‘Opening Doors’ – Social and Leisure Service

Relieving social isolation and promoting community inclusion for

people living with a visual impairment

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the ‘Opening Doors’ Project Worker post. We recognise that a job description cannot give you all of the information you may wish to know and so this document aims to give you some background information about Sight Support Derbyshire and about the Opening Doors project.

About Sight Support Derbyshire (SSD)

Sight Support Derbyshire is the only Derbyshire based sight loss charity, providing a range of services to visually impaired people. As well as our own services, we provide services on contract to Derbyshire Integrated Care Board, and to the County Council. Our skilled and experienced staff and volunteers pride themselves on the high quality services that we have provided for over 100 years throughout Derbyshire. Over this time, we have learned a lot about the needs of people living with sight loss and how services help in reducing isolation and promoting independence.

SSD is a Registered Charity and we rely on fundraising for over half of our total income. We have a small but dedicated fundraising team who work with individuals as well as local and national groups to raise our money.

We are a team of twenty staff working from our main office in Derby, our sub-office in Chesterfield and we have staff based in the two main hospitals in Derby and Chesterfield. The majority of our staff had not worked with people with sight loss before starting work with us, they learned from training and from doing the work. The most important skill to bring to our direct services is to be outgoing and good with people – we can teach you the more technical knowledge that you’ll need to know.

About our ‘Opening Doors’ – Social and Leisure Service

For many people, sight loss is not easy to come to terms with and can lead to a variety of challenging problems. It can lead to reduced confidence, an adverse effect on the person’s health, and a decline in general wellbeing. Sight loss is linked to reduced wellbeing and involvement in society. Almost half of visually impaired

people feel moderately/completely cut off from people and things around them (RNIB research). Over a third of visually impaired older people have depression (research UK Vision Strategy). With the number of people being registered as blind or partially sighted in Derby and Derbyshire growing, we know there is work to do.

The aim of the SSD 'Opening Doors' Social and Leisure Services Project is to increase people's confidence in accessing social and leisure activities and to improve access to community facilities. Traditionally organised social groups can lead to dependence; the aim of this service is to improve access to current community based social and leisure opportunities and to improve the confidence of visually impaired people to access them.

The service works with people from around the county, with many activities focused on key conurbations of Derby and Chesterfield. The project will involve close monitoring and evaluation to assess the impact and benefits of the service intervention.

Format of the support

Following Covid, we have managed to get many of our social activities back up and running as face-to-face events. However, because of Covid we have also learned that other methods of engaging people can be successful. We hope to continue and expand our work with on-line and telephone conferencing groups, particularly over the winter months when visually impaired people may not want to be out and about quite so much. So, the new post holder will host some group sessions remotely and look at ways to promote this style of work.

What next?

If you're still reading, and are still in interested, then have a look at the full job description and person specification and then complete the application form and get it back to us by the closing date. We would love to hear from you.

If you have any questions that you need answering before you apply, feel free to drop us a line:

Heather.davidson@sightsupportderbyshire.org.uk

Or telephone Rachel Graham on 01332 292262

Kind regards

Sight Support Derbyshire

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