

Social Enterprise Kent

Job Description:

Community Connector Long Term Health & Disability

Reporting to: Employability Project Manager

Work pattern: 37.5 hours per week
Based in Broadstairs, with travel throughout Kent and the South East



Social Enterprise Kent – Background

Social Enterprise Kent (SEK) is a Community Interest Company (CIC), registered with and regulated by the CIC Regulator. This means that all of our operational activities are guided by a commitment to maximising our positive social impact for our target market – local people, communities and businesses.

SEK has been operating for over 30 years, with the overarching vision of ‘Improving Lives, Supporting Communities’.

SEK’s founding objectives are;

- To provide support for people in areas of deprivation and for those that are most disadvantaged, to gain skills and employment
- To support the creation, organisation and management of social enterprises and small businesses, and to make this sustainable
- To support the regeneration of deprived areas in Kent through skills training and job creation activities

SEK supports those most in need. We work with people who are unemployed, have mental health needs, are experiencing social isolation, or those who need some support and training to help them improve their skills and prospects.

Our values include:

- We treat people with respect, promoting independence and growth
- We value quality and continuous improvement
- We keep things simple
- We have a positive attitude and a sense of humour
- We strive to be socially responsible

Context of the Community Connector Role

SEK is in partnership with Sussex Community Development Association (SCDA), who have secured funding through the Big Lottery and ESF to deliver the ‘Let’s Get Working’ project, which is focused on participants who have disabilities or long term health illnesses. SCDA, who are based in East Sussex, are the lead partner for this project with other consortium members including SEK and Royal British Legion Industries. The project will be delivering support to communities in East Sussex, Kent and Medway, with bespoke Hubs being created to provide intensive and ongoing practical employment support for disadvantaged people, empowering them to move into sustainable volunteering, education, training or employment.

The ‘Let’s Get Working’ project will develop, test, deliver and evaluate a way to provide support to people with disabilities or long term illnesses to access the labour market. The project brings together specific employability support with the principles and practices of social prescribing, using referral relationships with health and care professionals to offer personally tailored help to people to find and keep work, or move towards employment. Support will be offered in a context where we seek to deliver specific employment and wellbeing outcomes for individuals, as well as benefits for communities and the health and care system.

The project will enable the establishment of Hubs, which include the following staff members;

- Community Connectors
- Community Navigators
- Employability Trainers
- Employment Co-ordinator

Supporting the Thanet community, Hub staff will offer access to specific support for employment, health and wellbeing needs including community activity. Hubs will enable project staff to deliver local services to participants, as close to communities as possible, with a high level of outreach and flexibility.

Job Purpose

The Community Connector is responsible for providing intensive 1:1 information, advice, guidance and support to an allocated caseload of participants to address employability skills and secure sustainable volunteering, work trials and employment, including supported employment. The post holder will also support the participants' re-engagement with their community through appropriate signposting and referral and, when appropriate, by accompanying participants to the activity, in line with their individual support plan.

The Community Connector will liaise with Project Navigators and the Project Manager to ensure that support provided is participant-led and meets the needs of individual support plans. The Community Connector will also be responsible for identifying and building relationships with local groups, agencies and other organisations so that participants can be referred to other services that can support their positive re-engagement into their local community and into employment.

Main Tasks

Encourage and promote partnership working:

Liaise with a range of statutory, voluntary, and private sector agencies and organisations to improve participants' access to services and maximise their choices, in particular, when sourcing employment opportunities for participants.

Work in partnership to identify and recruit potential participants:

Build and maintain effective working relationships with appropriate referral agencies, organisations and relevant professionals (e.g. Medical and Health Centres, Local Authority Health Teams, CCG Link Workers, Jobcentre Plus, Family and Children's Services etc), to identify areas of need and people facing barriers to work, learning or volunteering.

Establish needs of each individual participant:

- Conduct confidential, one to one interviews offering information, advice or guidance, as appropriate, on the range of work and learning opportunities available locally.
- Enable participants to develop the opportunity to exercise individual choice and the pursuit of their own options for work and learning, and support them in these choices.
- Assist participants to access and attend appropriate work and/or learning opportunities and community activities.
- Use a range of resources to help participants identify their skills, including project and online assessment tools.
- As appropriate, offer intensive support where individual need has been established (specific to their disability and/or health need).
- Recognise and work appropriately within challenging situations.

- Support individuals to access services such as job club and other training opportunities.

Your work would also include:

- Keeping up to date with occupational and labour market information
- Giving talks and leading discussions
- Updating records and completing other administration tasks
- Assisting potential participants to engage with the project and explain what the service can provide
- Recognise and work appropriately within challenging situations

Signposting and Referral:

- Communicate confidently with colleagues, partner agencies, individuals and other Hub/ SEK staff to identify appropriate learning and work placement providers, to meet individual participants' needs.
- Maintain awareness of and signpost to a range of local providers to meet participant needs

Follow up agreed actions:

- Ensure the necessary support structures are in place to maintain the volunteering, learning or work placement of each participant.
- Track participants to ensure up to date information is held at all times.

Management reporting:

- Keep accurate participant records and assist in the preparation of written and statistical reports as required.
- Maintain appropriate administrative and recording systems.
- Work with others to contribute to the delivery of projects so that they are on time, to target and within prescribed budgets
- Collaborate and contribute to funding bids as required.
- Update systems as required accurately and on a timely basis within 1 working day.
- Maintain an accurate caseload management sheet at all times.
- Report and record achievement of all project outcomes within the month they occur to maximise contract target performance.
- Provide one good news story per month reflecting participant progress and/or success.

Other:

- Meet regularly with the Project Manager or other designated supervisor for supervision and project reviews and to take responsibility to follow through agreed areas of work.
- The varied nature of the role may require flexibility to undertake other appropriate and relevant duties as they occur.
- Attend team briefs, meetings and SEK staff meetings as required.
- Promote and comply with SEK's policies and procedural requirements.
- Work from outreach centres as required.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

SEK is an equal opportunity employer and is fully committed to a policy of treating all of its employees, participants and customers, equally. Services that are delivered to our local community will be based on need, will be non-discriminatory, and will be delivered with the aim of engaging and empowering community members. All staff are expected to comply with these policies.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

All staff have a responsibility to maintain the health and safety of themselves and others within the performance of their duties in accordance with SEK health and safety policies and to undertake specific health and safety responsibilities as necessary.

The Long Term Health & Disability project has two cross cutting themes, Sustainable Development and Gender Equality/Equal Opportunities. Project post holders will be required to comply fully with and behave entirely in keeping with any requirements.

Person specification

Essential:

- Demonstrable experience, paid or unpaid, working with individuals accessing opportunities, ideally relating to work and learning.
- Demonstrable experience, paid or unpaid, supporting clients who are facing barriers to work and learning caused/ exacerbated by long term health issues and disabilities, and a track record of helping them move towards a positive outcome (eg. re-engaging with their community, voluntary work, work placements, training, moving into employment).
- Experience of working to and delivering project targets, specifically in relation to job outcomes. .
- Able to maintain accurate records for participants and monitor progress.
- Able to communicate effectively at all levels.
- Able to make assessment of need on a one to one basis.
- Strong organisational, IT and time management skills.
- Good understanding of equal opportunities and an ability to translate this into work practices.
- Able to gain a rapid understanding of SEK services, and promote our vision, aims and values in a positive manner.
- Ability to work in a fast-paced, challenging environment, and to achieve stretching targets.
- Full driving licence and access to own vehicle.

Desirable qualifications & experience:

- Appropriate professional qualification or degree, or relevant experience.
- Level 4 or equivalent qualification in "Advice", or willingness to undertake this qualification and commitment to study in own time where necessary
- Knowledge of the benefits system.
- Understanding of good employment practices which support the placement of clients with barriers to work e.g. disability discrimination, flexible working.

Essential skills, abilities and knowledge:

- Good understanding of data protection requirements
- Clear understanding of participant confidentiality
- Good understanding and experience of MS Access, Excel and Word.

Essential personal qualities:

- Able to work effectively as part of a team and on own initiative
- Be confident in dealing with participants, partners and be able to respond at all levels
- Tact, diplomacy
- Resilience to withstand peaks in workload
- Emotional resilience to work objectively and professionally with vulnerable people
- Understanding of or willingness to learn about the needs of a wide range of socially excluded people.

Circumstances:

- Full, clean driving licence and access to own vehicle.
- Willingness to undergo enhanced DBS