

Job Profile



Job Title: Welcome Newham Specialist Benefits & Debts Lead	Service Area: Welcome Newham
Directorate: Public Health – Adults & Health	Post Number: Fusion
Grade: P02	Evaluation No: 6801 Date: May 2023
Accountable to:	Welcome Newham Manager

People at the heart of everything we do

We are committed to putting people – Newham residents and Council staff – at the heart of all we do. Our approach is a collaborative joint enterprise between residents, the Mayor, Members, Council staff and the Corporate Management Team.

Equality and diversity

We are committed to and champion equality and diversity in all aspects of employment with the London Borough of Newham. All employees are expected to understand and promote our Equality and Diversity policy in the course of their work.

Protecting our staff and services

Adherence to health and safety requirements and proper risk management is required from all employees in so far as is relevant to their role. All employees are expected to understand and promote good health and safety practices and manage risks appropriately.

Corporate parent

We believe that every member of staff working for Newham Council should understand and fulfil our corporate parenting responsibilities for our looked after children that we have under the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

Overall Purpose of Job

The London Borough of Newham is recruiting Welcome Newham Specialist Benefits & Debt Lead to be part of its Welcome Newham Team. The Welcome Newham Team is a multilingual team, who co-ordinate and administrate the Government's Home for Ukraine and Family visa schemes and offer wrap around support to all new arrivals into Newham including asylum seekers and other refugees on government resettlement schemes.

As a member of this team, you will provide support to those newly arrived or recently granted their leave to remain in the form of benefits and debt advice including casework to support them with income maximisation and reduce the threat of homelessness. You will be the first point of contact for Welcome Newham Officers to support in queries and applications in relation to universal credit.

Attendance at the Welcome Newham One Stop Shop and other “drop in” surgeries for debt and benefits advice.

To identify Universal Credit / Housing Benefit entitlement and other issues for all newly arrived residents known to Welcome Newham, to submit applications as appropriate for residents, remaining involved until the claim is determined. The post holder will have expert knowledge and experience of dealing with such claims in accordance with relevant legislation and council procedures.

As appropriate, to encourage residents to get paid employment, providing estimates of In Work benefits and signposting or referring to employment services. To support the resident (through direct work) in gaining the knowledge and skills to be able to manage their finances and develop their independent living skills.

To, wherever possible, encourage and enable clients to self-help and improve their personal and economic resilience.

To act as specialist Benefits & Debt advisor, mentor and trainer to the Welcome Newham team to build team capacity in this specialist area of work.

To work in a co-ordinated and joined up way with other officers, Council services and external services, to help improve clients' financial capability and overall resilience.

The post holder will be the first point of contact for Welcome Newham Officers to support in queries and applications in relation to universal credit.

Job Context

1. The postholder reports to the Welcome Newham Manager.
2. The post holder may be required to carryout home visits to provide advice on occasions.
3. The postholder may be required to work from home and other Newham based venues according to the needs of the service and travel to different Newham-based venues to deliver the service and to attend meetings both within and externally to the Borough.
4. The postholder does not have any direct line management but may have occasional supervision for people assisting on cases and receiving training.
5. The postholder does not have any budget responsibility.
6. The post holder may be required to work occasional evenings and weekends.

Principal Accountabilities and Responsibilities:

Responsibilities and accountabilities are intended to be a guide to the range and level of work expected of the post holder. This is not an exhaustive list of all tasks that may fall to the post holder and employees will be expected to carry out such other reasonable duties which may be required from time to time.

1. Provide a benefits advice casework service, including making applications and follow on work, up to specialist level, to improve residents' immediate and future financial situations.
2. To review applications that are rejected or assessed incorrectly and where appropriate to appeal decisions.
3. Provide information and advice on debt issues including casework.
4. Ensure that the service delivers advice in line with its policy of encouraging and supporting clients to:
 - (i) self-help wherever possible, both immediately and in the future
 - (ii) improve their economic situation and financial capability.
5. Identify other issues affecting clients' ability to maintain or improve their economic well-being and potential, then ensure these are dealt with through signposting or referrals wherever possible.
6. Deliver training to external providers and Welcome Newham staff about the Universal Credit process, Housing element of Universal Credit and other relevant benefits.
7. To be responsible for coordinating and leading on this work, remaining involved until claims are in receipt and ensuring at all times a professional, customer focused high quality service to achieve the set objectives.
8. To facilitating the process, monitoring, reporting and evaluation of this work.
9. As appropriate, to encourage clients to get paid employment, providing estimates of In Work benefits and signposting or referring to employment services.
10. Keep accurate and comprehensive case records, recording all interactions and outcomes on the appropriate systems.
11. Keep the Welcome Newham Manager informed of caseload size and other activities. Consult with the manager when guidance is needed.
12. Stay informed of all changes to relevant legislation, regulations and practices of the DWP, HMRC and LBN Benefits.
13. Keep in contact and liaise with the senior officers within Our Newham Money to ensure that officers are aware of any changes affecting benefits.
14. Develop and maintain a good working knowledge of the Council's web based debt advice.
15. Liaise with other Council departments and third sector organisations to develop and maintain an understanding of their customers' needs for information, advice and guidance on benefits issues.
16. Produce written procedures, training manuals, guidance notes and other documentation, the ensure Welcome Newham staff are trained in benefits advice and applications.
17. Provide support for officers at the 'front line', by giving a professional opinion when asked.
18. Raising any safeguarding concerns with Team Leader/manager and following safeguarding processes to provide the right support to residents.
19. General administrative work for all the above.

General/Professional

To keep your line manager up to date with progress against targets and any issues.

To manage own diary and the expectations of residents and partner organisations, ensuring that conflicting priorities are identified and managed in a way that promotes and supports the professional standards of the service.

To work effectively as part of a team, providing cover to colleagues as appropriate. Flexibility and adaptability to a constantly changing work flow is essential.

To attend meetings, representing Welcome Newham both internally and externally

To ensure that the work carried out is in accordance with the required Council's standards, General Data Protection Regulations, legal requirements, and Council's objectives.

To make effective use of ICT systems and processes to develop and provide monitoring information to enable effective performance management to take place.

To actively participate in team meetings and your own continuous professional development, identifying suitable development opportunities with your line manager.

Understand and promote our Equality and Diversity policy in the course of your work.

To undertake any other duties which may be reasonably required and within the capability of the postholder.

About the role

We are looking for a Welcome Newham Specialist Benefit & Debt Lead to join our Welcome Newham Team.

You will provide support to those newly arrived or recently granted their leave to remain in the form of benefits and debt advice including casework to support them with income maximisation and reduce the threat of homelessness by way of face to face/video and telephone appointments; making relevant applications on their behalf and follow up work as required to improve their financial resilience.

Attending the Welcome Newham One Stop Shop and other "drop in" surgeries for debt and benefits advice. To act as specialist and mentor to others in the Welcome Newham Team, imparting knowledge on benefits and debt advice to increase capacity in the team.

This role is office based, from Our Newham Money offices and Newham Dockside, but you could be required to work from other Newham based offices as deemed appropriate.

This is a temporary role on Fixed Term Contract or Seconded role, until 31st March 2024.

IMPORTANT: If you are an LBN member of staff and applying for this role as a secondment you should note that secondments are subject to the agreement of your current employing service. Please ensure that you inform your line manager of your intention to apply for the post in the first instance.

Working Hours

The team currently work 36 hours per week, 5 days at 7.2 hours covering Monday – Friday 10am-5.45pm. Flexibility is required, as outside normal working hours is

required so we can meet the needs of our community, going out to them when they are available. Evening and weekend visits to residents will be necessary and attendance at community events to promote our role and offer support is required. The Council is willing to be flexible with working patterns and will always try to match the rota to suit individual requirements. However, this cannot always be guaranteed.

Training and continuing professional development

This role will be subject to a full DBS check, local training programme (including GDPR and Safeguarding, unless can be demonstrated as having been taken in previous 12 months). This must be recorded as done on FUSION. Completion of these modules is a compulsory part of the role. As part of your induction, you will also receive training in supportive conversations, the case management system used to support this work. Training is accessed remotely; therefore, access to a computer is essential - which will be provided, if not already available. Home internet connection is essential.

Newham Council is committed to supporting your continued professional development. We will look to link you with training opportunities to increase your knowledge and expertise in various matters related to your role including welfare support.

Travel

Travel within the London Borough of Newham is necessary to complete visits to residents and community events. Please indicate in your application whether you have a full driving license. Any expenses connected to work travel will be reimbursed.

Personal Specification



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IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

The criteria listed in this Person Specification are all essential to the job. Where the Method of Assessment is stated to be the Application Form, your application needs to demonstrate clearly and concisely how you meet each of the criteria, even if other methods of assessment are also shown. If you do not address these criteria fully, or if we do not consider that you meet them, you will not be shortlisted. Please give specific examples wherever possible.

CRITERIA	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE:	
Experience of providing benefits and debt advice casework at a specialist level, for at least two years.	Application form/Interview
A clear understanding of ways in which people can improve their financial situation.	Application form/Interview
In depth knowledge of benefits and tax credits, including claim procedures	Application form/Interview
Experience of keeping accurate case records and providing accurate monitoring data.	Application form/Interview
Engaging with members of the public and with vulnerable residents	Application form/Interview
Handling difficult situations with sensitivity, care and	Application form/Interview

<p>Ability to work well under pressure, prioritise tasks and set own goals, working without supervision to achieve those goals.</p> <p>Ability to keep well organised records.</p> <p>Ability to use computer systems and learn new applications.</p>	<p>Application form/Interview</p> <p>Application form/Interview</p> <p>Application form/Interview</p>
<p>SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS</p> <p>The post is subject to an enhanced DBS check</p> <p>Willingness and ability to work flexibly to maintain service delivery, this includes working evenings and/or weekends. Ability to work remotely from home and across other Newham venues/offices.</p> <p>Commitment to the work and adhere to the strict guidelines and procedures required.</p> <p>Please indicate if you have a full driving license.</p>	<p>Satisfactory clearance at conditional offer stage</p> <p>Application Form/Interview</p> <p>Application Form</p> <p>Application Form</p>