



Private Rented Sector Mentors

Role description

The organisation

Porchlight is a forward thinking and innovative charity, passionate about helping people and communities. We work throughout Kent to help the most vulnerable and isolated people in our communities to access housing and related support services. We help change lives through the following services: Help and Advice; Kent Outreach Service; Young Person's Services; Homelessness Prevention; Supported Accommodation; Community Support and Building Skills. In 2010-2011 we supported over 2,300 people to change their lives for the better

The Schemes

The PRS schemes funded by Crisis are designed to enable service users under 35 to access suitable accommodation. These are a response to the proposed changes within the Welfare Reform Bill and shortage of suitable, affordable accommodation for this age group.

The scheme will deliver a range of activities to assist clients to move into and sustain private-rented accommodation, including:

- Work with landlords and letting agents
- Pre-tenancy training.
- Mentor support (6-12 months).

There will be a coordinator for each area who will liaise with landlords and use their expertise to help people set up new tenancies. In turn each area has a bond and rent-in-advance budget. The coordinator will ensure that relevant checks and procedures are carried out.

Additional practical help provided by the scheme: move-in packs of basic essentials, support with accessing individual grants, community care grants, accessing local furniture recycling schemes, freecycle and saving plans.

The Role

Each Mentor will assist the success of the tenancy and provide ongoing support to service users in their transition into the private-rented sector. Mentors will support service users in their area in a number of practical ways. This is not an exhaustive list but rather some suggestions of support:

- Helping service users to attend training workshops delivered by Porchlight
- Supporting service users in looking for accommodation
- Support regarding budgeting, e.g. making arrangements for paying rent, paying bills etc
- Encouraging use of activities to help them feel part of the community

What we need from you:

- No experience is required
- Enthusiasm and an interest in promoting and maintaining independent living
- An awareness of the problems people face in accessing private sector accommodation (training will be provided)
- To be committed to attend relevant training sessions
- To be committed to meet with service users on a regular basis to be agreed according to circumstances and the needs of the scheme
- Two references will be required
- A full CRB will be sought

Induction/Training

A full specific training course will be delivered to all new mentors to prepare everyone for their new roles.

Where: Schemes in Canterbury, Dartford and Gravesham, Shepway, Thanet, and Tunbridge Wells.

When: March 2012- Feb 2013. We are pursuing funding to continue this project beyond this date.

Commitment: We are seeking a commitment of at least 6 months.