

Job Description: Blesma, The Limbless Veterans

Job title: Blesma Area Support Officer
Reports to: Director of Membership Services
Location: Home Based in Area (East)
Last updated: August 2017

Blesma, The Limbless Veterans

Blesma exists to assist limbless Veterans to lead independent and fulfilling lives. Our vision is that limbless Veterans are not failed, forgotten or left to fend for themselves.

We realise this ambition through:

- Individual welfare programmes in local communities across the UK
- Advocating at all levels on behalf of our Members
- Offering residential and convalescence care for our most disabled and infirm
- Delivering an annual programme of amputee-supporting-amputee activities with one Member helping another. Our programme of ambitious, challenging and enjoyable activities are a cornerstone of wellbeing for many Members.

Job purpose

To support Blesma Members in the designated Area of responsibility by providing a welfare visiting service.

The Area comprises Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Lincolnshire (PE postcodes), Norfolk and Suffolk.

Main accountabilities of the post

1. Assist Members to obtain all the assistance to which they may be entitled from statutory sources, such as Benefits and Allowances from the DWP and Veterans UK and care services from the NHS and Local Authorities.
2. Promote the mobility and independence of Members through the provision of disability and mobility aids either through statutory sources or from Blesma or other charitable sources.
3. Support Members in their dealings with the NHS' Limb Service with a view to ensuring they receive a satisfactory and appropriate level of support.
4. Refer Members to other specialist charities and organisations when appropriate.
5. Assist Members in financial distress and whose need is not provided for by the State by considering grants from Blesma or other charitable sources and making the appropriate recommendations.
6. Support Blesma activity in their Area through building a community profile, representing Blesma at events, engaging volunteers and supporting fundraising activities.

Work context

Home based within area of responsibility with a requirement to visit Members throughout the area and to attend meetings at Blesma Chadwell Heath and at other locations. BSOs spend a considerable amount of time 'on the road' and there will be occasional overnight stays away from home. Consequently there will be times when there may be the need to work outside of a standard working week. BSOs also deliver and collect mobility aids to/from Members and Widows.

Autonomy and decision making

1. The post holder has overall accountability and responsibility for representing the interests of Blesma Members in their Area.
2. The post holder is accountable to the Director of Membership Services (DOMS) for decisions affecting the charity regarding provision of this support.

Communications

Internal

1. Blesma Members.
2. Blesma Support Officer (Prosthetics) regarding issues of provision of prosthetics to Members in their Areas.
3. Blesma Activities Manager regarding participation in activities and events by Members in their Areas.
4. Head of Finance regarding budgetary matters.
5. Media & Comms Officer regarding publicity matters.
6. Associate Director of Fundraising regarding fundraising matters.
7. Membership Services Department meetings as required.

External

1. Health Services
2. Local Authorities
3. Veterans UK
4. DWP
5. Other Service charities involved in supporting Blesma Members.

Main areas of difficulty

1. Managing the expectations of Blesma Members with regards to the provision of support in health and social care from statutory providers.
2. Managing the expectations of Blesma Members with regards to timescales for appointments and provision of prosthetics within the Health Services.
3. Managing the expectations of Blesma Members with regards to the timescales and levels of financial support provided by Blesma and other Service charities and the requirement for scrutiny of personal financial circumstances.
4. Balancing the requirement to meet Members' needs against meeting the requirement to maintain a network at local level with Blesma's stakeholders, partners and supporters

Additional information

This Job Description is a guide to the work the job holder is required to undertake. It may be changed from time to time to meet changing circumstances. It does not form part of the Contract of Employment.

Person Specification – Blesma The Limbless Veterans

	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrable knowledge of the needs of Blesma Members of all ages • Demonstrable knowledge of State Benefits and Allowances (DWP and Veterans UK) • Demonstrable knowledge of the services provided by statutory and voluntary health and social care providers • An understanding of the relationship between stakeholders supporting Blesma Members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good understanding of the challenges facing amputees in achieving and maintaining independence • Demonstrable knowledge of prosthetic provision within the Health Services • Demonstrable knowledge of the Defence Recovery Capability and Blesma's role within it
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High level of written and verbal communication skills • Excellent organisational, time management and problem solving skills • Ability to work under pressure and to deadlines • Excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to build positive relationships at all levels • Ability to represent Blesma • Ability to effectively manage resources • A confident presentational and public speaking style • Computer literate including MS Word, Outlook, Excel and Database systems • Competent in the use of social networking communication tools 	
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educated to at least GCSE level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate • Recognised welfare qualification
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering support to WIS Military Personnel and their families 	
Personal qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging and proactive • Confident and friendly • Approachable • Compassionate • Calm under pressure • Analytical decision maker • Tactful and diplomatic • Flexible • Organised • Decisive • Discreet • Emotional Intelligence 	

TASKS

- To provide a support service to Members by visiting individual Members at least once a year or as required
- To provide advice in person, by email, telephone or letter to Members in the Area
- To refer Members to and coordinate input from other agencies where appropriate (for specialist care for example)
- To remain up to date with regulations governing eligibility for DWP and Veterans UK Benefits and Allowances in order to assist Members in submitting claims
- To assist Members in obtaining all the assistance to which they may be entitled from statutory sources, such as Benefits and Allowances from the DWP and Veterans UK and care services from the Health Services and Local Authorities
- To represent Members at DWP Tribunals and War Pension/AFCS Appeals as required
- To have a good working knowledge of the range of mobility and disability aids available which could improve the mobility and independence of Blesma Members in order to recommend which aids are most appropriate, obtaining reports from an Occupational Therapist when appropriate
- To promote the independence and mobility of Members through the provision of disability and mobility aids either through statutory sources or from Blesma or other charitable sources
- To assist Members in financial distress and whose need is not provided for by the State by considering grants from Blesma or other charitable sources and making the appropriate recommendations and completing the appropriate paperwork
- To manage volunteer Welfare Reps who carry out friendship visits
- To develop a good understanding of the process involved in achieving a satisfactory prosthetic limb, including current availability and suitability. A knowledge of limb interfaces such as pin lock, suction etc will be invaluable in expectation management in difficult cases where, for example, the stump is badly scarred or too short
- To identify Members who are eligible for prosthetic upgrade following the Murrison Report and encourage them to contact their Limb Centres, offering support as necessary
- To liaise with Limb Centres in the Area, not only to ensure the pathway to the prosthetic upgrade is as smooth as possible but also to support those whose amputations are not attributable to their military service receive the best possible support
- To represent Blesma at local level on networks and committees as directed by DOMS, building on Blesma's existing good relationship with the Health and Social Care Providers in the Area
- To work with other charities such as Blind Veterans UK which supports Blesma Members
- To visit Personnel Recovery Centres and Units in order to support Blesma Members within the Defence Recovery Capability
- To contribute to Blesma metrics by maintaining an up to date record of all contact with Members in the Area, updating the Membership Database as appropriate
- To provide feedback and comment on Papers, Government Consultations and other matters as requested by DOMS
- To contribute to Blesma publications such as the magazine and Members' Bulletin as requested by DOMS
- To attend meetings such as the Blesma Weekend and AGM, Area and Branch meetings when requested to do so
- To improve Blesma's connectivity with Members by organising and attending social events

- To improve Blesma's connectivity with supporters by representing Blesma at events, engaging volunteers and supporting fundraising activities
- To attend Induction and Continuation training as required
- To maintain the company vehicle in accordance with the Blesma policy
- To use the Blesma company credit card in accordance with the Blesma policy, including retaining receipts and submitting monthly to DOMS
- To use the Blesma corporate Premier Inn card in accordance with the Blesma policy, including retaining receipts and submitting monthly to DOMS
- To submit monthly Expenses Claims to DOMS with supporting receipts, detailing all travel and expenditure