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| **Job Description** | |
| **Post title** | Welfare Rights Officer |
| **JE Reference No** | A5266 |
| **Grade** | Grade 9 |
| **Service** | Resources |
| **Service Area** | Finance & Transactional Services – Assessment & Awards Service |
| **Reporting to** | The post holder will be accountable to the Team Leader (Welfare Rights). |
| **Location** | Your normal place of work will be Green Lane, Spennymoor or Comeleon House, Tanfield, but you may be required to work at any Council workplace within County Durham. |
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| **DBS** | This post is subject to a Basic disclosure. |
| **Flexitime** | This post is eligible for flexitime. |
| **Politically restricted** | This post is not designated as a politically restricted post in accordance with the requirements of Section 1(5) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and by regulations made from time to time by the Secretary of State. |

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| **Description of role** |

The delivery of a highly effective Welfare Rights Service to service users in County Durham.

The Welfare Rights Team is responsible for providing advice and representation in relation to social security benefits, housing and council tax benefit, and tax credits within County Durham. The Team provides advice and assistance to the general public as well as the County Council and other professional and voluntary agencies.

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| **Duties and responsibilities** |

Listed below are the responsibilities this role will be primarily responsible for:

* Providing a range of services including benefits surgeries for the general public, telephone advice to the general public, advice and assistance to users of the Welfare Rights service on their entitlements and rights, represent appellants at tribunals and to the Upper Tier tribunals on all aspects of Social Security law and to conduct home visits to service users when necessary.
* Keep up-to-date on all aspects of social policy and social security legislation and case law.
* To undertake research activities in respect of Social Security law in order to identify areas of need within the county and to plan to meet identified needs.
* Liaise with other advice agencies, benefit administration agencies, relevant organisations as appropriate
* Carry out training and support of staff and other agencies and services, with the aim that they will be proficient in assisting clients with benefit enquiries and to work productively with the Welfare Rights Team.
* To contribute to the development and promotion of the Welfare Rights service for the public and the County Council within County Durham.
* Provide a high quality customer services response to all users of service.
* Contribute to a whole team approach in meeting quality and performance targets
* Provide a range of services for people affected by cancer including benefits surgeries, home visits, telephone advice, providing up to date relevant information, literature and publicity materials as appropriate.

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| **Organisational responsibilities** |

* **Values and behaviours**

To demonstrate and be a role model for the council’s values and behaviours to promote and encourage positive behaviours, enhancing the quality and integrity of the services we provide.

* **Smarter working, transformation and design principles**

To seek new and innovative ideas to work smarter, irrespective of job role, and to be creative, innovative and empowered. Understand the operational impact of transformational change and service design principles to support new ways of working and to meet customer needs.

* **Communication**

To communicate effectively with our customers, managers, peers and partners and to work collaboratively to provide the best possible public service. Communication between teams, services and partner organisations is imperative in providing the best possible service to our public.

* **Health, Safety and Wellbeing**

To take responsibility for health, safety and wellbeing in accordance with the council’s Health and Safety policy and procedures.

* **Equality and diversity**

To promote a society that gives everyone an equal chance to learn, work and live, free from discrimination and prejudice and ensure our commitment is put into practice. All employees are responsible for eliminating unfair and unlawful discrimination in everything that they do.

* **Confidentiality**

To work in a way that does not divulge personal and/or confidential information and follow the council’s policies and procedures in relation to data protection and security of information.

* **Climate Change**

To contribute to our corporate responsibility in relation to climate change by considering and limiting the carbon impact of activities during the course of your work, wherever possible.

* **Performance management**

To promote a culture whereby performance management is ingrained and the highest of standards and performance are achieved by all. Contribute to the council’s Performance and Development Review processes to ensure continuous learning and improvement and to increase organisational performance.

* **Quality assurance (for applicable posts)**

To set, monitor and evaluate standards at individual, team and service level so that the highest standards of service are delivered and maintained. Use data, where appropriate, to enhance the quality of service provision and support decision making processes.

* **Management and leadership (for applicable posts)**

To provide vision and leadership to inspire and empower all employees so they can reach their full potential and contribute to the council’s values and behaviours. Managers and leaders must engage in personal development to ensure they are equipped to lead transformational change; always searching for better ways to do things differently to meet organisational changes and service priorities.

* **Financial management (for applicable posts)**

To manage a designated budget, ensuring that the service achieves value for money in all circumstances through the monitoring of expenditure and the early identification of any financial irregularity.

*The above is not exhaustive and the post holder will be expected to undertake any duties which may reasonably fall within the level of responsibility and the competence of the post as directed by your manager.*

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| Person specification | | |
|  | Essential | Desirable |
| Qualifications | * 2 A Levels Graded A-C or equivalent. | * Degree in a relevant discipline e.g. Law or Social Policy |
| Experience | * Experience of: * Multi-agency partnership working * Report writing * Preparing presentations * Experience of advice-giving on social security matters * Tribunal representation on behalf of the public * Developing and presenting Training programmes | * Experience in a Social care or related setting. * Experience in all fields of social security benefits ideally to Upper Tier level. |
| Skills & Knowledge | * To work on an individual basis and as a member of a team sharing skills knowledge and experience. * Communicate clearly and concisely in both written and verbal forms. * To plan and organise work effectively under pressure and to deadlines. * Legislation and guidance relating to The Social Security Benefits System. * An appreciation of the need to provide a value for money service. | * IT e.g. Word, Excel, Client Information database. |
| Personal Qualities | * Respond quickly to phone calls and messages and pass on information promptly to colleagues. * Keep information secure and confidential * Current driving licence/ car owner or access to a means of mobility support. (If driving must have current valid driving licence and appropriate insurance). |  |