Position Description

Position Description: Youth Support Worker
Reports to: Team Leader - Youth Homelessness Services
Supervises: Nil
Office Locations/s: Knox
Date: May 2015

Organisation

UnitingCare Harrison is a mission of the Uniting Church in Australia Synod of (Vic/Tas) and as such we are part of the church and affirm its principles and philosophies. Since the 1960s Harrison has been offering general welfare services in the Eastern Metropolitan area of Melbourne. Harrison has three streams of service provision: Disability Services, Homelessness Services and Housing Services.

With over 140 volunteers and more than 80 employees, Harrison supports more than 400 people at any time and provides tenancy management to about 250 residents.

The Harrison website provides further information relating to the strategic plan and the organisational structure, www.unitingcareharrison.org.au.

Mission

UnitingCare Harrison assists people to take charge of their own lives.

Values

UnitingCare Harrison’s work is inspired by its Christian foundations and the Statement of Purpose of UnitingCare Victoria and Tasmania.

Hope: UnitingCare Harrison believes people have the capacity for positive change.
Excellence: UnitingCare Harrison is a responsible steward of all its resources striving for the best in everything it does.
Compassion: UnitingCare Harrison listens and works together with people to find solutions, having particular concern and empathy for those who are vulnerable, poor and marginalised.
Integrity: UnitingCare Harrison acts ethically at all times.
Equity: UnitingCare Harrison stands for justice and a fair go for all people regardless of their background, ability or circumstances.
Independence: UnitingCare Harrison fosters self-reliance.

Vision

UnitingCare Harrison will be an influential leader in the provision of quality housing and community services.
Program/Project

The Youth Support Workers, as part of the Homelessness, Creating Connections and Leaving Care programs, provide transitional support to young people, couples and families 15-25 years in the Eastern suburbs of Melbourne, who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

This team is linked to the UnitingCare Harrison Opening Door, HOPE Programs and other Creating Connections agencies, as part of an Eastern Metropolitan Region response to the Victorian Homeless Strategy to improve the referral process for at risk homeless young people, and also develop innovative ways to prevent homelessness. These programs take referrals from other Opening Doors, Homelessness services, Headspace, Schools, Universities, TAFE, JSP’s, Community Health, Council Youth Services, DHHS Child Protection, and Centrelink offices throughout the Eastern Region

Program Aims

The Youth Homelessness Program

The Youth Homelessness Program provides onsite, colocation and outreach support to at risk youth, couples and youth families in the Eastern suburbs. The aim of the program is to support young clients from all ethnic, cultural or religious backgrounds to access and maintain housing, while addressing support needs which contributed to their homelessness. To give homeless young people a streamlined service response through Opening Doors to the regional and state-wide vacancy registers which provide an up to date list of all the vacancies (both support and housing). To assist young people in an outreach capacity or who are couch surfing, in crisis motels, in youth refuge, Council youth drop in centres and transitional housing to access long term safe, secure and affordable accommodation in either private rental, social or Public Housing. To provide support to young people relating to life skills, employment, education, finance, transport, health, childcare, legal issues. To provide information and referral to other more appropriate support and counselling services, in relation to drug, alcohol and mental health issues in order to promote self-reliance and independence of the welfare system.

Creating Connections Program

Creating Connections provides life & living skills development, and links to education, employment and training, to young people who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless, in the Eastern Metro region of Melbourne. The training is provided to both individuals and groups of young people who might be living together in Youth THM, Youth refuge, Foyer residences or attending, Council youth drop in centres who require additional support to prepare for independent living. Creating Connections provides young people with assistance in developing skills in cooking healthy, nutritious meals, budgeting on a limited income, sharing in private rental, tenant rights, home maintenance, health, relationships and communication skills.

In addition, Creating Connections provides training sessions and active case work that assists young people to access education, employment and training opportunities, with the aim of strengthening their independence once they have secured independent housing. The program also offers advice and consultation to other homelessness services supporting young people with similar goals. Creating Connections staff also assist the Team Leader advertising the program, the assessment process, recording on the data base and 3 month
reviews of CEEP funds allocated in the region. The program is committed to improving the access and support for indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse young people.

**Leaving Care Program**

This initiative aims to achieve better outcomes for young people leaving care, by assisting them in the development of independent life skills, providing links into, and sustaining, education, training, and employment options, and preventing homelessness through the creation of pathways into sustainable long term housing options. The program actively supports the young people to sustain their housing, or assisting them to secure alternative housing where their housing placement has ended.

The Leaving Care program has an early intervention focus targeting young people who are still on their Care Order, aged 16 years, up to 21 years, when they are preparing to leave care who, through transition planning and assessment are identified as being at risk of homelessness. UnitingCare Harrison staff work in close coordination with DHHS Child Protection staff, and other support services who are supporting the young people, until they turn 18 years. Once they are no longer the responsibility of DHHS, Leaving Care provide the sole case management role of a young person until the requirements of progress against the transition planning process have been met. Continued participation in this program is dependent upon the young person demonstrating commitment to developing independent living skills and actively working with their support worker.

Young people in the leaving Care program are likely to:
- have limited access to alternative housing and support arrangements
- be assessed as having the ability to live in non-supported accommodation
- have limited community and support connections
- be assessed as being able to move to sustainable independent living within 2 years.

Leaving Care does not target young people who:
- have high complex needs, display significant risky behaviours and require on-call, response 24/7. Also young people who have been provided with high cost packages while in care, and would require case managed support for a period longer than two years to achieve sustainable independent living

Support will focus on building skills which will also assist young people to access employment, education and training. Young people will also be offered opportunities to reconnect with family through Family Reconciliation/Mediation (if appropriate) and the broader community by referral to specialist services.

**Key Selection Criteria**

- An understanding of the issues that may lead to a young person accessing the Homelessness system, leaving Care of the State, or have few family or community supports networks
- Ability to respond in a manner that is confident, engaging, motivating, flexible and sensitive to young people
- An ability to tailor support to a young person’s individual needs
- An ability and commitment to working cooperatively with existing agencies in the delivery of services to young people, couples and their families
- Demonstrated community networking, liaison and advocacy skills
• An understanding of the cultural awareness in the delivery of services to young people and families from CALD and Indigenous backgrounds
• Any offer of employment is dependent on satisfactory safety screening checks

Qualifications

Mandatory
1. Cert.IV or above in Youth Work, Welfare Work or related field
2. Current Victorian drivers licence is required

Desirable
1. Diploma or degree in Youth Work, Welfare Work or related field
2. Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAA40104)

Experience
Experience working with young people aged 15-25 years required
Experience in working with young people with complex needs
Experience working within the homelessness system
Sound understanding of the principles of service delivery within the Community Services sector
A knowledge of youth and family support services within the community services sector
A sound knowledge of case management
Ability to liaise and network with schools and community organisations
An ability to work independently within a team environment
Well developed problem solving skills
Well developed interpersonal and communication skills

Knowledge
Knowledge of the following is desirable:
All relevant Funding Agreement Guidelines and their reporting requirements
Child Wellbeing & Safety Act (VIC) 2005
DHHS Critical Client Incident Management Instruction 2014
Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

Key Attributes
Flexibility and Innovative in the face of changing circumstances
Self-starter/hands-on person who relates well to clients
Interacts professionally and ethically with staff and clients
Demonstrates compassion through displaying empathy and consideration for others

Position
This is a part time or full time position up to 38 hours per week, Monday to Friday, according to the employment contract. The position delivers services to clients primarily across the Eastern Metropolitan Region. Pool cars are available for staff to use during work hours. The occasional use of your own car may be required at times if agency cars are unavailable. Fuel costs are reimbursed. Staff working full days offsite at co-location sites will be expected to use their own vehicles to drive to and from the co-location sites, at the start and end of
day. Staff will be reimbursed as per policy for any return trip to the main office from the co-
location sites.

**Key Responsibilities and Duties**

Key responsibilities for this position **include but are not limited to:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Responsibilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Referral and Engagement Response:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To respond to referrals provided by line manager within 48 hours by contacting the client/s or referring agencies like DHHS, refuge, Open Doors etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- If unable to contact the client, the worker will contact the referring worker of the young person and/or send a letter requesting contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To engage with the young person using a variety of techniques depending on the young person/s including outreach and afterhours work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To engage with all relevant services and supports involved with the young person to work towards a successful outcome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To work actively with homeless or at risk youth, couples, families and accompanying children with complex needs, to break the cycle of homelessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To work with households from all indigenous, ethnic, cultural or religious backgrounds who are homeless or at risk of homelessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To use an engaging, inspiring and assertive case-management approach to address identified clients support needs as outlined in their jointly developed action plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To promote self-determination, reliance and independence of the welfare system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- To provide information, referral and support to youth clients relating to, employment, education, finance, transport, health, court, Domestic Violence, AOD issues, childcare, mental health, legal issues and Child First</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Key Responsibilities

**Direct Service Delivery:**

- Develop and maintain referral pathways into relevant specialist services and programs offered by other service providers
- Create/ explore and maintain pathways to employment, education and training options for young people
- To work with young people and groups to develop and deliver life skills programs and activities ensuring clients are taught practical life skills, such as basic communication skills, basic cooking skills, hygiene skills, cleaning skills, budgeting skills, and negotiating relationships
- With the young person, facilitate development of an Housing / Support plans identifying the young person’s support needs and housing outcomes
- Provide outreach support to young people and families when required, in collaboration with other agencies in an assertive outreach capacity
- Provide support to young people in other services and agencies on a co-location basis, according to the obligations and requirements of the relevant interagency Service Agreement/ MOU
- Provide assertive outreach as required to youth clients in the crisis motels, rooming houses, Head leased crisis properties and THM properties.
- To prepare and run fortnightly housing meetings and share meals in with the tenants in each THM property
- To support youth clients to establish and maintain their tenancies in both the service apartments, THM and private rental accommodation and OoH properties
- To link families and children to community supports and resources, including financial counselling services and education, training and employment support
- To assist youth clients to access longer term housing, including private rental accommodation, Social Housing and OoH if deemed appropriate
- To support clients to address those support needs which have contributed to their homelessness
- To assist clients to secure required furniture, whites goods, rent in advance, bond monies, removalist’s costs, through a savings plan, NILS loan, HEF grants and material aid providers in advance of moving into long term housing
- Assist the TL in the allocation of CEEP funds in the region, by assessing clients and their applications for CEEP funds and homelessness / housing support if required. Record outcomes on SHIP, and following up 3 and 6 months outcomes reports.
- To provide youth family and parenting support to help solve problems that are causing concern or threatening to break up the family units
- To provide Housing Options appointments, case work and coordination of various support services to youth clients one day per week while co-located at various Centrelink, OoH, Headspace Council youth drop in centres and Community Health Centre offices
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Key Responsibilities</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Agency Responsibilities:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contribute to external research and pilot innovation programs as required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Represent the agency at appropriate network meetings when required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attend regular supervision with line manager on a fortnightly basis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participate in regular team meetings, group supervision and agreed training opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To support areas of Homelessness, Creating Connections, Leaving Care, if requested by your Line Manager, to enable the Agency to maintain its core service functions during staff non work days, leave, absences/ shortages. This may involve taking clients to pre-arranged appointments, home visits and dealing with issues that may arise. Staff are required to update the clients SHIP file regarding the incident or additional case work on behalf of another co-case worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop and maintain a collaborative working relationship with the other Homelessness team workers, external support agencies and to promote Harrison programs within the region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participate in meetings with other relevant services including the EMR Practitioners, Youth/ Family Services, DHHS Child Protection, Community Health, Council, and Employment Networks and represent the agency appropriately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participate in Homelessness staff meetings and planning days to review programs, policies and procedures to ensure that the service is meeting objectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To comply with all relevant Harrison policies and procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To actively participate in the Harrison and funding bodies data collection process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To document and inform the Line Managers immediately of any serious incidents involving clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provide as a secondary case worker, immediate response and case support to other case workers allocated clients when they are unavailable, absent on leave, out of office or sick.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To take direction from Line Managers as appropriate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Key Performance Indicators

- Participation in at least one of the following:
  - Agency committee
  - Working group
  - Colocation Innovation project site
  - Provide training or mentoring to my peers and students

- To provide 2 hrs of direct casework per week per client. Therefore a case load of 12 would be 24 client contact hours per week. This time includes face to face, case coordination, transport to and from client contact time, meetings, conferences and phone calls to clients, co-workers and family members. For part time staff it is pro-rata hours.

- Understands and has followed correct paperless file management process as per funding agreements and Agency policies. This includes case notes, client outcomes and service provision on SHIP, Privacy and Confidentiality, Consent, Grievance and closure of files.

- Every client must have a SHIP Housing and Support action plan written within 2 weeks relevant to clients identified support needs and ensure minimum 3 month review.

- Using the SHIP Housing and Support action plan, identify appropriate services/supports to meet young persons and any children’s needs and refer into other services including exploring education, employment, training and life and living skills.

- Participate in at least 90% of all team meetings, supervision(individual and group), agreed training opportunities and network meetings.

- Explore and develop pathways to a range of safe, affordable, comfortable and secure long term housing options, employment and training for the young person including exploring family mediation and reconciliation as well as identifying what is required for the young person’s accommodation to remain sustainable and addressing those support needs.

- To support and cover the Agency’s Opening Doors Intake and HOPE collocation programs. Staff will work at least 1 Opening Doors or HOPE Intake shift per fortnight as per roster and when required during intake staff absences and leave.

- Meet targets (number of young people supported) as per their EFT status and demonstrates positive outcomes for at least 80% of annual case load.

## Legal Compliance

To keep abreast of and comply with all relevant Federal, State, Council, Acts, laws, and regulations including but not limited to:

- DHHS Critical Client Incident Management Instruction 2014
- Children, Youth and Families Act 2005
- Racial Discrimination Act 1975 (Commonwealth)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Commonwealth)
- Residential Tenancy Act 1997
- Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT).
- OoH, Housing Standards Policy Manual
- OoH, Public Housing Policy and Procedures Manuals
- Department of Health and Human Services/GOH Segmented Waiting List
Continuous Quality Improvement
UnitingCare Harrison is an accredited agency and staff are expected to take an active part in Continuous Quality Improvement processes (CQI).

Work Conditions

Police Check and Working with Children Card
We are a child safe employer. The employee shall provide a Police Check (less than 12 months old) and Working with Children Card for sighting and Registration numbers will be recorded. This must be provided on (or before) commencement of employment.

Performance Development Review (PDR)
A PDR will be conducted monthly during the six month probationary period and then on an annual basis with the Line Manager. This appraisal will be based on this position description.

Hours of work
Hours of work are usually 9am – 5.06pm Monday to Friday, however some work will occur after hours or occasionally weekends. Any such hours will be accrued as Time-in-lieu.

Induction
Staff induction will be carried out in the first two weeks of employment by the Line Manager.

Salary
Salary will be according to the Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Award, up to Level 4. Paypoint 4 - according to qualifications and experience.
Salary sacrifice is available.
All entitlements are portable within UnitingCare agencies within Victoria/ Tasmania.

Staff Benefits
According to Staff Benefits policy

Staff training and development
Staff training and development is provided through:
- Basic training - induction training; compliance with the agency's legislative responsibilities such as occupational health and safety (including the use of equipment), privacy, equal opportunity, harassment
- External training - provided by relevant external agencies

Staff training and development will be identified through the following:
- Probation reviews
- Staff meetings
- Annual Performance Development Review.
Supervision
The position reports to the Team Leader - Youth Homelessness Services. Individual supervision is on a fortnightly basis and group supervision is as required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Verification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I have read the position description and I am satisfied that it accurately describes the position. We agree that any changes will be made in consultation with the employee.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Manager or Team Leader

Name: __________________________________________

Signature: _______________________________________

Date: _____ / _____ / _____

I have read this position description and agree to undertake the duties as described above.

I agree that:

- This position description is a good indication of the duties and responsibilities that I may be required to perform. Any additional duties and responsibilities may be allocated to me by my line manager, following consultation and discussion with me. Where additional training or support is required to fulfil additional duties, it will be provided.

- This position description will be reviewed regularly in consultation with me.

- The KPIs indicated in this document will contribute to my annual performance review. These KPIs will also be reviewed regularly in accordance with the needs of the role.

Employee

Name: __________________________________________

Signature: _______________________________________

Date: _____ / _____ / _____