

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Adviser (Housing and Welfare Benefit)
Department	National Services
Reporting to	Advice and Support Manager
Line Manages	None
DBS/BD/PVG:	Basic
Location	Avonmore Road, London W14 8RR (with hybrid working) or Homebased (attendance in London as and when required)

JOB PURPOSE

Working as part of the Advice and Support team, this role provides information, specialist advice and support, to older people, their friends, family and professionals on Housing and Welfare Benefits, and generalist level advice on a range of issues including health and social care, connection to community and others. This role provides advice on the Advice and Support Service duty line and through pre booked appointments. The post holder will manage a caseload of more complex housing and welfare benefit cases and carry out checks on our public facing information

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

Advice and Support

- Provide specialist advice and support
 - on housing issues affecting older people including for example, housing options, homelessness, eviction, repairs, adaptations, and leasehold issues.
 - on complex benefit calculations, including both working age and pension age benefits and supporting those in need to make applications.
 - on eligibility to disability benefits and assist callers to complete relevant forms over the phone.
 - about mandatory reconsiderations and appeals.
 - and support with challenging decisions through complaints and appeals.
- Staff the duty advice and support line on a rota basis, providing generalist level advice on a range of issues affecting older people including welfare benefits, housing and social care. The post holder will spend a minimum of 20% of their time on the duty service.

- Take a person-centred approach, combining rights-based advice with holistic support, working alongside the individual to identify their priorities and concerns, and connecting them with relevant internal or external services/groups.
- Effectively manage a caseload, monitoring key dates, communicating regularly with the older person and ensuring the case is progressed to achieve the best possible outcome in the shortest possible time.
- Maintain up to date case records and monitoring information in line with our AQS quality assurance processes and our internal reporting framework.
- Identify and act upon any safeguarding concerns in line with the Safeguarding Procedure.

Maintain expertise

- Keep up to date with changes that may affect older people, particularly in relation to welfare benefits and financial support, care, housing, utility providers schemes for vulnerable customers, scams and general budgeting/money saving tips.
- Horizon scanning and participating in external discussion forums to understand the changing environment and how this may impact the team's work.
- Undertake any research or training required to ensure we can provide accurate information and advice across England, Scotland and Wales.
- Pilot new and innovative means of providing advice as the service develops.

Public Information

- Work alongside colleagues in the Information Team to scope and review public facing information.
- Carry out thorough checks on information produced for the public on a wide range of topics related to later life, to ensure accuracy.
- Make suggestions for additions to content that would be useful to older people, based on previous experiences.

Collaboration

- Collect and share evidence of the issues affecting older people including case studies, stories, statistics, and anecdotal evidence.
- Attend cross organisational and external meetings to support Independent Age's policy, influencing and media work and fundraising.
- Provide briefings on advice topic areas to relevant staff across the charity.
- Give talks, run training sessions and presentations as required to groups, internally and externally.
- Work proactively within a team, support and motivate colleagues, suggest service improvements, share responsibilities, and take the lead on areas of development work for the team.

General Responsibilities

- Embrace diversity and share in our commitment to equality of opportunity and to eliminating discrimination
- Model and embed Independent Age's values and behaviours.
- Share in our commitment to promoting welfare and safeguarding adults at risk of harm and any children or young people connected with them that we may come into contact with through our work.
- Ensure that information is obtained, used and stored in accordance with our Data Protection and Confidentiality policy.
- Undertake any other duties commensurate with the level of the role.

How we work

At Independent Age, we live by our values and EDI principles.

Our Values are that we are:

Purpose-driven - the experience, needs and views of older people are central to everything we do

Compassionate - we listen, care and take action

Expert - our work is evidence-based and solution-focused

Collaborative - we work in partnership to maximise our impact

Accountable - we work with integrity and transparency

Inclusive - we value diversity and always treat everyone fairly with dignity and respect

To put our EDI Principles into practice, we will:

- proactively challenge ageism and other forms of discrimination throughout our work.
- celebrate and champion diversity within and outside our charity and create a culture where everyone knows that they belong.
- develop leaders at every level to act as role models and champions for each other and encourage all staff to embrace these principles and apply them in their work.
- deliver equity of opportunity for our staff, volunteers and the people who use our services whether they have a protected characteristic or not.
- ensure our strategy, policies and actions are integral to our annual planning processes to ensure that we deliver our goals and that our values are central to their delivery.
- commit to setting target indicators for diversity and regularly review progress.
- collect data to enable us to track our progress.
- be publicly accountable and transparent about our progress.
- use our influence to proactively champion the principles of EDI internally and with external partners.
- continuously improve, adopt best practice and learn from and share with others.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Knowledge and experience

- Demonstrable knowledge of the law and practice relating to welfare benefits for people aged 65+ (this now includes working age benefits) and their carers.
- Demonstrable knowledge of the law and practice relating to housing for people aged 65+
- Understanding of the role of an advice worker and advice practice models, with proven ability to put them into practice.
- Understanding of and ability to provide excellent customer service.
- An understanding of safeguarding and how to act upon concerns.

Skills and attributes

- Excellent verbal and written communication skills including the ability to translate complex issues into clear, focused, and understandable language for a range of audiences.
- Strong telephone and digital skills including the ability to quickly establish and build rapport in a remote setting, listen effectively, manage call time and record key details.
- Excellent attention to detail with the ability to accurately proofread and edit written material.
- Strong time management and organisation skills shown through the ability to work at pace, prioritise a number of concurrent tasks and meet strict deadlines.
- Ability to work autonomously for both personal and service development.
- Ability and willingness to develop knowledge and personal skills.
- Good IT skills including Microsoft Office packages and confident use of video technology and databases.
- A demonstrable commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

Ideally you will also have:

- Experience of case management and case recording in an advice context.
- Experience of working within an advice supervision framework, including quality checks, and acting on feedback.
- Familiarity with the Advice Quality Standard.
- Experience of working with volunteers.
- Good generalist knowledge of a range of issues affecting older people including Health & Social Care, Housing, End of Life, Bereavement, and Loneliness.
- Experience of using Salesforce database.