Adviser (Isabel Hospice) Role Description

Position: Adviser (Isabel Hospice)

Responsible to: Deputy Service Manager

Hours: 22.5 hours per week

Location: Citizens Advice East Herts office in Ware, Isabel Hospice day centres and travel around eastern Hertfordshire visiting clients at home

Salary: £23,231 (including outer London Fringe) FTE

Contract: Fixed term until 31 March 2019

Context of Role:
Our advice service is delivered predominately by a team of volunteer advisers alongside some paid specialist project advisers. We have two main sites based in Bishop’s Stortford and Ware, and a smaller presence in Buntingford, Hertford and Sawbridgeworth.

In addition to our core service we work in partnership with Isabel Hospice to provide a specialist advice service to patients and their families across eastern Hertfordshire. The Adviser will offer generalist and benefits advice at a time and location that suits the client. This can be in the client’s home, at one of Isabel Hospice day centres or our office in Ware. Follow-up casework will be undertaken as part of the service.

The Adviser will work extremely closely with other members of the team at Isabel Hospice and also alongside specialist volunteer advisers working on the project.
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ROLE DESCRIPTION

Key work areas and tasks:
The Adviser will work closely with other members of the team at Isabel Hospice and will specifically provide advice at generalist help level in the following areas:

- Income maximisation including eligibility for benefits
- Support to claim relevant benefits
- Identification of debts and commitments
- Creation of financial statements
- Negotiation with priority creditors
- Casework relating to ongoing related benefits and debts
- Support for bereaved families in terms of maximising income, claiming benefits, budgeting and organising household finances
- Updating relevant members of the Isabel Hospice team with changes to the benefit system.

Casework

- Provide a home visiting service giving advice to clients and their families on entitlements to welfare benefits as appropriate.
- Support clients and their families in claiming benefits including completion of forms, calculating entitlement, negotiating, drafting or writing letters and telephoning.
- Act for the clients where necessary, by following up the progress of claims, collecting evidence in support of claims, and negotiating with third parties.
- Provide support to bereaved families including benefits, probate, funeral payments and associated paperwork.
- Provide casework covering benefits, debt and income maximisation.
- 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.
- Provide outreach sessions at Isabel Hospice and the day centres.
- Work with, allocate tasks, and provide support to volunteers who work on the project.
- Liaise regularly with staff at Isabel Hospice to ensure a seamless referral system operates for clients as required.
- Work with colleagues at Isabel Hospice to develop their knowledge of welfare benefits.
- Ensure that all work conforms to Citizens Advice East Herts’ systems and procedures, those of Isabel Hospice, and the Citizens Advice Quality standard as appropriate.
Maintain close liaison with relevant external agencies including other local Citizens Advice in Hertfordshire.

Case recording and handling information
- Maintain case records for the purpose of continuity of casework, information retrieval, and statistical monitoring and report preparation both on Citizens Advice and Isabel Hospice systems.
- Collect, access and handle client information as required to fulfil the role. Abide by legislation and local policies regarding information handling, confidentiality, data protection and information assurance.

Research and campaigns
- Assist with research and campaigns work by providing information about clients' circumstances.
- Provide statistical information on the number of clients, the nature of cases and provide regular reports and case studies as requested.
- Establish and record outcomes of the client benefit claims.
- Alert other staff to local and national issues.

Professional development
- Keep up to date with legislation, case law, policies and procedures relating to welfare benefits and other advice areas and undertake appropriate training.
- Attend any training required by Isabel Hospice.
- Read relevant publications.
- Attend relevant internal and external meetings as agreed with the line manager.
- Identify and implement own training and development needs.

Other duties and responsibilities
- Demonstrate commitment to the aims and policies of the Citizens Advice service.
- Abide by health and safety guidelines and share responsibility for own safety and that of colleagues.
- Carry out any other tasks that may be within the scope of the post to ensure the effective delivery and development of the service.
PERSON SPECIFICATION

- Knowledge and experience of welfare benefits and generalist advice, ideally in a Citizens Advice environment.
- Understanding of, and commitment to, the aims and principles of the Citizens Advice service and its equal opportunities policies.
- Ability to work with a wide variety of people, including staff at Isabel Hospice and those with life limiting illness and recently bereaved, and as part of a team.
- Understanding of the issues involved when working with vulnerable clients.
- Ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing.
- Sensitive approach to working with clients who have life limiting illness and their families.
- Access to own transport and willingness to travel around eastern Hertfordshire to visit clients and their families in their homes and day centres.
- Ability to give feedback objectively and sensitively.
- Ability to use IT in the provision of advice, case recording across two organisations and the preparation of reports and submissions.
- Understanding of the requirements of data handling, storage and confidentiality and the ability to maintain electronic and paper-based casework systems.
- Ability to prioritise own work, meet deadlines, manage caseload, and maintain own standards.
- Ability to record, analyse and interpret information.
- Numerate to the level required in the tasks.
- Understanding of the issues affecting society and their implications for clients and service provision.
- Good, up to date understanding of equality and diversity and its application to the provision of advice.
- Commitment to continuous professional development.

Please note that a DBS check will be required for this role.