

Northumberland County Council

JOB DESCRIPTION

Post Title: Welfare Rights Officer		Director/Service/Sector: Community / Welfare Rights		Office Use
Band: 7		Workplace: Eddie Ferguson House		JE ref: 4001
Responsible to: Welfare Rights Service Manager		Date: December 2025	Job Family: Community	
Job Purpose: - To provide an expert resource in welfare rights issues to the Council and other organisations within Northumberland. - To ensure maximum take-up of welfare benefits for service-users in Northumberland, and carry out targeted benefits “take-up” work. - To provide training, information, advice and support for social care staff, and also staff and volunteers from other agencies in Northumberland. - The Welfare Rights unit exists to increase the incomes of vulnerable people living in Northumberland, which has a positive impact on their health and wellbeing. - Provide a consultancy advice service to staff within the Council and other organisations within Northumberland. - Provide telephone, face to face and written advice, including support and assistance, directly to individual clients regarding their entitlement to benefits; and to support with claims and disputes, up to and including Social Security Commissioner level. - Visit clients in their own homes, or at other venues, if necessary. - Interpret social security legislation and communicate this information in an understandable form, written or verbal; to clients, colleagues and external partners. - Carry a caseload of complex benefits issues, up to and including Social Security Commissioner’s appeals. - Provide representation and advocacy at appeal tribunals. - Provide up-to-date written information and publicity material related to welfare benefits. - To raise awareness of welfare benefits amongst social care staff. - Inform local and national policy and practice related to welfare rights, to improve access to benefits for claimants. - Represent the unit at meetings within the Council and with external organisations. - Assist other sections of the Council with the implementation of related policies, such as those involving Crisis & Resilience Fund.				
Resources	Staff	None		
	Finance	None		
	Physical	At a desk, using laptop and mobile phone, ability to travel is required		
	Clients	- Staff within team and Northumberland County Council - Government departments at a local and national level - Paid staff and volunteers in other agencies within Northumberland - Clients / service-users		

Duties and key result areas:

- Carrying out own duties and making decisions related to welfare rights advice
- Understanding and working to NCC's confidentiality policy
- Identifying when it is appropriate to make a referral to another organisation
- Working within the limits of own competence and discussing cases with the Welfare Rights Service Manager if necessary.

- Interpret complex legislation and communicate this in an understandable form to all of the above
- To liaise with other relevant agencies as appropriate
- Discuss sensitive issues and be able to empathise with clients and their relatives
- The provision and distribution of appropriate written information
- Must be able to use analytical skills to identify relevant issues regarding entitlement to social security benefits through information gathering and understanding complex legislation and rules of entitlement, where there may be a range of options.
- Plan and coordinate complex activities including assessments for social security benefits and related issues, using legislation which is made up of several components, which will require regular reviewing and the potential for adjustment.
- Mainly office-based using keyboard/mouse and telephone.
- Must be able to provide general non-clinical information and advice about social security benefits to clients and colleagues.
- Implements policies in own work area and proposes changes to working practices or procedures for own work area
- Personal duty of care in relation to equipment and resources
- Provide an ongoing programme of planned specialist training sessions to social care staff, other statutory agencies, voluntary organisations and community groups
- Provide ad-hoc training, briefings and Question and Answer sessions to the same groups
- Attend relevant training sessions as agreed with line manager
- Research and preparation of training courses
- Personal Development
- Undertakes surveys as necessary – e.g. staff survey and participates in service and training evaluation.
- Required to manage own workload and use own judgement to provide relevant information and advice.
- Work discussed with line manager at regular 1:1 supervision meetings, but manager available to provide support and guidance on an ongoing basis as required.

The duties and responsibilities highlighted in this Job Description are indicative and may vary over time. Post holders are expected to undertake other duties and responsibilities relevant to the nature, level and extent of the post and the grade has been established on this basis.

Work Arrangements

Transport requirements:	Travel to work sites, area offices, meetings or other venues throughout the County and region, and further afield on occasion.
Working patterns:	May include weekends and evenings. Mainly office-based but some travel required.
Working conditions:	Mainly indoors. Occasional exposure to working outdoors.

Northumberland County Council
PERSON SPECIFICATION

Post Title:	Director/Service/Sector:	Ref:
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Essential	Desirable	Assess by
Qualifications and Knowledge		
A degree or equivalent experience and/or qualification Relevant experience of welfare rights work, including appeals to Tribunal Experience of working with more than one client group Experience of interviewing people Demonstrable, up to date knowledge of Social Security legislation and case-law		
Experience		
Relevant experience of welfare rights work, including appeals to Tribunal Experience of interviewing people Experience of working with more than one client group	Experience of preparing and delivering high quality training and briefings	
Skills and competencies		
Strong analytical and problem-solving skills An awareness of social policy relating to Social Security benefits Excellent verbal and written communication skills, including interviewing skills both face to face and by telephone Ability to operate a personal computer using Windows and Microsoft Office Must be able to maintain accurate records - electronic and written		
Physical, mental, emotional and environmental demands		
Be able to empathise with clients and their relatives		
Motivation		

Work without close supervision. Good time management skills Must be able to plan and prioritise own workload		
Other		
Required to travel throughout Northumberland		

Key to assessment methods; (a) application form, (i) interview, (r) references, (t) ability tests (q) personality questionnaire (g) assessed group work, (p) presentation, (o) others
e.g. case studies/visits