

Position Description



Position details

Position Title:	Social Worker
Purpose	You will work within a cohesive high-performing Health Justice Partnership, utilising your excellent psycho-social skills and experience, to ensure First Step Legal (FSL) provides a high standard of assistance to vulnerable and marginalised individuals who experience mental health, addiction and family violence concerns. You will be embedded in a legal service that is focused on access to justice and supports access to therapeutic intervention that improve the health and wellbeing of its clients.
Classification:	Salary Negotiable, subject to skills and experience SCHADS award
Reports to:	Practice Manager
Location:	St Kilda + outreach locations.
Employment Status:	1-year fixed term contract, with continuation subject to further project funding
Hours:	Flexible Part-time 0.6 FTE (22.8 hrs per/week) subject to negotiation
Probationary period:	A six month probationary period applies.

The Organisation

FSL is a unique Community Legal Centre providing pro bono legal advice, casework and representation to marginalised members of our community.

First Step Legal (FSL) operates as a Health Justice Partnership (HJP) within First Step, a not-for-profit mental health and addiction clinic in St Kilda. In recent years, FSL's services have expanded significantly to incorporate health justice partnerships with four additional organisations: Windana's residential drug treatment program; Alfred Health's community mental health outpatient clinic; Better Health Network's Family Violence Program and Launch Housing's transitional program for women.

FSL practices predominantly in relation to criminal law, family violence and related family law matters. Assistance is also provided with infringement, debt, VOCAT and other matters on an ad hoc basis. FSL currently comprises a small team of a Principal Lawyer, a Practice Manager, two lawyers, a legal case manager, a legal administrator and several volunteer paralegals and lawyers.

FSL's vision is to increase *Access to Justice* for clients struggling with mental health and addiction issues to enable them to access supports to rebuild and improve their lives and by achieving legal and court outcomes supportive of their continued recovery and rehabilitation in the community. FSL also works to champion HJPs and therapeutic, compassionate legal practice via law reform and advocacy opportunities.

FSL aims to embody a methodology of practice which values:

- Delivering excellence in the provision of our legal services to clients within a framework of compassionate legal practice
- Ensuring clients are well-informed about the process and conduct of their legal matters
- Assisting clients who are genuinely engaged or wanting to be engaged in treatment, recovery and therapeutic interventions that will support their ongoing wellbeing
- Giving clients agency in decisions regarding their treatment that best support them and their needs
- Working hard to achieve legal resolutions that will support ongoing recovery and rehabilitation.

The Role in Context

This role embeds a social worker in FSL’s practice. Receiving referrals from FSL lawyers, the role enables FSL to directly support clients with legal issues to overcome health, personal, physical and mental conditions to rebuild and restore their lives. The social worker provides a range of service types including information and referral, one off support, crisis intervention, short term targeted interventions and ongoing case management.

Key Responsibilities

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<p><u>Intake , Legal Information, Referral and Advocacy</u></p> <p>Participate in the FSL’s triage of referred HJP clients to –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine preliminary non-legal needs of referred clients. • Liaise with the referrer to gather relevant background information to support effective intake decisions. • Provide appropriate secondary consultation to FSL Lawyers. • Undertake advocacy and liaison on behalf of clients with a range of relevant health, community, education and legal services to enable access to and use of those services. • Contribute to identifying systemic issues affecting the delivery of services and contribute to informing relevant policy.
<p><u>Assessment, Counselling and Case Management</u></p> <p>Work with individual clients on a <u>short to medium term</u> basis to -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine individual client requirements for addiction and psycho-social support and facilitated referral to appropriate support services. • Conduct risk assessments to ensure priority and immediate interventions are taken. • Provide high quality incidental counselling and brief intervention counselling to HJP clients utilising a range of therapeutic approaches. • Assist clients to identify and work towards their goals, including supporting them to remain engaged with current HJP supports or engage with other mainstream services. • Review, revise and evaluate case plans against goals established with client.

Client Information & Reporting

- Accurately document and record all social work case notes separately within the client management system, in line with professional requirements.
- Maintain timely and accurate client records, meeting all requirements according to organisational policy.
- Prepare documentation and reports for relevant parties.

Organisational Obligations

- Attend and participate in all activities which meet FSL's organisational and professional development requirements. These include staff, team and agency meetings, professional development sessions, supervision and debriefing.
- Undertake a range of project or other duties required to support the effective delivery of services to clients.

Health & Safety

- Actively contribute to health and safety at FSL by being aware of safety policies and procedures and consciously applying these every day to ensure the health and safety of our workplace including additional requirements to maintain a COVID-safe workplace.

Personal Qualities

- Values-system aligned with FSL, including a genuine interest in working with vulnerable clients in promoting well-being.
- Ability to work autonomously and collaboratively as a member of a multidisciplinary team.
- Role modelling open-mindedness, respect and inclusiveness.
- Ability to manage competing priorities.
- Interest in and ability to share knowledge and expertise with colleagues in an inclusive way.
- Commitment to human rights and social justice.
- Flexible and adaptable approach to meeting goals.

Selection Criteria

Qualifications and Experience:

Mandatory

Relevant tertiary qualifications in social work or a related discipline.

Highly Desirable

- Experience in Drug and Alcohol, Family Violence and/or Mental Health service settings.

- Experience in comprehensive psycho-social assessments, risk assessments and case management processes.
- Experience in collaborative service design as part of a multi-disciplinary team, ideally in an HJP context.
- Experience with assessment, counselling, and advocacy of vulnerable clients regarding a range of issues related to addiction, mental health, family violence, welfare, and legal matters.

Skills and Knowledge

- Knowledge of mental health and addiction recovery and rehabilitation.
- Understanding of complex family violence dynamics.
- Knowledge of a range of suitable interventions, using a systems-based framework.
- Understanding of health and other service systems and how they operate in Victoria.
- High level interpersonal, communication, problem solving and analytical skills.
- Computer literacy skills in direct data entry for client information and word processing.

Conditions of employment

- This position will require some travel between sites and therefore the successful applicant must hold a current drivers licence.
- The right to live and work in Australia.

Approval and Acknowledgement

Date PD last reviewed: September

PD Approved by: FSL Managing Lawyer

Date of approval:

