

## **JOB PACK:**

### **SPECIALIST SUPPORTER - AUTISM (SWALE)**

#### **About Skillnet Group**

We are people with and without learning difficulties and/or autism in Kent and Medway working together to achieve equality.

Skillnet Group is also a social enterprise. As a Community Interest Company, all our profit is put back into supporting the work we do.

- We support people with learning difficulties or autism to speak up, make choices and become powerful and influential. We support them to gain opportunities and become more independent in learning, housing, work, health, money, travel, leisure and relationships.
- We support people to hear, respect and empower people with learning difficulties or autism.
- We promote positive action to challenge negative attitudes about disability.
- We work with local communities so that people with learning difficulties and/or autism become fully included and no longer segregated.

## **The background to this job**

Skillnet Group started Life Choices over five years ago to provide holistic and progressive individual support to people with learning difficulties/disabilities. In early 2014 we identified a need for this to be available for people with autistic spectrum conditions to support people to become more independent. We have been developing the project to ensure we have a strong, specialist team of supporters available to meet the growing demand for this support in Kent.

The main aims of Life Choices are:

- To provide personalised individual support to enable people with autistic spectrum conditions and/or learning difficulties/disabilities to gain independence.
- To support and encourage more inclusive and accessible communities in Kent.
- To build strong local networks and partnerships.

*Apply online here:*

[skillnetgroup.co.uk/working/pages/jobapplication.php](http://skillnetgroup.co.uk/working/pages/jobapplication.php)

## Job Description

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>Main aim:</b>            | To support people with autistic spectrum conditions and people with multiple and complex support needs to fulfil their dreams and ambitions as independently as possible.   |
| <b>Salary:</b>              | £18,000 per annum pro rata / £9.36 per hour   |
| <b>Hours:</b>               | 14 hours per week (variable and flexible). The position is based on 12 hours per week of funded support plus 2 hours for administration and supervision. Funded work varies according to demand, and there is potential to increase hours as the project grows. |
| <b>Location:</b>            | Swale (Sittingbourne, Upchurch, Isle of Sheppey)  |
| <b>Duration:</b>            | Permanent contract  |
| <b>Probationary Period:</b> | 12 weeks  |
| <b>Annual leave:</b>        | 25 days per annum plus eight public holidays  |
| <b>Notice period:</b>       | 4 weeks   |
| <b>Line management:</b>     | Project Lead - Life Choices   |

## **Main responsibilities:**

Work in a co-produced way. This means working alongside people with autistic spectrum conditions and/or a learning difficulty/disability as equals to ensure the quality and standard of personalised support is excellent.

Work to support people with autistic spectrum conditions in a personalised way. This means building relationships, getting to know people and finding creative and innovative ways to shape their support to suit them.

Support people in every aspect of their lives. This may include supporting people to consider their actions and the impact they have on others. You may need to have difficult and personal discussions so the ability to build trust and show warmth is important.

Plan with each person how you will support them in a person-centred way. This may include family members and professional advice on what the person enjoys and how they would like to develop their skills.

Work with each person to record a plan about how they would like to be supported. Ensure this plan is recorded in a way the person understands and is shared with those supporting them.

Ensure on-line records are maintained about the support provided and progress achieved within support sessions. Records may need to be created without the use of words.

Liaise with Case Managers from Kent County Council's Autistic Spectrum Conditions Team regarding referrals and progress.

Attend regular service Review Meetings with Case Managers, families and the people we support.

Develop an excellent understanding of the local community you are working within. This means knowing what facilities are on offer, how people may access them and the support available.

Research and develop new opportunities to offer support to individuals, groups or organisations. The continued provision of this personalised, individual support will be reliant on maintaining our excellent reputation for this work and actively seeking new opportunities to provide more where appropriate.

Undertake personal risk assessments with the people you are supporting so they can explore new opportunities safely.

Invite regular feedback from people you are supporting through questionnaires, group discussions and feedback from professionals to facilitate continuous improvement.

Keep up-to-date with developments in guidance and policy changes in your area of responsibility.

Work in line with all Skillnet Group's policies and procedures.

Work flexibly and do (or be involved with) other work sometimes as needed by Skillnet Group.

## Person Specification

### **It is essential that you:**

Are a highly motivated person and able to motivate other people.

Are reliable, punctual and complete what you commit to doing.

Are a good listener who gives others the space to speak.

Are sensitive and tactful but also able to give an honest opinion.

Have a track record of building excellent and positive relationships.

Are happy to ask if you do not know something or need more support.

Work in a co-produced and person-centred way (see main responsibilities).

Are experienced in working with people with autistic spectrum conditions and/or multiple and complex support needs. You must be able to demonstrate an understanding of how to communicate well, how to listen to people especially if they do not use words to communicate, and how to communicate without patronising people.

You understand the needs and rights of people with autistic spectrum conditions and multiple or complex support needs, and the ability to support people well. This means showing you understand people need different types of support at different times.

You understand and empathise with anxiety and its effects: how it can be triggered by environments, specific persons and situations or changes to one's circumstances; how it may impact a person's day-to-day choices and behaviour and you know how to meaningfully respond when someone is struggling due to anxiety.

Have experience of working sensitively with people who:

- may struggle to identify what it is they enjoy or might like to do in the future.
- may struggle with specific sensory stimuli which can affect how they approach their day.
- may find social situations and community-based situations stressful or difficult.

- may refuse support and struggle to articulate why.

Have the courage to take risks with people. This includes assessing risks quickly and acting on your instincts to stretch people to consider new possibilities.

Have an understanding of the role a person's family plays in supporting him or her to move forward in their lives. Experience of supporting families in difficulty would be an advantage.

Have an understanding of the effects of trauma and how poor support is linked to discriminatory attitudes. You are able to empathise and work with people who may have been misunderstood or received ineffective support in the past.

Understand Equality and Diversity and how to put these ideas into practice.

Know your local community and can support people to make the most of their community and not rely on 'specialist services'.

Are organised and able to work to deadlines.

Have excellent administration skills. You can use reporting and project management systems, the internet, email and office applications.

Can present and communicate information clearly. This includes keeping records and passing information to others in a timely way.

Are a licensed car driver with class 1 business insurance and can use your car to support people. It should be noted however, that as much as possible, encouraging people to use public transport is our first priority.

### **It is desirable that you:**

Understand the law and important plans and policies that relate to education, training, employment and the rights of people with autistic spectrum conditions and learning difficulties to access support and services.

Have a working understanding of the benefits system.

Are confident to speak up in meetings and advocate for the people you are supporting.

Have skills in using websites, social media, posters and other methods of communication for promotion and marketing.