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| **Welfare Rights Advisers (Trainees considered)****Job description & Personal Specification** |

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| **Reporting to:** Welfare Benefits Team Leader & Advice Services Manager  |
| **Purpose of role:** To undertake casework on behalf of vulnerable and marginalised clients who require specialist legal advice around welfare benefits. This will include representation at mandatory reconsiderations and appeals, including First Tier and Upper Tribunals where appropriate.To participate in benefit take-up campaigns and pop-up advice sessions at community locations. To assist with providing specialist welfare benefits advice and training to non-welfare benefits advisers working at CANS**About Citizens Advice North Somerset**: We provide a range of advice services through digital means, by telephone and in person. We seek to empower our clients and support them to improve their confidence and capability on a wide range of issues. We aim to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone living or working in North Somerset who needs our help and support, by providing accessible, effective and tailored information and advice that is free, independent, confidential and impartial. We believe that our common humanity makes us equal in worth, dignity and rights. We value diversity, promote equity and challenge discrimination. |
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| **Main duties and Responsibilities** |
| **Casework** |
| * Provide specialist legal advice, casework and representation in all areas of welfare benefits.
* Research, analyse and interpret complex information to prepare and present cases to the appropriate statutory bodies, tribunals and courts.
* Ensure income maximisation through the take up of appropriate benefits, discretionary relief and grants, including at community pop-up locations.
* Use interpersonal skills to explore, listen and understand complex problems and tailor approach to advise accordingly with regards to benefit entitlement.
* Participate in awareness raising campaigns for marginalised communities.
* Work as a team to produce a library of self-help guides and common advice topics for members of the public.
* Work as a team to ensure/create a dedicated specialist advice service is available for communities such as Gypsy and Traveller/Deaf communities and those who may struggle to access digital services.
* Ensure that all work conforms to the organisation’s office manual and the Advice Quality standard / Legal Aid Agency’s Quality Mark / other funding requirements, as appropriate.
* Ensure that work reflects and supports the Citizens Advice service’s equity and diversity strategy.
* Maintain detailed case records for the purpose of continuity of casework, information retrieval, statistical monitoring and report preparation.
* Mentor and participate in the training of other CANS advisers to upskill and improve knowledge of the social security system.
* Provide peer support to volunteer advisers during advice sessions either on the phone or face to face.
* Ensure all relevant policies and procedures are followed.
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| **Other duties and responsibilities** |
| * Keep up to date with legislation, policies and procedures and undertake appropriate training.
* Keep up to date with Citizens Advice aims, principles and procedures and ensure these are followed.
* Create a positive working environment in which equity and diversity are well managed, dignity at work is upheld and staff can do their best.
* Ensure that work reflects and supports the Citizens Advice service’s equity and diversity strategy.
* Abide by health and safety guidelines and share responsibility for own health and safety and that of colleagues.
* Carry out any other tasks within the scope of the post to ensure the effective delivery and development of the service.
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| **Training and development**  |
| * Complete required training to comply with requirement of the role and quality assurance processes.
* To be appraised regularly and to engage fully in this process to further personal development and maximise your contribution to CANS.
* Attend relevant internal and external meetings as agreed with the line manager.
* Assist with Service Initiatives for the improvement of services.
* In conjunction with your line manager identify own training needs.
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| **Research & Campaigns and monitoring**  |
| * Assist with Research & Campaigns work by providing information about clients' circumstances through the appropriate channel, with a particular focus on vulnerable and marginalised clients and those who struggle to access digital services.
* Keep up to date with research and campaign issues and ensure research and campaigns is promoted and integrated in a way relevant to the role.
* To assist in localizing data collected, improving its relevancy for partnership working and meeting demand.
* Alert clients to research and campaign options.
* Participate in relevant consultations and campaigns.
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| **Person specification**  |
|  | **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| 1. | Proven ability to interview clients using sensitive listening and questioning skills to get to the root of issues and empower clients, whilst maintaining structure and control of meetings. | **✓** |  |
| 2. | In depth knowledge and recent experience of welfare benefits legislation and income maximisation. |  | **✓** |
| 3. | Ability to research, analyse and interpret complex information and produce and present clear reports verbally and in writing. | **✓** |  |
| 4. | Effective writing skills with particular emphasis on persuasive reviews, reports and correspondence. | **✓** |  |
| 5. | Ordered approach to casework and an ability and willingness to follow and develop agreed procedures.  | **✓** |  |
| 6. | Ability to use a variety of IT/digital systems and packages.  | **✓** |  |
| 7. | Ability to act as a specialist on matters relating to welfare benefits to staff at CANS |  | **✓** |
| 8. | Ability to give and receive feedback objectively and sensitively and a willingness to challenge constructively. | **✓** |  |
| 9. | Ability to work with a variety of organisations and to earn and maintain the trust and respect of those people with whom the organisation deals | **✓** |  |
| 10. | Proven understanding of equality and diversity and its application to the provision of advice.  | **✓** |  |
| 11. | Understanding of the issues affecting society and their implications for clients and service provision and a commitment to the organisations research & campaigns programme | **✓** |  |
| 12. | Understanding of and commitment to the aims and principles of Citizens Advice service and its equal opportunities policies. | **✓** |  |
| 13. | Commitment to continuing professional development | **✓** |  |
| 14. | Ability to work with and empower marginalised groups in the community and/or those who struggle to access services, whether digital or in person. | **✓** |  |

In accordance with Citizens Advice national policy we may require the successful candidate to be screened by the DBS. However, a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to your being able to take up the job.