# JOB DESCRIPTION

# WELFARE RIGHTS OFFICER

**Directorate:** Operations & Neighbourhoods

**Service Unit:** Cultural & Customer Services

**Work Group:**  Welfare Rights Service

**Job role:**  Welfare Rights Officer

**Salary Scale:**  Grade G

**Responsible to:**  Welfare Benefits and Debt Advice Supervisor

**POST OBJECTIVES;**

To provide specialist welfare rights and tax credits advice, including telephone advice, casework and appeal representation to Tameside residents

**MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**;

1. To provide confidential, specialist welfare benefits and tax credits advice to Tameside residents.
2. Provide telephone advice through the Advice Line on welfare benefits and tax credits to include benefit checks and to establish grounds for appealing social security benefit decisions.
3. To provide appeal representation at First and Upper Tier Social Security appeal tribunals.
4. To maintain accurate case work records.
5. Assist residents with benefit claim form completion as and when required
6. Identify relevant charitable funds and assist residents in making the application.
7. To assist clients in communicating with outside agencies and council departments.
8. To refer non-benefit cases to appropriate agencies.
9. To provide advice sessions in other buildings within the Borough including Tameside Hospital
10. To build up relationships with relevant agencies e.g. social workers, district nurses, occupational therapists etc.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. To liaise and negotiate with benefit providing agencies in order to affect positive outcomes with regard benefit claims.
14. To maintain an up to date knowledge of the practices of agencies administering benefits.
15. To collect evidence from relevant sources to support clients’ claims for benefits.
16. To provide training and information on welfare benefits to voluntary and statutory groups.
17. To identify policy or problem areas and report to welfare rights and debt advice supervisor.
18. Initiate and contribute to take-up work with Tameside residents.
19. To assist with the production of reports, with regard to the work of the postholder.
20. To operate a PC and other office equipment associated with providing a customer service.
21. To prepare and produce own written material.
22. To contribute to the development of the whole of the welfare rights service.
23. 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.
24. To carry out any duties that correspond reasonably to the general character of the post and are commensurate with its level of responsibility.
25. To converse at ease with customers and provide advice in accurate spoken English
26. To work outside normal office hours if and when necessary.

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

**Welfare Rights Officer**

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| **Experience** | **Essential/Desirable** |
| Significant experience of delivering welfare benefits and tax credits advice work  | E |
| Experience of providing welfare benefits advice by telephone  | E |
| Experience of benefit maximisation work | E |
| Experience of working directly with the public | E |
| Experience of managing a high caseload to specified case management standards  | E |
| Experience of representing clients at social security appeal tribunals | E |
| Experience of delivering training and talks to others | D |
| **Skills/Knowledge**  |  |
| In-depth knowledge of social security legislation, tax credits legislation, housing benefit and council tax legislation | E |
| Knowledge of the social security appeals procedure  | E |
| Ability to prioritise own work, meet deadlines and manage a caseload including a willingness to follow and develop agreed quality assurance procedures | E |
| Excellent written communication skills | E |
| Excellent telephone communication skills with the ability to extract sensitive information from clients to advise on their enquiry | E |
| Ability to work to deadlines | E |
| Ability to use IT in the provision of advice, casework and the preparation of reports and submissions | E |
| Excellent organisational skills | E |
| Excellent administrative skills | E |
| **Personal attributes** |  |
| Ability to demonstrate empathy with people who are vulnerable and in crisis | E |
| An empathy and commitment to the priorities of the Council | E |
| The ability to converse at ease with customers and provide advice in accurate spoken English | E |
| Tact, diplomacy and ability to elicit sensitive information, to identify problems and plan action | E |
| Ability to work own initiative and as part of a team | E |
| Comply with the Council’s equality and diversity policy | E |