Job Description

Job title	Welfare Benefits Officer
Directorate	Business Support
Division	FBI
Range	MPR 5
Reports to	Welfare Benefits & Community Support Operations Manager

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Main purpose of the job:

To provide a comprehensive welfare benefits advice and advocacy service with complex claims and community co-ordination

Support the liaison and enhancing the work of the voluntary sector and local welfare support landscape in line with the principles of the crisis and resilience fund

Liaise with stakeholders in a way that promotes the One Medway Council Plan and embeds our values and behaviours.

Accountabilities and outcomes:

Provide direct benefits advice, information, support and advocacy (including tribunal representation) for people in Medway who have complex needs.

Provide information and support for residents and carers in person, on the phone and by e-mail and by personal visit. Identify all sources of benefits, grants for clients and assist them in applying.

Maintain a comprehensive knowledge of welfare benefits which will enable you to interpret and explain legislation and documents to your clients.

Liaise with and maintain positive relations on behalf of the council to a range of stakeholders relating to technical, legislative and procedural issues. Stakeholders may include VCS Organisations and, elected members, Council Departments and external organisations.

Support in creating and maintaining better-connected local welfare landscape in Medway ensuring that long term partnerships and referral pathways make immediate crisis response and long-term financial resilience possible.

Deal with informal and stage 1 complaints in line with the Council's procedures.

Identify and support welfare benefit take up campaigns.

Ensure that performance metrics are recorded for each case so that outcomes can be quantified and reported accurately within the FIT plan and Crisis and Resilience Fund monitoring.

At manager's discretion, other activities may be assigned that fit the job description.

Key Corporate Accountabilities:

To work with colleagues to achieve service plan objectives and targets.

To understand and actively keep up to date with GDPR responsibilities, including completing regular refresher training.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: all employees are required to act in such a way that safeguards the health and well-being of children and vulnerable adults.

As a corporate parent, all council employees are responsible for ensuring the well-being and positive outcomes of Medway's care-experienced children and young people.

To participate in the Performance Appraisal process and contribute to the identification of own and team development needs utilising the Career Progression Framework.

Work in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Promoting equality of opportunity, fostering good relations and improving the quality of life and opportunities for everyone living and working in Medway.

To ensure full compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Council's Health and Safety Policy and all locally agreed safe methods of work.

To fully understand and be aware of the commitment to the duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to prevent crime and disorder.

Promote the Medway Carbon Neutral by 2050 commitment; supporting the Council action plan to ensure we play our part in addressing the climate emergency.

Medway Council is a Category One responder in relation to the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) and as a result all staff working for the Authority may be asked to carry out Category One response duties or stand in the role of another member of staff who is responding to a Major Civil Incident.

Organisation:

This role reports to the Welfare Benefits & Community Support Operations Manager

The post holder will not be required to line manage others but may be required to direct, coordinate or train other employees.

The post holder will need to liaise with all stakeholders both internal and external to the organisation.

Working Style:

HYBRID - a flexible working arrangement whereby an employee can undertake their work either in the office and/or partially or mainly from home on a temporary or permanent basis.

Person specification

All criteria at level A should be considered essential requirements.

Qualifications

Level A

- 5 GCSEs (including pass at English & Maths grade 4/C and above) or equivalent qualification
- Completed Money Guiders Foundation and Tier 1,2, and 3. *External applicants to complete as part of induction/probation

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

- Working towards a relevant level 5 professional qualification for example Leadership and Management, or IRRV or equivalent

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

- Relevant Level 5 professional qualification in either Leadership and Management, or IRRV or equivalent.

Knowledge

Level A

- Good knowledge of Welfare Benefits legislation and administration processes.

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

- Comprehensive knowledge of the reconsideration and appeals legislation and procedures and the ability to create comprehensive submissions to be heard at tribunal.
- Legislative and procedural knowledge to confidently represent clients at tribunal hearings without supervision.

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

- Ability to demonstrate complex knowledge across all areas which can be used when reconsidering claims, preparing submissions and representing the clients at tribunals.

Experience

Level A

- 5 Years Experience of working in a Welfare Benefits Team
- Experience of dealing with complex claim assessments

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

- The experience of creating comprehensive submissions to be heard at tribunal.
- Experience of applying welfare benefit legislation to claim decisions
- Starting to understand the role of the CCC Manager, occasionally deputising on certain tasks inc. representing the team at presentations or events, checking case work of other team members
- At least 2 years' satisfactory performance in the role

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

- Demonstrative experience of compiling and presenting a range of cases at appeal showing positive feedback.
- Experience of managing cases to a high standard
- Experience of Deputising for the CCC Manager in their absence., inc. representing the team at presentations or events, checking case work of other team members
- At least 4 years' satisfactory performance in the role.

Skills

Level A

- Proficient in the use of Microsoft Word, Excel Teams and Outlook
- Full driving valid for use in the UK and access to own transport for work purposes
- Demonstrable ability to use analytical skills and to work independently to solve problems.
- Ability to undertake complex case assessments which may involve difficult calculations and to be able to present these to residents and customers.>

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

- Ability to interpret complex information and recommend solutions.
- Can undertake a wide range of activities within the technical or specialist welfare benefits area without support.
- Ability to deal with high levels of work-related pressure, deadlines, interruptions, or conflicting demands

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

- Demonstrable ability to work within recognised procedures and respond independently to problems where there are no recognised procedures and decisions are made without access to a manager.
- Undertakes work outside of casework to support wider awareness of the Benefits and Financial Welfare Service, requiring a range of imaginative solutions and responses and involves application of fresh and innovative thinking.
- Demonstrating the ability to use complaints and claim decisions to enhance and improve the work of the Benefits and Financial Welfare Service