

## Job Description

<b>Post title</b>	Welfare Support Advisor (Debt and Benefits)
<b>Post number</b>	
<b>Grade</b>	Band 6
<b>Responsible to</b>	Welfare Support Team Manager
<b>Responsible for</b>	N/A

### Overall objectives of the post

To be responsible for the provision of a proactive detailed Welfare Benefit and Debt Advice service in relation to residents in the borough, including work with those who have debt issues, withdrawal of benefits, support into employment, welfare reforms, eviction, or threat of eviction. To represent residents in respect of appeals and tribunals, up to and including county court. To help and support residents to sustain their homes. To provide a seamless advice service to residents of South Tyneside.

### Key tasks of the post

- You will be responsible for delivering a high quality, proactive, customer focused and efficient Welfare Benefit and Debt Advice service. You must:**
  - Provide information, advice and representation for individuals in respect of welfare benefits, debt, budgeting, support into employment, and tenancy sustainment up to and including tribunal and County Court.
  - Work in partnership with DWP, Income Section, Council Tax, Housing Benefit, HMRC, creditors and other relevant agencies to resolve the benefit and debt problems referred to you
  - Be proactive in areas of low uptake of benefits and maximise entitlements and provide a reactive service where a crisis has occurred.
  - To be fully up to date and conversant in relevant legislation, policies and procedures in regards to debt and benefits and welfare reforms and be able to communicate these to residents, colleagues, voluntary organisations, and members.
  - Deliver a seamless service to residents, being a single point of contact, where possible, though operating an efficient referral system to colleagues, or third sector agencies where this is unavoidable.
  - Provide a proactive and targeted tenancy sustainment service which looks to provide help and support and enables residents to sustain their homes and tenancies.

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- Develop and deliver training to relevant, partners and residents where required
- Robustly manage and monitor a caseload, ensuring that all contact /progress is documented within the relevant management systems.
- Deliver a flexible service, accessible from a range of sites within the borough as required eg organise and attend surgeries, drop in sessions, home visits meetings and events where appropriate.
- Liaise with Income Officers in the prevention of eviction for STC tenants.

## **2 Be proactive in identifying tenants/residents and their needs within your target group**

- Be fully up to date and conversant in welfare reform changes
- Keep up to date with key changes in the benefit system, including major changes in case law and significant tribunal decisions
- Identify areas of low take up of benefits or service and undertake campaigns to publicise the service and entitlements.
- Receive referrals from the other teams in line with the debt advice and rent arrears and all other income related issues.
- Ensure targets for appointment times are met.
- Promote affordable credit providers, Home Contents Insurance, Basic Bank Accounts, and an awareness of illegal money lenders
- Ensure residents and tenants receive the support they need to improve their lives, including health and employability support
- Champion the Welfare Support Service internally and externally attending meetings, talking to stakeholders, local authorities and residents and encouraging joint working
- Make referrals to other agencies where appropriate and maintaining effective relationships with all partners and stakeholders
- Develop budgeting advice and guidance sessions for residents, explore external funding opportunities and encourage residents to participate
- Assist colleagues with complex applications for the Local Welfare Provision Scheme and liaise with these applicants.
- Develop schemes and champion digital inclusion opportunities which benefit residents.
- Actively promote and advise applicants in regards to the Local Welfare Provision Scheme.
- Identify other sources of assistance available to service users where the Support Service is unable to assist.
- Prepare Performance Monitoring Information for the Welfare Support Team Manager.

## **3 You will be responsible for contributing to a great team. You must:**

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- Work as part of the Tenancy Services Team helping and supporting all colleagues in the delivery of excellent services.
- Be responsible for keeping Managers and Colleagues informed of the service so that work is co-ordinated across the service.
- Develop professional relationships and share good practice with Colleagues, Managers and Members to aid communication and consistency.
- Comply with the organisations commitment to Equality and Diversity in the delivery of all services.
- Demonstrate total professionalism, propriety and value diversity.

**4 You will be responsible for making a corporate contribution. You must:**

- Understand and contribute towards the Corporate Strategies and priorities of both South Tyneside Homes and the Council.
- Contribute towards ensuring that all operational activity and resources are geared towards delivering a Value for Money service.
- Be aware of and work within the budgets available.
- Participate and contribute with a view to ensuring the organisations commitment to continuous improvements

All employees have a responsibility to undertake training and development as required. They also have a responsibility to assist, where appropriate and necessary, with the training and development of fellow employees.

All employees have a responsibility of care for their own and others' health and safety.

The above list is not exhaustive and other duties may be attached to the post from time to time. Variation may also occur to the duties and responsibilities without changing the general character of the post.

You are expected to have a flexible approach to your working hours, there will be a requirement for some evening and occasional weekend work and you should have the ability to travel between locations.

**Ref: TA**  
**Date: 8th April 2015**