

Job description

Job title: Welfare Right Specialist

Reports to: Manager of Advice Services

Salary: £36,000 (pro rata for part time) plus benefits

Contract: permanent, full time or part time (21-35 hours)

About us:

The Cardinal Hume Centre works to prevent and tackle youth and family homelessness. We:

- Provide a home with support for up to 39 young people
- Support children and families in housing or other need
- Offer housing and welfare rights advice to help people keep or find a stable home and to manage their money
- Advise and coach people to find work, learning or training
- Provide immigration advice to help people secure their legal right to remain in the UK to access homes, work and benefits.

Last year we helped over 1200 people including nearly 600 families and 230 children and young people, aiming to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty from a young age. Our approach is personalised, acknowledging the unique complexities of each individual through six key services: residential; family support, legal advice, employment, education and immigration advocacy.

The Centre is based within five minutes' walk from Parliament but works in an area where homelessness in nearly all its forms has increased. Around 3,600 children from Westminster are housed in temporary accommodation. Over 25% of children live in poverty. Families face unaffordable housing costs, a challenging labour market and rising levels of crime.

With an annual income in the region of £3.5 million, the Centre currently employs around 65 dedicated members of staff and around 45 volunteers.

About the role:

The overall purpose of this role is to provide a structured information, advice and casework service (including representation at tribunal where appropriate) to clients of the centre with complex welfare rights issues. The role will also provide second tier advice and training in welfare rights for generalist advisors and non-welfare rights specialists in the centre.

Job description:

1. To manage a specialist welfare rights caseload, ensuring casework is recorded in a timely manner and in line with agreed quality standards.
2. To provide emergency welfare rights advice to clients in crisis.
3. To work together with the other members of the Advice team, providing basic welfare rights advice and referring to our Welfare Rights Specialists when necessary.
4. To work in partnership with clients, informing them and empowering them to problem-solve and make informed decisions about their future.
5. To work as part of the wider Advice and Assessment teams ensuring effective cover in services including dealing with emergencies when required.
6. To ensure clients are offered an integrated holistic service by working closely with the other teams in the centre.
7. To build and maintain good relationships with statutory and other partners and to work together with them to get the best outcomes for our clients and to monitor unmet need locally so that this can be addressed.
8. To participate in the development and delivery of referral partnerships and outreach services, in order to reach the most vulnerable families and young people within the local community.
9. To keep up to date in all relevant matters relating to welfare rights and related social welfare law, actively participating in training and development opportunities.
10. To share key information about developments in welfare rights with the wider centre and provide second tier advice and training in welfare rights law to staff and volunteers who are not welfare rights specialists.
11. To provide line management to volunteers, where required.
12. To monitor outcomes against agreed standards and produce statistical information, reports and case studies when required.
13. To actively seek feedback from clients, colleagues and stakeholders and to use this feedback to improve the service.
14. To promote a safeguarding culture, applying best practice to ensure the safety of all clients, particularly children and young people and adults who may be vulnerable

Person specification

Essential:

1. Proven specialism in welfare benefits advice work (at least two years' experience of delivering advice across a range of welfare rights issues)
2. Detailed knowledge of all welfare benefits.
3. Knowledge of welfare reform and future changes likely to affect our clients.
4. Detailed knowledge of the system of reconsiderations and representation experience at appeals.
5. Experience of direct work with vulnerable people, including those experiencing or threatened with homelessness.
6. Awareness of child and adult safeguarding practice.

7. Ability to deal with a large and complex caseload and prioritise accordingly.
8. Commitment to and experience of working in multi- disciplinary teams.
9. Excellent communication skills, both verbal and written.
10. Strong skills in networking and the ability to build effective working relationships with partner agencies.
11. Willingness to work flexibly including periodic work out of office hours.
12. A strong commitment to the Centre's mission, values and behaviours; a strong belief in the value of every individual.

DESIRABLE:

- Experience of advising young people and families.
- Experience advising migrants on their entitlement to benefits, and challenging decisions that they are not.
- Experience of supervising staff or volunteers.
- Knowledge of Housing Law.
- Knowledge of the Care Act and the Children's Act.
- Experience of devising and providing training to a wide range of audiences.
- Ability to speak a second language.

Our people - we believe each person matters:

Our clients

Our clients guide everything we do. We're here to help children, families and young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, or clients who have urgent needs that can be met at the Centre and not elsewhere.

We value every person; this is central to our work

We seek to develop trusting relationships with our clients. We rely on them to help us improve and develop our services so we include them wherever possible in our work.

Our staff and volunteers

Our staff and volunteers are diverse in their backgrounds, and their skills and experience. Many have lived experience of the challenges our clients face. We are proud of our warm welcome and our team's commitment to support people facing disadvantage to escape the cycle of poverty and homelessness.

The Centre's [website](#) has more about our work including our [approach](#), our [plans](#) and our [values](#) and behaviours.