**Information for candidates**

**Helpline Advisor**

About Beat

Beat is the UK’s eating disorder charity. We exist to end the pain and suffering and loss of life among people affected by eating disorders:

* We help them to understand their illness, support them to get treatment and help them towards recovery.
* We help families and carers know how best to support a loved one into, through and out of treatment.
* And we train teachers, health professionals and other key individuals to spot when someone is showing the early signs of an eating disorder, how to talk to them and how to encourage them to seek and get treatment as quickly as possible.

We use our experience to campaign for better government policy and health service practice that addresses the challenges faced by people with eating disorders, always guided by the experience of our beneficiaries and the expertise of clinicians. We work both nationally and locally, focussing on three priority areas: early intervention, family empowerment and prevention & cure.

We have a five-year strategy for 2019-24 with the goals of:

* Reducing the delay between someone falling ill and starting treatment from over 3 years at present to less than 12 months, and shortening current waiting times from months to days;
* Ensuring that all family members and carers are fully informed about their loved one’s illness and empowered to support their recovery;
* Achieving an increase in the funding and priority given to eating disorders research so that there is a chance of effective cures and prevention strategies being discovered.

Beat has been working for people with eating disorders for over 40 years. Anorexic Aid was formed in Manchester in 1974 while Anorexic Family Aid was created in Norwich in 1976. The two organisations merged in 1989 to become the Eating Disorders Association. We have been known as Beat since 2007. Our registered name changed to Beat (formerly Beat Eating Disorders Association) in October 2018.

About Eating Disorders

Eating disorders destroy lives. They steal childhoods, devastate relationships and pull families apart. And they can be fatal. They are serious mental illnesses and include anorexia nervosa, bulimia nervosa and binge eating disorder. There are 1.25 million people in the UK with an eating disorder at any one time, with around 130,000 falling ill each year. While more women are affected than men, and eating disorders commonly emerge during adolescence, they affect people of all ages and genders.

On average, it takes someone over 3 years from falling ill before they seek treatment, followed by more than 6 years of waiting, therapy, semi-recovery and relapse before they get better. PwC estimates that this costs the NHS £4 billion per year. However, it doesn’t have to be this way: if someone starts treatment early, they have a good chance of making a rapid and sustained recovery.

Parents, siblings and other family members are also seriously affected. They should be enabled to help their loved one into a quick and sustained recovery but they can only play their role if they have full understanding, are fully supported and engaged by the health services, and if their own wellbeing is protected. However, they commonly report not being given useful information when a loved one is diagnosed, so they can’t stop things getting worse while waiting for treatment to start and they don’t know how to support their treatment regime. Families and carers also find that supporting the sufferer has a negative impact on their own physical and mental health.

Working together

Our statement of values (see page 1 of the job description) is a description of how we work at Beat when we are working together at our best. As the statement concludes, when we get this right we will achieve brilliant results, making Beat a truly inspiring and enjoyable place to work.

Central to those values is the conviction that happy people are more likely to perform at their best, and that people performing at their best are more likely to be happy in their work.

Everyone at Beat therefore has a responsibility for modelling our values and doing whatever is needed to make sure we are working together at our best for as much of the time as possible.

Managers in particular are expected to create an environment of cohesive and focussed teamwork built on trust, understanding and a shared determination to achieve great results. They put their people first and give them the support and freedom they need to innovate and succeed. The definition of a good manager at Beat is someone who is leading a happy and high performing team.

So if you are successful in your application, you can expect regular meetings with your line manager to share ideas, ensure wellbeing, support and review your progress. They will encourage your learning and development, enabling you to spend on average at least 10% of your time on L&D using a wide range of options. And they will ensure you have all the information and connections you need to do your job to the best of your abilities.

Beat’s shorter working week

Following a pilot period in 2020-21, Beat has permanently adopted two significant changes to our working practices:

1. Reducing the full-time working week to 34 hours over 4 consecutive days without reducing pay.

2. Allowing significantly greater flexibility to work from home

These changes were introduced to help protect staff wellbeing during the Covid pandemic, but were so valued by our colleagues – and resulted in higher productivity despite the reduced hours - that we have made them permanent.

Therefore most full-time staff at Beat work 8.5 hours per day Monday-Thursday, with considerable flexibility available providing that necessary diary commitments can be met. Part-time working patterns are agreed on an individual basis but with the 4 day week as a starting point.

No internal meetings are arranged on Fridays. The Norwich and London offices are closed (although still available for use as needed and in the case of personal preference). Full time staff are nevertheless required to be available to work on Fridays when required for meetings unavoidably organised by other organisations, with time to be taken off in lieu.

A slightly different version applies for the Helpline but the principle remains that full-time means working for 34 hours across 4 consecutive days (adjusted to allow for the required fortnightly weekend shift). The Warrington office remains open 365 days a year.

Staff who are unable to work 8.5 hours in a day (e.g. because of caring responsibilities) can work some of their hours on Friday and requests for this working pattern would only be refused for very specific business needs or wellbeing requirements. Any full time staff choosing this option would nevertheless need to be available for engagements considered as ‘business need’ on Monday to Thursday, with notice given and TOIL to be taken as necessary.

Beat’s offices and home working

Beat main office (and business address) is in Norwich. We also have a Helpline and Support Services Centre in Warrington and a small office in London (Farringdon), although the majority of our colleagues are now based across the UK, working from home.

For most jobs at Beat, the default location is either home working or a split between the staff member’s home and one of the Beat offices, with a high degree of flexibility and personal preference applied.

Staff who are allocated to a Beat office must be present at that office when a business need arises and can choose to work there whenever they like, but they also have the option of being largely home-based.

This post is therefore being recruited on the assumption that the postholder will be at least partly home-based. A laptop and relevant other necessary equipment will be provided. If choosing to work from home, the postholder must ensure an internet connection of sufficient speed to attend meetings by video conferencing without disruption.

The postholder will be required to attend meetings in one or more of the Beat offices when there is a business need. Expenses will be paid for any required travel to a different Beat office or other location.

Resilience Interview

If selected for interview alongside the panel interview/s you will also undertake a resilience interview to ensure you have the ability and coping mechanisms to thrive at Beat . We are a highly ambitious fast paced organisation, we know a lot of our staff have a connection to eating disorders and/or other mental health conditions (through lived experience as a sufferer or carer) and we want all staff regardless of lived experience to be competent and have the necessary resilience to protect their own wellbeing and to support our beneficiaries who may be vulnerable.

Helpline Rota

Beat’s services are open 365 days of the year. Due to recently receiving additional funding, the working hours of this role are between 9am and midnight weekdays and 4pm and midnight weekends. This will be worked on a rota to include a variety of early and late shifts. Please state your availability on your application.

The ability to work flexibly is required. Although this role is advertised as 25 hours per week, there is the ability to work some additional hours.

Full training and support will be offered at the start of employment. Monthly supervision and training will then follow from an experienced eating disorder clinician.

About the post

Beat is seeking Helpline Advisors to support the team in responding to the increasing demand from those affected by eating disorders. Advisors will work closely alongside the Helpline team who are currently all based remotely (however there may be times throughout the year where the team will get together for team meetings or training). The team includes Senior Helpline Advisors, Deputy Helpline Managers, Head of Helpline, Digital Helpline Volunteers and a Deputy Director of Services.

The role will be busy and varied and each shift will involve responding to contacts across Beat’s different support channels including telephone, webchat and facilitating daily online peer support groups. Volunteers are continuously being recruited to support Beat’s Services team and this role will involve mentoring, supporting and debriefing digital volunteer, Echo and SharED volunteers. Please see here to learn more about Beat’s support services- <https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/support-services>

How to apply

Full information about this role including application forms are at [www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/vacancies](http://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/vacancies). For more information about this role, please contact the Talent Acquisition team via email: [talent@beateatingdisorders.org.uk](mailto:talent@beateatingdisorders.org.uk).

Completed application forms should be uploaded on the page via our website by Monday 18th July at 9am. All applications must be on the Beat application form. Please note, we will not accept CVs as a form of application.

Shortlisted candidates will be informed by close of business on 20th July. If you have not heard from us by this date, please assume that your application has not been successful. (**Please submit your application as soon as possible as we reserve the right to change the closing date of our vacancies.)**

Interviews will take place on 3rd/4th August in London.