

Post title: **SMILE Link Worker**
Hours: **16hrs/week**
Salary: **£13.39 per hour (equivalent to full time £25,738)
plus 6% pension contribution**
Line Manager: **SMILE project lead**

What is this project about?

One parent summarised what we do, like this: “with SMILE, lone parenting doesn’t need to be lonely parenting”.

SMILE provides support, activities and friendship for single parent families. Our goal is to create a community of families who support each other and live life to the full. Three elements make up the community:

- Providing fun and supportive activities for lone parent families, promoting well-being at low cost.
- Times with other community groups in local churches.
- An online community for sharing events and more, with peer to peer encouragement in a safe place.

Through all this we hope to improve wellbeing, have fun and enjoy life.

We also have a partnership with Safe Families to provide friendship & support to families who are in a hard season.

What is the purpose of this job?

The Link worker is a key member of the team, helping to strengthen the community, be present at events, support the running of courses and build on our relationships with external organisations.

Alongside being part of the core community, the successful applicant will work closely with a small number of parents to help them overcome barriers that keep them from moving on in certain areas of life. This may require liaising with professionals/ other groups involved, or sign posting other services to help them take the next steps in moving forward.

The post holder may also get involved in coaching or advocacy, and of course they will be required to keep excellent records

What makes a successful job holder?

This role will require someone who can take the initiative, has flexibility, insight, compassion and a passion to make a difference. Ideally, they will have some experience of working with vulnerable families, and other professional services.

This person will have experience of encouraging and coaching people to find their own solutions. They will be a great listener, be adept at liaising with church, community and professional partners, to help families move from surviving to thriving.

Please also note that as this role will include working with vulnerable adults and children, anyone applying for the role will require a criminal records check from the Disclosure & Barring Service.

What will I have to do? Duties and responsibilities

1. Empowering SMILE community members:

- a. Attend and support SMILE events and activities to build up trust with parents;
 - b. Research and share knowledge of local help available;
 - c. Work directly with specific SMILE parents who are facing barriers to identify issues and where appropriate, jointly work on an action plan to identify and implement potential ways forward;
 - d. Advocate for SMILE parents by attending statutory or other appointments with them, and help them to present their concerns or needs effectively in those appointments (attendance is usually limited to first time or one-off appointments);
 - e. Record all activity on FW systems in line with GDPR and confidentiality policies, so that a secure record is held of any actions and plans; update team members as appropriate.
 - f. Liaise with other organisations in the best interests of each parent, building trust and helping the parent to liaise directly in the future;
 - g. Work with, and encourage our team of volunteers in supporting parents, and helping them to develop their coaching skills .
2. Safe working: Support the team to ensure that all support activities comply with FW policies (esp. safeguarding adults, lone working, data privacy/ confidentiality and H&S)
 3. Holistic support: Develop relationships with SMILE partner churches; and be ready to find relational and spiritual support and prayer for families who request this through key members of these churches
 4. Partners: Working with other SMILE team members, develop excellent working relationships with key statutory and voluntary sector partners, so that there is a range of professional and community support easily available for families
 5. Support the team to collect feedback; encourage individuals to share their experiences and views to help shape SMILE. Collect stories that will be helpful to sharing with outside organisations, for spreading awareness and funding purposes.
 6. Any other duties that are commensurate with the role or as requested by the SMILE project lead.

Person specification: Skills, competences and experience:

Essential experience and skills:

- Sound appreciation of the needs of those in crisis, and some experience of responding to such needs with care and sensitivity.
- Knowledge of the issues facing Lone parent families
- Experience of working in a team to deliver a successful outcome, including clear evidence of prioritising and planning the work that needs to be done
- Experience of managing a caseload of clients / guests. Can exemplify how to prioritise needs and put a support plan together in the best interests of the client.
- Excellent communication skills both externally in order to inspire and develop partnerships, and internally in order to get the best out of team members

- Excellent interpersonal skills, ability to work on their own and evidence of being able to influence people positively.
- Able to travel in timely fashion to venues around the BCP area

Other desirable experience and skills:

- Experience in a similar role supporting vulnerable adults would be an advantage (e.g. people in addiction or with mental health issues)
- Experience of working successfully with volunteers or helping to organise unpaid groups of people to achieve a common task;
- Experience in working in partnership with other statutory and non-statutory organisations
- Evidence of Health & Safety and/or First Aid training/competence
- ICT and PC skills in relation to MS Office programs
- Knowledge of DDA working environment requirements

Key personal characteristics required:

- Sympathetic to, and willing to work within the Christian ethos and values of Faithworks
- Passionate about helping those in need in the community with practical, emotional and spiritual support
- Resilience, determination, perseverance and enthusiasm
- Outgoing personality, a friendly yet efficient style and the ability to establish a rapid rapport with people
- Able to model a high standard of integrity to volunteers, referrers and clients
- A self-starter – can take initiative; but also a willingness to learn new skills as systems and needs develop
- Flexible and always thinking about ways to improve the service
- Willing to work flexibly (different times of the day / different days of the week)