# JOB DESCRIPTION

# WELFARE RIGHTS OFFICER

**Directorate:** Operations & Neighbourhoods

**Service Unit:** Cultural & Customer Services

**Work Group:**  Welfare Rights Service

**Job role:** Welfare Rights Officer – Rough Sleepers Initiative

**Salary Scale:**  Grade G

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

**POST OBJECTIVES;**

To provide specialist welfare rights and tax credits advice, including casework and appeal representation to rough sleepers in Tameside through our Rough Sleepers Initiatives.

**MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**;

1. To provide confidential, specialist welfare benefits and tax credits advice to rough sleepers in Tameside through multi-agency working to address homelessness
2. To work closely with colleagues in our Rough Sleepers Initiatives to provide benefits advice, delivered in part on the street with support from outreach and also within the offer at A Bed Every Night and Rough Sleeper schemes
3. To provide appeal representation at First and Upper Tier Social Security appeal tribunals.
4. To maintain accurate case work records.
5. Assist with benefit claim form completion
6. Identify relevant charitable funds and assist 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 including referrals for mental health support or referrals into GP services.
9. To provide advice sessions and ongoing casework support in other buildings within the Borough including Greystones and other schemes supporting A Bed Every Night
10. To build up relationships with relevant agencies e.g. housing, social workers, alcohol and drugs services etc
11. To develop relationships with community and voluntary organisations who support those who are homeless or those at risk of becoming homeless
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. To liaise and negotiate with benefit providing agencies in order to affect positive outcomes with regard benefit claims.
15. To maintain an up to date knowledge of the practices of agencies administering benefits.
16. To collect evidence from relevant sources to support clients’ claims for benefits.
17. To provide training and information on welfare benefits to voluntary and statutory groups.
18. To identify policy or problem areas and report to welfare rights and debt advice supervisor.
19. Initiate and contribute to take-up work with Tameside residents.
20. To assist with the production of reports, with regard to the work of the postholder.
21. To operate a PC and other office equipment associated with providing a customer service.
22. To prepare and produce own written material.
23. To provide case studies and data for the evaluation of the project
24. To contribute to the development of the whole of the welfare rights service.
25. 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.
26. To carry out any duties that correspond reasonably to the general character of the post and are commensurate with its level of responsibility.
27. To converse at ease with customers and provide advice in accurate spoken English
28. To work outside normal office hours if and when necessary.

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

**Welfare Rights Officer – Rough Sleepers Initiative**

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| **Experience** | **Essential/Desirable** |
| Significant experience of delivering welfare benefits and tax credits advice work | E |
| Experience of benefit maximisation work | E |
| Experience of working directly with the public and in particular vulnerable people | 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 verbal and written communication skills | E |
| Ability to work to deadlines | E |
| Knowledge of homelessness issues  | 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 |