

Benefits Advice Officer

Role Profile

Service: Welfare Rights Team – Adults Directorate
Band: Band 6
Reporting to: Advice and Information Manager (Poverty Lead)
Responsible for: No direct reports



TRAFFORD
COUNCIL

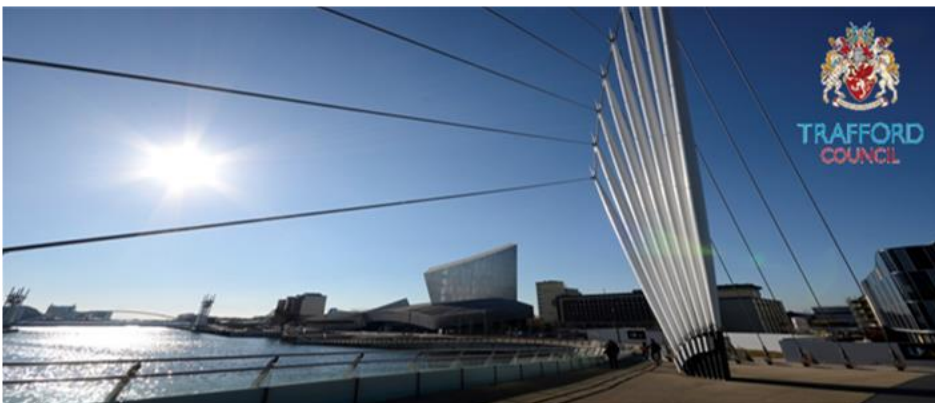
About Us

Trafford is a great place to live, work, learn and visit. From its leafy suburbs, to its more urban areas, the borough takes pride in its strong, diverse communities, its cultural and sporting heritage and its position at the heart of the region's economic powerhouse.

Trafford Council and its partners in the public, private and third sectors have a Vision which sees us working together to close inequality gaps and maximise Trafford's huge potential.

Our vision: Trafford – where all our residents, businesses and communities thrive

At the heart of our vision is a common cause – we want to make Trafford a better borough. We want to make it a place where everyone has a chance to succeed and where everybody has a voice. Through our new vision, we are making a commitment to work together across different services and agencies to make the best use of our resources.



Our Culture

Trafford Council employs around 2300 non-school members of staff and as one of the biggest employers in the borough, we work hard to make Trafford Council an employer of choice. We care what you think and believe you are more than just a job role. We have a great benefits' package and a real focus on your health and wellbeing, as well as, extensive learning, succession and development opportunities.

For us, it's not just about *what* we achieve as an organisation, but *how* we do it. Therefore, all employees are expected to display our **EPIC** values.

At Trafford Council we are EPIC

We EMPOWER – We inspire and trust our people to deliver the best outcomes for our customers, communities and colleagues.

We are PEOPLE CENTRED – We value all people, within and external to the organisation and give those around us respect. We will act with honesty and integrity in all that we do, and create an environment that enables everyone we work with to thrive and succeed.

We are INCLUSIVE – We are committed to creating an environment that values and respects the diversity and richness differences bring.

We COLLABORATE – We build relationships, collaborate; treat people as equal partners and work together to make things happen.

About the Role

This Role Profile outlines the key tasks you will be expected to perform to give you an understanding of a typical day and the key activities that you will be expected to deliver or contribute to the delivery of.

The 'About You' section explores what qualifications, experience, skills and knowledge you will need for the role.

We are a values-based organisation and you will need to reflect our values, as well as the requirements in 'About You' in your application.

Overview

The Welfare Rights Team is based in our Adults Directorate. This role works either within the existing Welfare Rights Team or closely within the Adults Social Care area teams to support and provide our clients with specialist Welfare benefit advice in often complex situations. The team specialises in legal challenge and represents at appeal hearings and other formal hearings. The post will also offer benefit advice to the wider public via the advice line on a rota basis.

Your Main Priorities

- Working within Welfare Rights Team or the Adult Social Care area teams to support clients via referrals from other departments and partner organisations as well as self-referrals or to support Adult Social Care clients.
- Providing a high quality, comprehensive and specialist welfare benefits advice service to members of the public, staff within the authority, and community groups.
- Managing a caseload of complex cases.
- Working as part of an advice hub with other agencies, including commissioned Information and Advice services.
- Liaising and working closely with a range of professionals, including Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Mental Health Services, Housing Options Support Team, and registered providers.

Key duties

- Providing comprehensive, accurate and specialist advice on all aspects of Welfare Benefits matters.
- Providing advice via outreach appointment sessions, home visits where appropriate, and telephone advice line duty.

- Providing a personal case work service in relation to Welfare Benefits.
- Preparing and presenting cases for 1st and 2nd tier appeals, including representation at appeal hearings and other formal hearings as appropriate.
- Maintaining case file records to Benefits Advice Team standards for the purpose of continuity of case work, information retrieval, statistical monitoring, and report preparation.
- Carrying out in depth benefit checks on behalf of clients.
- Managing a caseload of complex cases in a timely manner.
- Negotiating with third parties as appropriate on behalf of clients, both orally and in writing.
- Having a comprehensive and detailed knowledge of current social security legislation, guidance and case law, and other relevant legislation.
- Participating in a duty rota for the Welfare Rights Team Advice Line and inbox.
- Keeping up to date with legislation, case law, policies and procedures.
- Being a source of specialist knowledge regarding all Welfare Benefits issues. Developing and delivering training programmes for staff who are in contact with the public.
- Attending and contributing fully to team meetings.
- Undertaking any other duties from time to time which are commensurate with the grade.

About You

Qualifications and Professional Development

- Educated to A Level, BTEC, HNC/HND, NVQ level 3 or equivalent qualification in a relevant subject or combination of formal off the job training plus 2 years' experience in a similar environment
- Commitment to continued professional and personal development

Experience and Knowledge

- Previous demonstrable experience of welfare benefits case work including tribunal representation.
- Experience of excellent record keeping and case management
- Experience of negotiating and representing clients to 3rd party organisations
- Experience of working collaboratively with a multi-agency approach to problem solving

- A comprehensive and up-to-date knowledge of legislation, case law and procedures in relation to all Welfare Benefits

Skills and abilities

- Proven ability to identify and use relevant information services including legislation, case law and guidance
- Ability to work on your own initiative, to prioritise appropriately and identify relevant time limits and deadlines
- Excellent written and spoken communication skills
- Numerical skills to calculate benefit entitlement
- Ability to analyse complex issues and present options for action
- Able to manage a caseload and maintain case files in accordance with office procedures
- Good computer literacy including Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and IT based software packages
- Ability to work in a team and with partner agencies
- Able to prepare and deliver presentations and training

Special Conditions

- Willing and able to travel to sites within the Trafford Borough
- Standard DBS required
- Unsocial hours/weekend work may be required

Date prepared/revised	AUG 2013 Updated role profile – 04/12/2024 / Minor amends 4.4.25
Prepared/revised by	J Hobson / L Buchanan / R Pollard / L Shellabear
Job Evaluation	Existing evaluation

Health and Safety

To operate safely within the workplace with regard to the Council's health and safety policies, procedures and safe working practices. To be responsible for your own Health and Safety and that of other employees.

Equalities & Diversity

To work within the Council's Equalities and Diversity Policy, embracing through personal example, open commitment and clear action that diversity is positively valued, resulting in access for all by ensuring fair treatment in employment, service delivery and external communications.

Customer Care

To continually review, develop and improve systems, processes and services in support of the Council's pursuit of excellence in service delivery.
To recognise the value of its people as a resource.

Training and Development

To identify training and development needs with your manager, taking an active part in your Personal Development and Review Plan. To access development opportunities as they arise and share learning with others and where appropriate, actively encourage a learning environment and development within others.

Policy

To work at all times within the established policies and practices of the Council, within the framework established by the Council Constitution and associated guidance.

Information Governance

Confidentiality is of prime importance. In the normal course of duties, the post holder will have access to personal and or sensitive information relating to service users, staff and contractors, as well as information of a commercially sensitive nature. Such information should not be communicated to anyone outside or inside the Council unless done in the normal course of carrying out the duties of the post. Disciplinary action will be considered where a breach of confidence and or data breach has been established.

All information obtained or held during the post-holders period of employment that relates to the business of the Council and its service users and employees will remain the property of the Council. Information may be subject to disclosure under relevant legislation.

To ensure information is shared safely and complies with information governance standards and associated legislation.