

Advice Service: Welfare Benefits Advisor

Advice, support and housing
for a better tomorrow

Job Description

Post title	Welfare Benefits Advisor
Hours of work	37.5 per week
Salary	£22,500
Holiday entitlement	23 days annual leave plus statutory bank holidays
Based at	Various Sites Across North Northamptonshire
Accountable to	Advice Service 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 Welfare Benefits advice and/or casework having regard for relevant legislation, meeting the requirements of the Advice Service Alliance Standard for advice case work relating to Debt, Welfare Benefits, 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. To provide a Welfare benefits advice and casework service which conforms to the Advice Quality Standard & FCA.
2. Advise, assist and support clients who could benefit from welfare benefit advice in accordance with agreed procedures, policies and good practice.
3. Provide support and advice with form completion and/or challenging decisions (mandatory reconsideration)
4. Provide representation for clients by preparing and presenting cases at benefit appeal hearings.
5. Advise and assist with applications to increase income from other sources, including charitable trusts, local authority discretionary housing payment schemes, and utility companies.

6. Agree client needs and identify desired outcomes/actions.
 7. Conducting initial client interviews within diverse operational sites.
 8. Provision of advice and case work. offered as part of our CMA Debt Centre, which may include money management, budgeting and debt solutions
 9. General level advocacy and negotiation on behalf of client to other agencies/ authorities.
 10. Telephone advice as appropriate.
 11. Initial contact/referral with other agencies to help coordinate services.
 12. To maintain the accurate recording of client contacts and feedback within statistical software packages.
 13. Writing/setting case outcome inline with S.M.A.R.T Principles.
 14. Work in accordance with the AQS operating model for casework management
 15. Meet management performance targets.
 16. To support your Line Manager to ensure that the Advice Centre remains compliant and meets all regulatory requirements eg CMA Debt centre & FCA
 17. To work and liaise with other Advisors, to share information and to support best practice.
 18. To refer clients to other colleagues /services to assist in meeting any identified needs and liaise and negotiate with relevant agencies.
 19. Maintain up to date knowledge of the benefit system, case law and the effects of the welfare reform and forthcoming changes.
 20. Work collaboratively with other colleagues in the team and wider organisation to enhance the services provided.
 21. Provide cover for the other Advice Team members when required (may include Housing, Debt and/or Welfare Benefits Advice)
- Other:**
22. To prepare statistical reports, written reports, case studies and any other feedback relevant to the service.

23. To meet defined objectives and targets relating to service delivery and specific project work.
24. To undertake a range of consultation and evaluation processes with clients as required.
25. To maintain and develop partnerships with a range of key stakeholders.
26. To undertake all relevant administrative tasks as necessary.
27. To adhere to the charity's policy and procedures, including safeguarding reporting, interventions and disclosures.
28. To attend meetings and training as necessary.
29. 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

Full training and induction will be provided to the successful candidate.

Education & Qualifications

Essential

GCSE level or equivalent in English & Maths

Relevant computer experience/IT qualification/ Level 2 IT qualification or equivalent experience (ECDL)

Desirable

Certificated Course or qualification in:

- Advice
- Debt
- Housing
- Benefits

Experience

Essential

Experience of working with individuals facing poverty and/or with dysfunctional lifestyles

Experience of working effectively in partnership with a range of stakeholders

Experience of giving advice/guidance

Experience of displaying patience and the ability to remain calm in stressful situations

Experience of having to be thorough and pay attention to detail

Desirable

Third sector experience

Experience of the benefit system, making claims & challenges

Knowledge of undertaking benefit checks and ways of maximising income

Experience within one or more of the following:

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

Knowledge and Understanding

Essential

Knowledge and abilities in using Microsoft Office packages

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

Desirable

Knowledge and ability to use Advice Pro database

Knowledge of money advice issues,

Knowledge of local networks and resources in Kettering/North Northants

A knowledge of AQS and how it impacts the delivery of Advice.

Aptitudes and skills

Essential

- Ability to understand complex information and convey it in a way that is understandable to clients
- Ability to engage, build and develop relationships with adults who are; living in poverty; disadvantaged; homeless; and or ex-offenders
- Ability to prioritise tasks, identify and work to deadlines and manage time effectively
- Ability to promote empowerment with adults at all time and encourage clients to accept their responsibilities
- Ability to work independently and within a team whilst working professionally, innovatively and diligently
- Evidence of a successful track record of achievement against targets
- Commitment and understanding of confidentiality
- Have attention to detail with high standards to work

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