**Job Description and Person Specification Profile**

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| **Job Title** | Welfare Rights Officer |
| **Job ID** | R50 |
| **Service** | Welfare Rights Service |
| **Grade** | G |
| **Reporting to** | Welfare Benefits and Debt Advice Supervisor  |

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| **The Role** |
| To provide specialist welfare rights advice, casework and appeal representation to Tameside residents**Main Duties and Responsibilities include:*** To provide confidential, specialist welfare benefits and tax credits advice to Tameside residents.
* Provide advice on welfare benefits and establish grounds for appealing social security benefit decisions.
* To provide appeal representation at First and Upper Tier Social Security appeal tribunals.
* To maintain accurate case work records.
* Assist residents with benefit claim form completion as and when required
* Identify relevant charitable funds and assist residents in making the application.
* To assist clients in communicating with outside agencies and council departments.
* To refer non-benefit cases to appropriate agencies.
* To provide advice sessions in locations throughout Tameside and conduct home visits when necessary
* To build up relationships with relevant agencies e.g. social workers, district nurses, occupational therapists etc.
* To maintain an up to date knowledge of the complex nature of the legislative basis of the social security system and to understand, interpret and advise on the implications of such legislation.
* To maintain an up to date knowledge of the development and changes to case law and to be able to advise on the implications of such changes.
* To liaise and negotiate with benefit providing agencies in order to affect positive outcomes with regard benefit claims.
* To maintain an up to date knowledge of the practices of agencies administering benefits.
* To collect evidence from relevant sources to support clients’ claims for benefits.
* To provide training and information on welfare benefits to voluntary and statutory groups.
* To identify policy or problem areas and report to welfare rights and debt advice supervisor.
* Contribute to any benefit take up campaigns
* To assist with the production of reports, with regard to the work of the post holder.
* To operate a PC and other office equipment associated with providing a customer service.
* To prepare and produce own written material.
* To contribute to the development of the whole of the welfare rights service.
* To be aware of the Council’s Equal Opportunity Policy and to contribute to it by ensuring the Welfare Rights Service is available to all Tameside residents.
* To converse at ease with customers and provide advice in accurate spoken English
* To work outside normal office hours if and when necessary.

The duties may vary from time to time without changing the nature of the post or the level of responsibility, and the post holder may also be required to carry out any other duties appropriate to the grading of the post.  |

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| **About You** |
| **Your essential qualifications*** A level or equivalent

**Your essential skills, knowledge and experience*** Significant experience of providing welfare benefits advice both face to face and by telephone
* Experience of benefit maximisation work
* Experience of working directly with the public
* Experience of managing a high caseload to specified case management standards
* Up to date proven experience and expertise in welfare benefits advice work including appeal representation up to and including Upper Tribunal level
* In-depth knowledge of social security legislation, tax credits, housing benefit and council tax legislation
* Knowledge of social security reconsideration and appeals procedures
* Excellent organisational skills with the ability to prioritise own work, meet deadlines and adhere to quality assurance procedures
* Excellent written communication skills
* Excellent telephone communication skills with the ability to extract sensitive information from clients to advise on their enquiry
* Ability to advocate effectively and make written and oral representations on behalf of clients
* Ability to use IT in the provision of advice, casework and the preparation of reports and submissions
* Ability to manage a large and complex caseload and maintain accurate, detailed electronic case records.
* Excellent administrative skills
* Ability to demonstrate empathy with people who are vulnerable and in crisis
* An empathy and commitment to the priorities of the Council
* The ability to converse at ease with others and provide advice in accurate spoken English
* Tact, diplomacy and an ability to elicit sensitive information, to identify problems and plan action
* Ability to work on own initiative and as part of a team
* Commitment to equality and diversity when dealing with others

**If you have the following experience or qualifications – then that’s great!*** Experience of delivering training and talks
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**Our employees’ skills, experience and knowledge are essential to our success along with their happiness, commitment, enthusiasm and motivation to be the best they can be.**

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| **What can you expect from us?*** A fair salary and benefits
* Opportunities for good health and wellbeing
* Help you to grow, develop and to do your best
* Enable you to be creative and innovative
* Fully involve you in changes that affect you and your work
* Listen, and act on your ideas and feedback

**Working together, we are proud to work for Tameside** |

Our **STRIVE** values underpin our practice and behaviours and are at the heart of everything that we do:

