Job Description

JOB TITLE:	**Welfare Benefits Advisor – Based at Newcastle Foodbank**
SALARY:	**£30,000 per annum** plus 6% contributory pension scheme
HOURS:	**35 hours per week** (option for 30-35 hours if required)
ANNUAL LEAVE:	**25 days per annum, + 8 statutory bank holidays,** plus 1 extra day each year of employment (up to 30 days)
RESPONSIBLE TO:	**Advice Services Manager**

Key tasks:

- Provide **Welfare benefits** advice and support to individuals and families accessing foodbanks in Newcastle
- Helping people to maximise income by advising on welfare benefits entitlements, better-off calculations, budgeting advice and money advice
- Benefit application support and completion
- Providing information on homelessness & housing support available and signposting to specialist housing and homelessness providers
- Applying for crisis grant funding on behalf of service users
- Making appropriate referrals to specialist organisations for additional help with related specialist issues, e.g. employment, family, housing issues, drugs and alcohol
- Referring into FISCUS team and to our Bundles for Babies Baby Bank and our Community Clothes Bank
- Meeting project targets and maintaining high quality standards
- Keeping accurate case records on Advice Pro (training will be given)
- Produce written reports monthly & quarterly including progress, outputs, data and case studies
- Ensuring all work conforms to correct procedures and maintaining confidentiality at all times
- Keeping up to date with and complying with GDPR
- Support a new Trainee Benefits Advisor and volunteers

Debt / Money Advice (training can be provided)

- Identifying debt reduction options including insolvency options and explaining implications, enabling clients to make informed decisions
- Acting for client and negotiating with creditors and debt enforcement agencies
- Preparing a Standard Financial Statement (SFS), holding action, making offers of payments (pro rata, token, and lump sum offers, deductions from benefits), debt write-offs, payment moratorium, etc
- Budgeting advice, fuel poverty advice and advising on shopping on a low-income
- Refer to Specialist agencies for insolvency options including: Debt Relief Orders, IVA's, Bankruptcy

Professional Development:

- Keep knowledge of welfare benefits updated
- Identify own training needs with support from FISCUS Advice Services Manager, CEO and wider staff team
- Attend relevant internal and external meetings and training events including Safeguarding training
- Attend monthly support & supervision sessions and team meetings

Other Duties and Responsibilities:

- Demonstrate commitment to the aims and policies of FISCUS and Newcastle Foodbank
- Abide by health and safety guidelines and share responsibility for own and colleagues' safety
- Carry out any other tasks including occasionally covering other team member duties to ensure the effective delivery and development of FISCUS Advice, Crisis & Community services and Newcastle Foodbank Welfare Advice Service

Person Specification

When we shortlist and interview for this post, the Person Specification will be used to assess each applicant in terms of their ability to do the job as set out in the job description.

When completing your LETTER OF APPLICATION and CV you should try to show how your skills, qualities, experience and relevant qualifications match each of the criteria below. As well as work experience, you can draw on personal and voluntary work experience. **The Post holder shall have:**

(Essential criteria)

1. Practicing knowledge and recent experience of providing welfare benefits advice to vulnerable groups and those in receipt of welfare benefits, tax credits and pension credits.
2. The ability to prioritise tasks, to work towards project targets, meet deadlines and to manage time effectively under own initiative.
3. The ability to communicate effectively and sensitively with clients, partner organisations and third parties.
4. The ability to work effectively alone and as part of a team.
5. Ability to maintain a professional and confidential manner at all times
6. Good practical knowledge of IT systems for case recording, internet/emails, online resources.
7. Understanding of and commitment to equality & diversity and equal opportunities
8. Empathy and understanding of the issues facing people dependent on welfare benefits and people who need to use food banks and require a variety of crisis support
9. Numeracy skills required to understand and check benefits calculations and experience of using a benefit calculator (preferably QBC) (training can be given)
10. Experience of completing monitoring reports and case studies in line with FISCUS and funders requirements

(Desirable)

1. Knowledge in all areas of debt management and income maximisation is desirable
2. The ability to research, analyse and interpret complex information.
3. Full driving licence and use of a vehicle is preferred. The role requires travel within tight timescales from multiple venues across West and East Newcastle. Candidate must be able to demonstrate they can meet the travel requirements of the post.
4. Experience of working within a foodbank or crisis environment would be advantageous

Closing Date: Thursday 13th February 2025 **Interviews: Thursday 20th February 2025**

Please Apply by outlining how your skills and experience meet the requirements of the post by emailing your **CV** and a **Letter of Application** to: courtneyknowles@fiscus.org

You can also apply by sending your CV and Letter of Application by post to: Courtney Knowles, FISCUS, Coop Centre, Whitehouse Road, Hendon, Sunderland, SR2 8AH.