

Person Specification and Job Description

Name of Role	Benefits Advisor
Responsible to	Advice Manager
Post Description	<p>To deliver a benefits advice service in Hounslow borough, 21 hours. There is potential for full time with 15 hours per week in the Richmond borough. Full time hours are 36 hours per week.</p> <p>You will work with our experienced benefits advisors in our busy benefits advice team.</p> <p>You will manage an active caseload providing a comprehensive advice and casework service to disabled people living Hounslow on all matters relating to Welfare Benefits. This will include advising clients on entitlements to Welfare Benefits in order to increase their income, assist and support in the application of relevant claims and to effectively challenge adverse decisions. Advice sessions will take place by face to face appointments at our offices, home visits and telephone.</p>

Experience & Knowledge	Skills & Abilities
<p><u>Essential</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experience of working face to face with clients to deliver advice or benefits advice 2. Experience of building effective relationships through which issues can be identified and resolved 3. A thorough understanding of social security and welfare benefits legislation and available benefits for disabled people 4. Experience of supporting people to fill in forms and meet deadlines 5. Understanding of the issues and barriers that disabled people face 6. Experience of writing and presenting reports and dealing effectively with correspondence. 7. Experience of successfully operating and negotiating with external & internal services and agencies to ensure optimum delivery of services 8. Understanding of confidentiality, data protection issues and safeguarding issues 9. Excellent working knowledge of MS word, outlook and other applications <p><u>Desirable</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experience of preparing people for appeal and tribunal 2. Understanding of the social model of disability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organised and can work to deadlines • Resilient and tenacious • Empathic approach • Time management and task prioritisation • Able to work independently as well as part of a team • Excellent written and verbal communication skills • Report writing skills • Networks and keeps others informed • Action orientated and can-do approach
Other requirements	
Enhanced CRB that permits working with vulnerable adults and children	

Main Tasks and Duties

1. Provide advice to disabled clients face-to-face, over the telephone or by letter or email. You work will also include home visits and outreach.
2. Ensure income maximisation through the take up of appropriate welfare benefits.
3. Provide detailed casework covering the full range of welfare benefits.
4. Act for the client where necessary by calculating, negotiating, drafting or writing letters and telephoning.
5. Negotiate with third parties as appropriate.
6. Prepare for the appropriate statutory bodies, appeals, tribunals and courts as appropriate.
7. Assist clients with other related problems where they are an integral part of their case and refer to other advisers or specialist agencies as appropriate.
8. Ensure that all work conforms to the Richmond AID Advice Manual and Advice Quality Standard.
9. Carry out case file reviews as required in the Richmond AID Advice Manual.
10. Keep informed of all new relevant legislation and changes in existing legislation and social policy.
11. Keep in touch with local issues, developments and changes in procedures of other agencies including the local authority.
12. Maintain case records for the purpose of continuity of casework, information retrieval, statistical monitoring and report preparation.
13. Keep accurate records of all clients seen and money awarded and maintain a database of client information and work completed.
14. Train volunteers or staff in welfare benefits issues
15. Publicise the service and ensure information is kept up to date on our website, information leaflets, newsletter and other channels of communication.
16. Work in partnership with other organisations
17. Ensure that the project is compliant with the Social Model of Disability
18. Comply with Richmond AID's policies and procedures
19. Attend training and development as identified by you and your manger
20. Any other work commensurate with the level of this post
21. You will need to travel within LBRuT and Hounslow as part of this post and occasionally may need to work outside of normal office hours