



Circles Coordinator, Dorset Briefing Note for Applicants May 21

What is Circles South West?

Circles South West is an independent regional charity established in 2010. Our vision is 'No More Victims' of sexual abuse; we work to prevent further sexual abuse by reducing the risk of sexual re-offending. Working in close partnership with public protection agencies, we provide Circles of Support and Accountability for people convicted of sexual offences, facilitating their safe integration as law-abiding members of local communities and preventing further sexual harm.

There are over 60,000 people living in UK communities who have been convicted of sexual offences; around 10% live in the south west region. We deliver services across the region in Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Avon, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire.

Our work is delivered in accordance with the Ministry of Justice approved Code of Practice for Circles of Support and Accountability and is audited regularly against national standards.

What are Circles of Support and Accountability?

A 'Circle of Support and Accountability' represents a community engaging with, not rejecting, someone trying to live without harming; putting local volunteers at the heart of a solution to prevent further sexual abuse being committed by known perpetrators. Our focus is on building stronger and safer communities by overcoming the isolation experienced by individuals who have sexually harmed, encouraging their safe inclusion, connection and integration within those communities.

Each Circle of Support and Accountability (Circle) consists of between four and six specially recruited and trained volunteers who support an individual convicted of sexual offences (core member) for between 12-18 months. Core members are generally referred by probation or police. If the core member is assessed as motivated to create no more victims, poses a risk to the community, is isolated and is prepared to accept close liaison between volunteers and the statutory agencies, then they will be considered suitable for a Circle. Volunteers are informed of the core member's past so they can assist the core member to better manage their thought patterns and behaviour, which could otherwise result in them re-offending. The volunteers are managed by an experienced criminal justice coordinator.

The Circle holds the core member to account for his or her behaviour and is alert for indications that the risk of reoffending might be increasing. In this way public safety is enhanced, the Circle acting as a safety mechanism for both the core member and the community. Circles work towards there being 'No More Victims' by reducing emotional loneliness; modelling appropriate adult relationships; monitoring core member behaviour and holding the core member to account.

What do we do in Dorset?

With the support of the Police and Crime Commissioner and The National Lottery Fund, we provide Community Circles (12 month duration) and Prison Circles (12-18 months). The latter start 3-6 months pre-release, supporting the core member 'through-the-gate' and on into the community for another 12 months post-release.

What is the remit of the Circles Coordinator?

Working closely with our existing Circles Coordinator in Dorset, you will establish and coordinate Circles of Support and Accountability for men convicted of sexual offences who are living in Dorset communities.

Circles will be delivered in accordance with national standards (Ministry of Justice approved Code of Practice for Circles of Support & Accountability) and Circles South West's Practice Standards.

The Circles Coordinator's main roles and responsibilities are set out in the attached Job Description.

What is the delivery model?

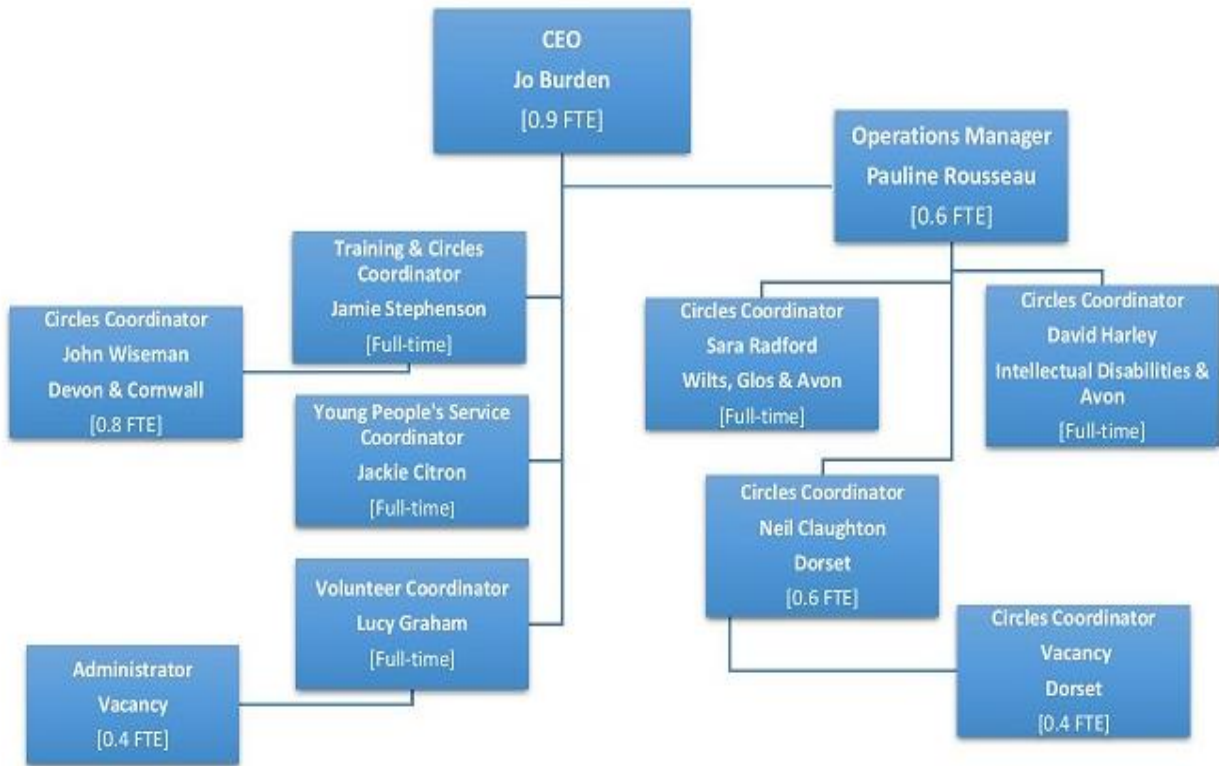
Small groups of trained and carefully selected volunteers from the local community meet regularly with the core member, providing a unique and supportive social network to counteract those circumstances and traits which are known to increase the risk of reoffending and sexually harmful behaviours.

There are weekly meetings between the core member and volunteers, taking place at pre-agreed and convenient times in safe local community venues. In general, community Circles continue for 12 months, and Prison/TTG Circles run for up to 18 months.

How does this new position fit within the existing Team?

With the appointment to this new post, our staff team will comprise 11 employed staff (6 part-time). We have a very experienced team, all bar one of whom are social work and/or probation or police qualified. Team members have an impressive track record of working with people who have sexually offended and with harmful sexual behaviour. All staff have extensive experience of working with and supporting volunteers. The staff team is ably supported by around 200 community volunteers across the region, 9 of whom make up our Board of Trustees. Operational staff are county-based meaning that with a very small team we are able to coordinate Circles across a vast regional area.

Circles South West Organisation Chart May 2021



Our volunteers are a diverse group of community members who offer an impressive skill set. Whilst we welcome relevant professional experience, we primarily seek well-balanced people with a mature outlook and clear personal boundaries who can represent their communities. We have a robust recruitment, training and assessment process which includes an application form, pre and post training interviews, mandatory two-day core training plus ongoing development training, two references and an Enhanced DBS check.

Further information about our work is on our website www.circles-southwest.org.uk



COMMENDED 2019 Prisoner Re-Integration

