

Welfare Rights Team Leader and Caseworker Job description & Personal Specification

Reporting to: Advice Services Manager

Purpose of role:

- To lead, coordinate and develop the Welfare Rights team, working with both paid and volunteer advisers.
- To undertake casework on behalf of clients particularly those who require specialist advice regarding mandatory reconsiderations and appeals, helping them to prepare for appeals tribunals and to represent them on paper.
- To provide welfare rights specialist support to non-welfare benefits advisers working at CANS

About Citizens Advice North Somerset: We provide a range of advice services through digital means, by telephone and in person. We seek to empower our clients and support them to improve their confidence and capability on a wide range of issues.

We aim to improve the wellbeing and health of everyone living or working in North Somerset who needs our help and support, by providing accessible, effective and tailored information and advice that is free, independent, confidential and impartial.

We believe that our common humanity makes us equal in worth, dignity and rights. We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination.

Main duties and Responsibilities

Service Delivery

- To manage the day to day running of the Welfare Rights service, to ensure adequate staffing and resources, and support and supervise the Welfare Rights team; monitoring caseloads and providing appropriate level of support and supervision depending on their level of competence;
- Monitor the case records / telephone calls / emails of designated staff to meet quality standards and service level agreements;
- Analysis of the effectiveness of the service and to provide regular reporting to senior management and partner organisations.
- Coordinate Caseworker training and CPD, including development and delivery of training programmes and maintaining records.
- Ensure appropriate systems are developed and maintained for case recording, statistics, follow-up work and quality control;
- Keep technical knowledge up to date and provide technical support to designated staff;

- Assist the Management Team on compliance with Citizens Advice membership scheme, advice quality standards and audit requirements;

Staff Management

- Encourage good teamwork and create a positive working environment in which equality and diversity are well managed, dignity at work is upheld and staff can do their best;
- Participate in the recruitment and selection activities as delegated;
- Ensure the effective performance management and development of staff through regular supervision sessions, the appraisal process, learning and development, peer support and team meetings;

Advice Giving

- Interview clients using sensitive listening and questioning skills in order to allow clients to explain their problem(s) and empower them to set their own priorities.
- Research and explore options and implications so that clients can make informed decisions.
- Act for the client where necessary by calculating, negotiating, drafting or writing letters and telephoning.
- Negotiate with third parties such as statutory and non-statutory bodies as appropriate.
- Prepare and present cases to the appropriate statutory bodies, tribunals and courts as appropriate.
- Ensure that all work conforms to the organisation's office manual and the Advice Quality standard / Legal Aid Agency's Quality Mark / other funding requirements, as appropriate.
- Ensure that work reflects and supports the Citizens Advice service's equality and diversity strategy.
- Maintain detailed case records for the purpose of continuity of casework, information retrieval, statistical monitoring and report preparation.
- Mentor and participate in the training of our trainee advisers.
- Provide peer support to volunteer advisers during advice sessions either on the phone or face to face.
- Keep technical knowledge up to date
- Ensure all relevant policies and procedures are followed.

Other duties and responsibilities

- Keep up to date with legislation, policies and procedures and undertake appropriate training.
- Keep up to date with Citizens Advice aims, principles and procedures and ensure these are followed.
- Ensure that work reflects and supports the Citizens Advice service's equality and diversity strategy.
- Abide by health and safety guidelines and share responsibility for own health and safety and that of colleagues.

- Carry out any other tasks within the scope of the post to ensure the effective delivery and development of the service.

Training and development

- Complete required training to comply with requirement of the role and quality assurance processes.
- In conjunction with your line manager identify own training needs.

Research & Campaigns and monitoring

- Assist with Research & Campaigns work by providing information about clients' circumstances through the appropriate channel.
- Keep up to date with research and campaign issues and ensure research and campaigns is promoted and integrated in a way relevant to the role.
- Alert clients to research and campaign options.
- Participate in generalist advice related campaigns where appropriate.

Person specification		Essential	Desirable
1.	At least two years recent and ongoing experience of specialist welfare rights advice casework and the ability to meet AQS competence requirements for specialist casework supervision.	✓	
2.	Ability to develop, lead and contribute to a team of paid and volunteer staff, including the ability to prioritise own work and the work of others, meet deadlines, maintain standards and take decisions in the day to day running of a busy service area	✓	
3.	Proven ability to interview clients using sensitive listening and questioning skills to get to the root of issues and empower clients, whilst maintaining structure and control of meetings.	✓	
4.	In depth knowledge and recent experience of welfare benefits legislation.	✓	
5.	Ability to research, analyse and interpret complex information and produce and present clear reports verbally and in writing.	✓	
6.	Effective writing skills with particular emphasis on negotiating, representing and preparing reviews, reports and correspondence.	✓	
7.	Ordered approach to casework and an ability and willingness to follow and develop agreed procedures.	✓	
8.	Ability to use a variety of IT/digital systems and packages.	✓	
9.	Ability to act as a specialist on matters relating to welfare benefits to staff at CANS	✓	
10.	Ability to give and receive feedback objectively and sensitively and a willingness to challenge constructively.	✓	
11.	Ability to work with a variety of organisations and to earn and maintain the trust and respect of those people with whom the organisation deals	✓	
12.	Proven understanding of equality and diversity and its application to the provision of advice.	✓	
13.	Understanding of the issues affecting society and their implications for clients and service provision and a commitment to the organisations research & campaigns programme	✓	
14.	Understanding of and commitment to the aims and principles of Citizens Advice service and its equal opportunities policies.	✓	
15.	Commitment to continuing professional development	✓	

In accordance with Citizens Advice national policy we may require the successful candidate to be screened by the DBS. However, a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to your being able to take up the job.