

Advice Service: Housing & Welfare Benefit Advisor

Advice, support and housing
for a better tomorrow

Job Description

Post title	Housing & Welfare Benefit Advisor
Hours of work	37.5 per week
Salary	£27,000
Holiday entitlement	25 days annual leave plus statutory bank holidays
Based at	Various sites across North Northamptonshire
Accountable to	Advice Services Project Lead
Direct reports	None

Purpose of the Job

Deliver a professional, impartial, pragmatic and outcome focussed advice service to beneficiaries whilst working to Accommodation Concern Quality Standards, Policies and Procedures and Regulatory Requirements.

To provide advice/casework on all areas of housing law, having regard for relevant legislation, guidance and case law - meeting the requirements of the Advice Service Alliance Standard for advice case work relating to Welfare Benefits, Debt and Housing.

To provide advice/case work on Welfare benefit issues to ensure income maximisation is achieved for beneficiaries. Signposting to other local specialist agencies for expertise when required

Main Responsibilities

Centre:

1. Provision of independent housing, homelessness, (benefit, debt where linked) advice and case work.
2. Provision of advice on housing options in order to prevent homelessness
3. To provide advice to clients wanting to use Keyways, the Council's choice based allocations scheme.
4. Conducting initial client interviews within diverse operational sites.
5. General level advocacy and negotiation on behalf of client to other agencies/ authorities.
6. Telephone advice as appropriate.

7. Agree client needs and identify desired outcomes/actions.
8. Initial contact/referral with other agencies to help coordinate services.
9. Statutory challenge under Sections 202 of the Housing Act 1996 Part 7 (as amended) and other challenge /advocacy means regarding sections 183, 188, of the Act.
10. Housing Act 1996 Part 6 advocacy and statutory challenge.
11. Supporting where appropriate court representation and liaising with relevant professionals on the client's behalf.
12. Income maximisation through money, debt and welfare casework and representation (where linked to a housing case)
13. To maintain the accurate recording of client contacts and feedback within statistical software packages.
14. Writing/setting case outcome inline with S.M.A.R.T Principles.
15. Work in accordance with the AQS operating model for casework management
16. Meet management performance targets.
17. To support your Line Manager to ensure that the Advice Centre remains compliant and meets all regulatory requirements eg CMA Debt centre & FCA
18. To work and liaise with other Advisors, to share information and to support best practice.
19. To refer clients to other colleagues /services to assist in meeting any identified needs and liaise and negotiate with relevant agencies.
20. Maintain up to date knowledge around homelessness/housing system, case law and the effects of any reform and forthcoming changes.
21. Work collaboratively with other colleagues in the team and wider organisation to enhance the services provided.
22. Provide cover for the other Advice Team members when required (may include Housing, Debt and/or Welfare Benefits Advice)

Other:

23. To prepare statistical reports, written reports, case studies and any other feedback relevant to the service.
24. To meet defined objectives and targets relating to service delivery and specific project work.
25. To undertake a range of consultation and evaluation processes with clients as required.
26. To maintain and develop partnerships with a range of key stakeholders.
27. To undertake all relevant administrative tasks as necessary.
28. To adhere to the charity's policy and procedures, including safeguarding reporting, interventions and disclosures.
29. To attend meetings and training as necessary.
30. Undertake any other reasonable tasks as requested by your Manager.

Annual objectives will be set for this role which will be used to monitor and evaluate performance within the appraisal system.

This job description may be subject to review in light of the developing organisation and in consultation with the post holder

Person Specification

Education & Qualifications

Essential

Relevant qualification in Housing: (e.g. HND/NVQ Level) and/or Shelter A and B

Desirable

Relevant qualification/course in Benefit advice

Relevant qualification/course in Debt advice

Certificated Course or qualification in Advice

Experience

Essential

Substantial experience within one or more of the following:

- housing or homelessness services
- advice services
- anti-poverty services

Significant experience and skills in the delivery of diverse activities and support services for hard to reach and vulnerable adults

Evidence of a successful track record of achievements against targets

Experience of administration and recording procedures with the ability to audit case notes and gather required data to support full evaluation

Significant experience of working to improve the lives of disadvantaged members of the community

Experience of quality assurance systems and action planning

Experience of risk assessment processes

Desirable

Third sector experience

Employment services experience

Community work experience

Experience of working with volunteer personnel

Knowledge and Understanding

Essential

Knowledge and abilities in using Microsoft Office packages

Knowledge of the issues which affect the lives of disadvantaged adults.

Knowledge and experience of challenging homelessness, unemployment and poverty

Extensive knowledge of the homelessness legislation and case law with a track record of successful challenges

Desirable

Knowledge and ability to use Advice Pro database

Aptitudes and skills

Essential

Ability to understand diverse data, interpret and formulate into reports to help inform decision making

Ability to proactively contribute towards positive outcomes for disadvantaged communities including;

- increased confidence;
- protective behaviours,
- improved wellbeing;
- increased transferable life skills and knowledge;
- increased community volunteering

Ability to engage, build and develop relationships with adults who are; living in poverty; disadvantaged; homeless; and or ex-offenders

Knowledge and skills in using www, social networking platforms and apps

Ability to meet defined targets and outcomes

Ability to promote empowerment with adults at all time and encourage clients to accept their responsibilities

Ability to work independently and within a team

Ability to work professionally, innovatively and diligently

Have attention to detail with high standards to work

Ability to produce and present diverse reports to various audiences

Evidence of a successful track record of achievement against targets

Personal Attributes

Essential

Professional and value led with integrity, inclusivity and respect for diversity

Excellent organisational and time management skills

Possess self-discipline

Exhibit professionalism and integrity

Ability to work flexible hours including evenings and weekends (as required by the service)

Proven track record of negotiation and problem solving

Commitment to equal opportunities and anti-oppressive practice

Excellent communication skills

To show leadership qualities; skills of a strong negotiator; ability to advocate and be diplomatic

Professional curiosity with the ability and willingness to learn and apply learning in support delivery

Ability to challenge the status quo and influence others to change culture

Ability to work across the area to meet service delivery demands when required

To have a sense of humour, be personable and accept that things won't go as you think