

**Trainee Welfare Benefits Caseworker**

Job Pack

**Position**: Trainee Welfare Benefits Caseworker
**Location**: Bedford
**Closing date**: 1 October 2021
**Salary**: £20,009.60 per annum during probation, after a successful 3-month probation this will increase to £21,933.60 per annum
**Hours per week**: 37 hours per week
**Contract Type**: Fixed term until 31 March 2022 (possibility of continuation subject to funding)

Citizens Advice Bedford is looking for an enthusiastic Trainee Welfare Benefits Caseworker to join our team to provide welfare benefits advice to maximise income for clients and their families within Bedford Borough.

The service includes the provision of advice, information and digital support and this will be delivered via face to face, telephone and digital channels.

You’ll have the ability to interview clients using sensitive listening and questioning skills to get to the root of the issues and empower clients to resolve their welfare benefit queries in the most appropriate way.

Experience of giving advice and welfare benefits system is desirable.

**Closing date for applications: 1 October 2021**

Every local Citizens Advice is a registered charity. Different application procedures are adopted by individual local Citizens Advice. Contact the relevant one as outlined in the information about this role. You should not send an application form to national Citizens Advice.

All local Citizens Advice produce their own annual report, but you can find out more about the Citizens Advice network or download the latest national Citizens Advice annual report.

  **Role profile**

**Key work areas and tasks**

* To undertake training
* To deliver benefits advice
* To deliver a home visiting service

**Casework**

Once trained you will provide casework covering the full range of welfare benefits including;

* Specialist benefits advice – including ‘better off calculations’ and assistance with claims
* Reviewing completed claims for AA / DLA / ESA
* Advising on and completing supersession forms for service users looking to increase rates of AA / DLA / ESA
* Challenging benefit decisions
* Representing service users at First Tier Tribunal hearings
* Provide advice and guidance on Upper Tribunal appeals (*we will consider candidates who have not had this experience*)

In addition, you will be expected to;

* Act for the client where necessary by calculating, negotiating, drafting or writing letters and telephoning.
* Negotiate with third parties as appropriate.
* Ensure income maximisation through the take up of appropriate benefits.
* Assist clients with other related problems where they are an integral part of their case and refer to other advisers or specialist agencies as appropriate.
* Ensure that all casework conforms to the bureau's Office Manual and the requirements of the referring party.
* Maintain case records for the purpose of continuity of casework, information retrieval, statistical monitoring and report preparation.
* Ensure that all work conforms to the bureau's systems and procedures.

**Social policy**

* Assist with social policy work by providing information about clients' circumstances where appropriate.
* Provide statistical information on the number of clients and nature of cases and provide regular reports to bureau management.

**Professional development**

* Keep up to date with legislation, case law, policies and procedures relating to welfare benefits and undertake appropriate training. This is especially important with the forthcoming benefit reforms.
* Attend relevant internal and external meetings as agreed with the line manager.
* Prepare for and attend supervision sessions/team meetings/management team meetings as appropriate.

**Administration**

* Use IT for statistical recording, record keeping and document production.
* Keep up to date with policies and procedures relevant to bureau work and undertake appropriate training.
* Attend internal and external meetings as agreed with the CEO.
* Maintain a library of reference material and case law.

**Other duties and responsibilities**

* Carry out any other tasks that may be within the scope of the post to ensure the effective delivery and development of the service.
* Abide by health and safety guidelines and share responsibility for own safety and that of colleagues.

 **Person specification**

**Essential Criteria**

1. A commitment to the goals of Citizens Advice.
2. Excellent written and oral communication skills, using appropriate styles, methods and timing to maximise understanding and impact.
3. Strong interpersonal skills, with the ability to build effective working relationships with external and internal stakeholders.
4. Demonstrable ability to work under pressure, with good organisation, prioritisation and time management skills.
5. Experience of using a range of IT tools to carry out your work, including case management systems, Microsoft Office applications, online applications, internet and email etc.
6. Demonstrate the ability to undergo intensive training.
7. A proven ability to work effectively with a wide variety of stakeholders

**Desirable Criteria**:

1. Experience of working within a client facing role
2. Experience and knowledge of the welfare benefits system

**Requirements for role** *(candidates will confirm at application stage and at interview)*

1. Ability to contribute to purpose driven, people focused, collaborative and transparent organisation and team culture.
2. Ability to keep up to date with technology and take individual responsibility for learning new technologies.
3. Commitment to equality and diversity.
4. Awareness that Citizens Advice service users are at the heart of everything we do.

**Citizens Advice Bedford is committed to equal opportunities both in service provision and employment.**