

Work shadowing Information for applicants



1. Background

A staff shadowing scheme has recently been set up, coordinated by Volition and supported by Leeds Mental Health Trust as well as other statutory sector services. The scheme provides development opportunities for mental health workers in the voluntary and statutory sectors.

The aim of shadowing is to improve understanding amongst mental health workers about how services in other sectors operate by offering first hand experience of the issues that staff and organisations face. It is hoped that this will lead to improved partnership working across sectors, more appropriate referrals between services and ultimately better and more informed services for service users.

Volition received ChangeUp funding from West Yorkshire Local Development Agency via Leeds Infrastructure Consortium to set up work shadowing during 2007. The scheme is now an ongoing part of our work.

2. What does shadowing offer?

You will have the chance to “shadow” a member of staff in another service, for one to three days, in order to:

- ◆ experience a different work setting
- ◆ develop a greater understanding of the purpose of their work
- ◆ experience some of the issues that arise for them in their work
- ◆ have the chance to discuss different ways of working
- ◆ develop closer working links.

3. What opportunities are available?

The scheme has been developed to enable staff from voluntary sector mental health organisations to have the opportunity to shadow colleagues in Leeds Mental Health Trust and vice versa. Discussions are taking place with Social Services with a view to providing similar opportunities in relation to their mental health staff. And Leeds PCT is interested in work shadowing.

- **Shadowing within Leeds Mental Health Trust**

A range of roles could be shadowed within Community Mental Health Teams for example nurse, OT, home support worker, social worker, manager, admin worker. It may also be possible to arrange shadowing of staff in other teams such as Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment and Acute Community Day Services.

There will be opportunities to observe and participate (where appropriate) in home visits, one to one work, referral meetings, activity sessions, home visits, group work and other meetings and events.

- **Shadowing within voluntary sector organisations.**

A range of roles could be shadowed for example advice worker, housing/residential worker, nurse, support worker, development worker, manager, social worker, admin worker, receptionist. The possible settings include advice and information services, day centres, housing support teams, community arts and residential schemes.

There will be opportunities to observe and participate (where appropriate) in home visits, group work, one to one work, referral meetings, activity sessions and other meetings and events.

- **Placements with Social Services**

Discussions are taking place with Social Services about arrangements for shadowing. Please contact Volition for more details.

You might want to arrange shadowing with an agency / team in your locality that you have significant contact with. This will give you a chance to increase your understanding of how they work and assist you in making referrals.

Alternatively you might want a shadowing placement with a “citywide” project if it is one that you have referred people to (or wish to in the future) and would benefit from knowing more about.

4. How to arrange a shadowing placement

- Contact Volition for an application form (see contact details below).
- Fill in the form, ask your manager to sign it and return it to Volition.
- Volition will contact you if we need anything clarifying.
- Volition will contact the relevant “host” to request the shadowing placement.
- If the request is accepted the details of the placement will be negotiated directly between you and the host organisation – it is important that both parties work out an arrangement that is practical and feasible to give it the best chance of success.
- You will need to comply with the host’s **confidentiality** requirements in relation to the shadowing placement.
- You will need to check whether the host has specific **CRB** (Criminal Records Bureau) requirements.
- Once your placement is finished – you will be asked to complete an evaluation form. This will help us in monitoring the benefits of work shadowing and in planning any future schemes.

5. Application forms and further information

If you would like an application form or further information about work shadowing please contact Volition.

By phone: 0113 274 9585

By email: info@volition.org.uk

By post: 26 Michael’s Road, Headingley, Leeds LS6 3AW.