

Job Title	Generalist Adviser/ Caseworker
Team	Advice Centre
Salary	£29,000 - £33,000 (depending on experience)
Contract	Full-time, permanent
Location	East London

About Us

First Love Foundation, a Christian charity, was founded 14 years ago with a desire to see the transformation of society through the pursuit of justice, dignity, and equality for all members of the society. Our vision is for a Britain without poverty and our work is underpinned by the belief that no one regardless of faith, ethnicity, socio-economic background, or any other factor should live in poverty, let alone go through a crisis alone.

Based in the east end of London, First Love Foundation is an AQS-accredited service which works with families and individuals experiencing crisis i.e., 'income-shocks' ranging from incorrect denial (or suspension of) welfare support, serious ill health, debt, homelessness, right through to domestic violence, trapping them in a continuous cycle of poverty.

Our mission is 'to empower people to create their own independent lives by working alongside them with love'. This mission and our theory of change have been carefully developed over many years on the front line, helping people in crisis and learning what it takes for people to break the cycle of poverty.

Our **service** is delivered in three ways - in person, at community-based outreach sessions and via telephone. The service we provide is undertaken by two specific teams:

The Advocacy Team – who act as the entry point to the service, responsible for initially contacting referred clients and setting up "triage" meetings with individual clients to ascertain the precise issues they are experiencing, and to help identify possible solutions. The Advocacy Team also assist clients with relevant simple benefit and grant applications. More complicated welfare benefit related issues are referred to our Advice Team

The Advice Team – responsible for assisting clients with more complex welfare benefits problems and complete applications for Universal Credit, Disability Benefits. They also identify possible errors in the assessment of a clients benefit entitlement which can lead to Mandatory Reconsiderations and/or submission of appeals on the client's behalf.

Our teams of experts strive to provide the right help, at the right time and in doing so we are able to transform lives.

Purpose of Generalist Adviser / Caseworker

We are currently seeking a dedicated and experienced Generalist Adviser/Caseworker to join our esteemed team. The ideal candidate will possess a minimum of **two years of experience** serving as an advocate and adviser, in addition to at least one year of experience in a caseworker capacity.

This role necessitates a balanced and comprehensive approach to providing advice, case management, and advocacy services to a diverse and varied client base. The successful candidate will demonstrate exceptional interpersonal skills, a strong commitment to client service, and the ability to manage a dynamic caseload effectively.

We are looking for an individual who is not only knowledgeable and skilled but also passionate about making a positive impact in the community and empowering individuals to live sustainable lives. If you meet these qualifications and are eager to contribute to our mission, we would be delighted to receive your application.

Technical Competences:

The ideal candidate will:

- Be knowledgeable and skilled at offering welfare rights advice and advocacy
- Adherence to policy and standards
- Proficient in problem-solving and case management, in the key areas causing clients' crisis.
- Have excellent client care and communication skills

- Be able to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and expertise in managing complex welfare benefits cases
- Referral and signposting skills.
- Be proficient in adhering to the standards set by Advice Quality Standards (AQS), and using Advice Pro.
- Be able to demonstrate a track record of successful outcomes – financial and non-financial i.e. client better equipped to advocate for themselves.

Professional Competences:

The ideal candidate will:

- Place a strong emphasis on effective team membership skills.
- Be able to communicate effectively with a range of stakeholders.
- Have experience in providing guidance and direction to Advice Workers/Advocacy Workers & volunteers
- Good recordkeeping, note taking, casework management & organisational skills
- Have experience of providing welfare benefits training sessions
- Demonstrate professionalism, discernment, and empathy in delivering our service.
- Be committed to continuous learning and development and keep up to date on the latest issues in the rapidly changing welfare benefits sector.
- Will possess effective critical thinking skills and be able to work independently, efficiently, and effectively.
- Should be proactive and client-centred, employing strong oral and written skills, and able to demonstrate initiative, compassion, and tenacity to secure the best outcomes for service users.

Communicates With:

Advice Team Leader, Community Advisors, Community Advocates, Research Coordinator, Volunteers and wider First Love Foundation Team, local voluntary and statutory agencies

Please note:

While we offer our services as a charity to everyone regardless of their religion or background, we ask that candidates be in sympathy with the Christian values, mission, and aims of the First Love Foundation.

We actively encourage applications from individuals with lived experience and those from a wide range of communities. In particular, we welcome applicants from all diverse backgrounds, reflecting the rich cultural diversity of Tower Hamlets and the wider UK.

We believe in fostering an inclusive environment that values and respects all individuals.

Key Responsibilities

Contribute to the smooth running of the Advice service

- To be a primary staff presence in the Advice Centre, ensuring that services are offered in accordance with our AQS accreditation and First Love Foundation Policies and Procedures.
- Able to work collaboratively with other Advice Service team members and volunteers.
- Provide case guidance and direction to members of the Advocacy & Advice team.
- ⊖ In collaboration with the Advice Team Leader, contribute to the development of policies and procedures, and ensure that the service operates in strict adherence to, and compliance with AQS quality standards
- Proactively work with your team members to identify any challenges/areas for improvement.

Key Responsibilities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This role requires adaptability, agility, flexibility and awareness of current social, political, and economic factors, and ability to research case law precedent to ensure cases are properly represented at welfare benefits application, mandatory review, appeals and tribunals stages. ○ Work within the scope, remit, and responsibility of the role.
<p>Case Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Manage a caseload effectively, ensuring strict and timely follow-up and full resolution of client issues. ○ Accurately document all client interactions, assessments, and actions taken in accordance with organisational policies & AQS guidelines. ○ Collaborate with external agencies, stakeholders, and other professionals to facilitate onward referrals for further expert advice and guidance ○ Work collaboratively with colleagues to secure the best outcomes for our clients. ○ Proactively manage cases by preparing and sharing detailed case reports in advance of team meetings to allow effective collaboration and enable informed decision-making.
<p>Assessment and Advice Consultations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Working alongside the Advice Team leader, and Expert Benefits Caseworker preparing cases for appeals, attending tribunal hearings etc. ○ Ensuring that cases are taken based on merit and likelihood of success. ○ Have the ability to work resiliently, independently, compassionately and effectively with clients who present with complex needs and who may have trauma-related or challenging behaviors. ○ Take detailed and accurate case notes, logging these within strict agreed time limits and completing subsequent actions using our AdvicePro Case Management System (training provided) ensuring that key dates and deliverables are met. ○ Participate and proactively report to Advice Team leader ahead of CM meetings to secure direction in and actively contribute to multi-disciplinary Case Management meetings, reviewing and progressing cases to successful completion.
<p>Advisory Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide comprehensive advice on a range of issues, including housing, benefits, debt, employment, and social services. ○ Responsible for managing cases strictly within the scope of services the organisation is accredited to provide. Must follow established guidelines and protocols, ensuring no additional issues are taken on beyond the organisation's remit. Caseworkers are expected to adhere to the advice and direction provided by ATL (Advice Team Lead) and other supervisory staff. ○ Empower clients by offering information and resources to enhance their understanding of their rights and options. ○ Provide assistance with benefit forms, applications, and challenges up to the Mandatory Reconsideration level, as well as support benefit casework by preparing appeals. ○ Responsible for ensuring all cases taken onto the caseload have clearly outlined advice planning in place, ensuring accurate case note entries recorded in CRM. ○ To carry out the above in a professional, compassionate, non-judgmental, and respectful manner always remaining aware of client confidentiality.
<p>Advocacy Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide comprehensive advocacy on a range of issues support, referring clients on to specialist agencies e.g. housing solicitors, debt advice, employment support, and social services.

Key Responsibilities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Act as an advocate for clients in various settings, including meetings with service providers, hearings, and consultations. ○ Represent clients in a professional manner, ensuring their voices are heard and their rights are protected. ○ Work towards resolving disputes and barriers clients face by negotiating on their behalf. ○ Engage in community outreach and awareness initiatives to promote the organisation's services and support available.
Sympathetic to the Christian beliefs of First Love Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Attend and participate in fortnightly/monthly gatherings (for adherents of the Christian faith)
Act as full member of the Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Promote the values of First Love Foundation, participate as a full member of the team and where appropriate support initiatives and activities across the whole organisation e.g. fundraising events. ○ Sensitively and where appropriate gather quotes, outcomes, and stories from service users to raise awareness and further the work of the charity (i.e. case studies) ○ Contribute to decision-making in team meetings ○ To support the Research Coordinator and Advice Team Leader with monthly/quarterly/funders reports ○ Undertake any other appropriate duties as requested by the Senior Management Team.

Person Specification

EXPERIENCE		WHY	Ess	Des
1.1	Minimum of two years' experience as Advocate and Adviser - and at least one year as caseworker.	In order to effectively engage with providing accurate, quality advice and support vulnerable service users.	√	
1.2	Supervise volunteers where necessary	In order to ensure a consistent and quality service is offered to all users of our service	√	
1.3	Delivering quality welfare benefits advice and/or carrying out casework/ representations in person, via telephone or in outreach settings	In order to reach and provide effective support to vulnerable service users through the provision of accurate, quality advice, along with the ability to progress cases to a satisfactory and successful completion	√	
1.4	Networking, building rapport and liaising with a range of support services in the statutory and voluntary sectors,	Must be able to demonstrate an understanding of the need for partnership working in order to carry out effective onward referrals; work effectively with a range of different partner agencies to find solutions to the service users' crises and attend/report back on local advice network forums.	√	
1.5	Proficient user of Advice CRM databases e.g. Advice Pro, Salesforce, Aims, Casebook, etc.	Able to create and maintain accurate and up to date case work records in keeping with AQS requirements	√	

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EXPERIENCE		WHY	Ess	Des
1.6	Experience of working with Advice Volunteers	Able to share knowledge, insights, guidance, and training to Advice volunteers where required		√
1.7	Experience in delivering training & workshops	Able to contribute to professional development of in-house staff, volunteers through sharing knowledge, insights, guidance through training and workshops as required		√

JOB SKILLS		WHY	Ess	Des
2.1	Excellent Communication Skills – Oral	Able to communicate clearly, and effectively with a range of different service users and stakeholders, able to build rapport - adapting style and approach accordingly	√	
2.2	Excellent Communication Skills – Written English	Vital for clear, effective communication with diverse service users and stakeholders. Essential for effective note-taking, case recording, and case preparation. Clear written communication ensures accurate documentation, aids in understanding complex information, and support collaboration among team members.	√	
2.3	Strong Customer Service Ethos & Interpersonal Skills	Able to work effectively with a range of different service users, using interpersonal skills to inform, advise and through motivation, enable and empower them towards finding solutions to their crises.	√	
2.4	Self-Awareness, Discerning, Boundaries in practice	Discerning, able to build supportive working relationships with service users whilst maintaining boundaries, to help safeguard against the risk of service user dependency whilst protecting own health & wellbeing - using interventions such as supervision and reflective practice to discuss and manage.		
2.5	Effective Team Membership Skills	Able to build and maintain strong, supportive, collaborative respectful working relationships with colleagues and volunteers, ensuring the Advice Service is dynamic, robust, efficient and produces impactful outcomes for service users and our stakeholders.	√	
2.6	Excellent IT Skills	Must be proficient user of Microsoft 365 suite, including Outlook, Word, Excel and PowerPoint, Advice CRM databases, and confident with using the internet in order to carry out key tasks related to role. Training on CRM provided.	√	
2.7	Strong Administrative and Case Recording Skills	To ensure that Case Records are updated in a timely and accurate manner, and that all data related to service usage is kept up to date on relevant systems	√	
2.8	Self-Management	<p>Wellbeing - understands the need to maintain emotional resilience, and when to seek advice and support from team members/managers.</p> <p>Work - motivated and self-directive, able to prioritise workload, solutions-oriented, taking the initiative to progress and resolve client crises in a timely and effective manner.</p>		√

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JOB SKILLS		WHY	Ess	Des
		Career - championing in own personal and professional development.		
2.9	Policies & Procedures	Must understand the critical need for their practice to be in strict compliance to organisation-wide policies and procedures, particularly in relation to Safeguarding, Confidentiality, Data Protection, as well as AQS (Advice Quality Standards).	√	

KNOWLEDGE		WHY	Ess	Des
3.1	Solid understanding of the key drivers of poverty and crisis i.e. unemployment, debt and housing.	To be better able to effectively advocate and advise users of our service. Able to guide discussions; hold challenging, but information-giving conversations with service users, raising awareness of their rights.		√
3.2	Solid knowledge of the welfare benefits system and the key challenges affecting claimants	To be better able to guide discussions with service users, and professionals and the options related to steps needed to resolve their crisis.	√	

OTHER REQUIREMENTS		WHY	Ess	Des
4.1	Flexibility	Required to working from multiple locations – office, outreach in community settings – and home. Willingness to participate in occasional activities e.g. online/in person (where appropriate) fundraising event	√	
4.2	Integrity and Confidentiality	Must demonstrate understanding of the importance of handling/processing sensitive client information in an appropriate manner i.e. storage, client consent and maintenance of client confidentiality at all times	√	
4.3	DBS Check	This will need to be undertaken, in line with Safeguarding requirements as the role requires work with vulnerable adults and at times children.	√	
4.4	Considerate of the Christian aims, beliefs & values of First Love Foundation	Respectful of our core values of love, compassion, dignity, and justice.		√
4.5	Equality, Diversity, and Inclusivity	Value all people who come into contact or work with First Love Foundation and its associated projects	√	

How to apply for this role

- Send your CV and a covering letter to recruitment@firstlovefoundation.org.uk detailing how your experience and qualities meet the requirements of this role and why you are interested in the role.
- **Deadline: 7 November 2024**

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- If you are interested, please submit your application as early as possible, since interviews will be held on a rolling basis.
- Please note: We reserve the right to close this vacancy early if we receive sufficient applications for the role.