

Occupational Therapist (up to band 6)

We have a vacancy in our team for an Occupational Therapist (up to band 6), based in Scarborough. The role is community based and there is also the opportunity to work from home when appropriate. The role is a full-time, however, part-time working would be considered for the right person.

What is our approach

FirstLight Trust was set up in Scarborough in 2012, to support veterans from the armed forces and emergency services; we break down barriers and work within their communities to ensure veterans and their families get the support they need.

Our aim is to grow a network of hubs, with facilities for support, counselling, activities and workshops, which act as contact points and resource centres. We currently have hubs in Scarborough, Gosport, Lancaster, Hereford, Hawick and an active outreach programme in Redcar.

At FirstLight Trust we place an individual's needs at the heart of all we do (needs not neediness); we identify the appropriate support, source it, and help put it in place; we are most definitely NOT a signposting agency!

The support is as varied as the individuals who access the charity. We work with statutory services and the third sector, but if what is required is not in place, we will fund identified need such as psychological interventions. Whilst lockdown has restricted our activities programme it has made us refocus and develop what we do. Veterans have continued to access Stepney Hill Gardens, Art Therapy, Walks, Model Making for example and there is plenty of scope for developing activities further in the months ahead.

What issues do some of the veterans we support face?

Whilst many veterans experience no problems adjusting to civilian life there are a number who do. Life can be extremely difficult for some as they face the practical challenge of finding new employment, and housing, as well as coping with the psychological effects of service such as flashbacks, nightmares and feelings of guilt, anxiety, anger and frustration. These symptoms are also similar for many of those of the Emergency Services who are increasingly on the 'front line' of traumatic incidents, bombings, fires, fatal car accidents, physical danger, A&E. Experience of traumatic incidents can, in some cases lead to hyper-vigilance, fear of safety, sleep disorder/nightmares, strong startle reflex, reliving past events triggered by sights, sounds and smells, fear of crowds. The on cost to the veterans and their families of this behaviour is heavy and can take time to manifest. At FirstLight we are very clear that support for individuals takes as long as it takes. Sometimes it is simple, sometimes complex, and of course, it is not always successful. However the hubs, based on the high streets provide an easy access point for those who find it difficult to pick up the phone or use IT. Trust is difficult to build over the web, and consistency of approach, and always 'showing up' is vital.

What will the role involve?

The role will help shape the service we offer going forwards. Here is an opportunity to test out new strategies, interventions and activities to see what is most effective.

You will be supporting veterans (Armed Forces and Emergency Services) of all ages from all services in all aspects of their lives; some will just require housing and debt support, others might need to find new ways of coping and reconnecting with their communities, from the social to the practical. Needs range from support at work and home, to vocational rehabilitation, supporting families and individuals with dementia, brain injury, terminal illness, lifelong medical conditions and

mental health conditions. You will enable veterans to have a renewed sense of purpose, open up new horizons and change the way they feel about their future.

Day to day you will assess and understand veteran's needs, consider their strengths, abilities and health care needs, and whether their environment (home, workplace, etc.) supports or hinders their ability to do those things. You will source and put in place appropriate practical support to help them do the activities that matter to them. We know from what we do that sometimes it is the simple things which create the biggest change; learning to bake a cake, nurture an allotment or receive a compliment on successfully completing an activity (try archery or cycling for size!).

You will help veterans rediscover their skills, build up confidence by breaking down a task into simple steps, setting achievable goals with the veteran and building on a veteran's strengths and interests. Provide education either 1:1 or in a group setting to help them find solutions to their problems using a cognitive behavioural approach.

What type of person are we looking for?

We are looking for an Occupational Therapist (up to band 6) who would like a role in which they can make a real difference to the lives of the people they support. You will be HCPC registered as an Occupational Therapist with post qualification experience. You will have personality, common sense, a good sense of humour and the ability to make things happen; an individual who empathises and can have fun, balanced against being mindful of boundaries.

You will be an excellent communicator who can build effective networks and partnerships within the community, and have a working understanding of veterans' needs. You must be able to think on your feet and definitely have a creative approach. The ability to drive is a must, as there will be some travel and the occasional overnight stay when required.

What does work for FirstLight Trust feel like?

We want to shape a great place to work whilst making a difference. We are a family where people work together; there are no secrets or hierarchy, everyone's role is to support each other. This does not mean we don't have boundaries in place; we do, but we value trust and respect ahead of command and control. All our people are trusted with the freedom to show their integrity and initiative to ensure the people they support are supported in the correct way that enables them to lead an independent purposeful life.

What can we offer?

- A great place to work alongside dedicated support workers.
- A real opportunity to influence decisions and be part of developing and shaping a much-needed service
- An extra days' holiday with pay on your birthday
- Appreciation and recognition
- Trust and support in times of difficulty
- Flexible working

If you are interested please submit your CV alongside a covering letter explaining why you feel you are the person for the role. If you would like an informal discussion about the role please contact Louise Hanks on 07808 294782.