



Group Leader Job Description

Post: Group Leader for specific subject or activity
Responsible to: Ecas Chief Executive

Background

Ecas is an Edinburgh charity, established over 100 years ago. The charity works to improve the quality of life of physically disabled people across Edinburgh and Lothian promoting equality, choice and participation through its activities, befriending service and grants.

Provision of classes and activities for disabled people is one of Ecas' core activities. Groups are likely to be of mixed ability and to have varied physical disabilities. Group Leaders are therefore required to decide on the most appropriate objectives, methods and materials on a case-by-case basis, in agreement with the Chief Executive.

Purpose of Job

Organising and running activities for disabled people in the subject for which the Group Leader is employed.

Ensuring that Ecas' duty of care to service users is discharged, including responsibilities relating to the provision of transport.

Encouraging class members to take part in the class activities and to become more independent in their outlook.

Liaising with the Ecas office, transport companies and volunteer helpers involved in the class.

Compiling risk assessments for their activities and venues, in liaison with the Ecas health and safety officer, and complying with the assessments' recommendations in accordance with the Ecas Health and Safety Manual.

Where applicable, proposing, costing, organizing and managing field trips for their class within the budget set by the Chief Executive.

Major Tasks/Job Activities

To support service users to develop their confidence, knowledge and skills in specific subject areas, using a person centred and negotiated approach to agree course objectives.

To liaise with the Administrator to arrange cover for any activities for which the Group Leader is unavailable, subject to approval by the Chief Executive. Where possible, 4 weeks' written notice should be provided.

To liaise with the Administrator and transport providers regarding transport for service users, ensuring that all service users leave the venue in appropriate transport.

To compile risk assessments using the procedure in the Ecas Health and Safety Manual and in liaison with the Ecas health and safety officer. This is to include risk assessments for any activities conducted away from the usual class venue.

Proposing, costing, organizing and managing occasional field trips for their class within the budget set by the Chief Executive. To include compiling and complying with risk assessments. Costings to be agreed with the Chief Executive prior to any commitment being made. The Administrator will assist with transport arrangements; other arrangements are the responsibility of the Group Leader.

To comply with the Ecas Health and Safety Manual and to follow the procedures required by the risk assessments.

To ensure that service users are fully briefed on safety and domestic arrangements and that they are reminded of these on a regular basis, or when circumstances change.

To liaise with the Administrator regarding availability of facilities.

To pass requests for purchase of equipment and consumables to the Administrator as required.

To maintain and hand in records of attendance as required.

To monitor attendance and inform the Administrator where

- a service user is absent, without prior notice, for 3 consecutive classes
- the total attendance in a class falls to 4 or less for a period of 4 consecutive weeks

The majority of activity fees are by BACS or cheque. Occasionally the Group Leader is required to collect fees and forms from service users and pass them to the office staff. Service users are invoiced directly from the office.

To pass on information to service users as requested, for example minutes of consultation group meetings, and keep the Chief Executive informed of any issues raised by service users.

To participate in evaluation and feedback procedures.

To prepare fully for each class (materials, room layout etc) and ensure that materials are put away neatly on completion.

To prepare, or delegate preparation of, tea/coffee and refreshments where necessary.

To identify improvements and additions to the course, including outings, and pass on these recommendations to the Chief Executive.

To attend induction, other training and meetings as deemed necessary by Ecas. To provide copies of qualifications as required.

To provide a brief summary report to the Chief Executive at the end of each term.

To provide a brief summary report for the charity's annual report each year.

Service users requiring intimate care

The Ecas activity application form states that Ecas does not provide personal care and cannot take responsibility for anyone requiring medical or toileting assistance. There are good reasons for this, not the least of which is that Ecas staff are neither trained nor insured to provide such care. There are also other issues when personal care is involved. Ecas staff and volunteers are therefore not to provide such care, and Group Leaders must brief volunteers accordingly.

In general, the dividing line is that staff may assist a client to reach the toilet door, but must not go in. Similarly, staff are not to help service users to transfer between wheelchairs and chairs because staff are neither trained nor insured to do so.

Therefore, service users who require personal care as outlined above must bring their own carer. This is best achieved by Group Leaders having a word with the Chief Executive or Administrator following which a meeting with the service user concerned will be arranged.

Ecas appreciates that not all service users can afford carers and can provide some basic advice to help – including referring service users to our own grants fund which may be able to provide financial help for carers to allow a service user to continue to come to Ecas activities. This may include care whilst travelling to and from activities.

Responsibility for staff and volunteers

All group leaders are responsible for any volunteers who assist them, and they are to follow the procedures particularly the volunteers policy.

Decisions made in course of job

As courses are non-certificated and are unlikely to have a parallel, the aims of each programme, the methods of teaching, materials used and the objectives are decided upon by the Group Leader in agreement with the Chief Executive and the course participants. The principal decisions reflect the need to:

- Ensure the health and safety of service users.
- Provide educational guidance to service users.
- Evaluate the course and what the service users gain from it.
- To adapt the course to take account of the differing needs and abilities of the service users.
- Identifying and budgeting suitable field trips (not applicable to all activities).
- To draw to the attention of the Administrator and Chief Executive any difficulties encountered.
- To advise the Chief Executive on ways to improve the course and/or its facilities.

Supervision received

Group Leaders are accountable to the Chief Executive and, having agreed course objectives, are largely self-directed. Courses will be evaluated on an occasional basis via client evaluation forms, and by monitoring and investigating any complaints or issues raised by service users. Group Leaders will have a formal review with the Chief Executive annually as part of the staff appraisal system.

Contacts

Ongoing contact with service users assessing their learning styles, ensuring the course meets (as far as practicable) the needs and expectations of the service users and ensuring that the programme is appropriate.

Liaison with the Administrator for bookings, class lists, transport and general administration.

Liaison with the Chief Executive for financial and pay matters.

Liaison with the Chief Executive for introducing any improvements required arising from evaluations

Educational/vocational qualifications required

Group Leaders must provide appropriate evidence of their subject knowledge through a recognised qualification such as a degree or equivalent experience.

Experience required

Experience of teaching is desirable but not essential if tutors can demonstrate an understanding of what to take into account when teaching service users of varying experience and abilities; ability to plan a course and lessons tailored to meet individual needs; a knowledge of a range of teaching methods and use of materials; an understanding of the required aims and a willingness to work in a person centred way.

Complexity and creativity

The Group leader is responsible for the preparation, effective delivery and evaluation of course content. The Group Leader will adapt the content of each course according to the differing needs of each client/group of service users, recognising that the service users will come from a range of backgrounds and abilities, including those with physical and learning disabilities.

The Group Leader must be able to develop creative tutoring techniques to make the course more accessible and responsive to the individual needs of the service users.

The Group Leader is responsible for responding to a variety of learning styles and participant needs, and for developing an innovative and appropriate approach to meet those needs.