**Central Borders Citizens Advice Bureau**

**Job Description**

Name of Employer: Central Borders Citizens Advice Bureau

Job Title: Benefits Adviser

Responsible to: Manager

**About the role**

To ensure the provision and development of quality advice, information and representation on statutory benefits and other social welfare matters in the Scottish Borders.

**Key responsibilities**

* Improving access to benefit entitlements and maximising income.
* Carry ongoing casework associated with this post at review and appeal level, assisting clients prepare for benefit appeals, research and draft written and legal submissions.
* Provide representation for clients at Social Security First Tier Tribunals.
* Deliver outreach advice sessions as required
* Provide support and guidance on complex cases to CAB staff and volunteers.
* Refer clients on to colleagues or other agencies as appropriate for specialist help with issues that fall outside the remit of the benefits service.
* Keep comprehensive records of casework which meet audit requirements, including use of CASTLE case recording system.
* Be responsible for the recording, collation and reporting of statistical data.
* Keep all records confidential, safe and accessible for future retrieval.
* Extract and compile information for social policy and other reporting purposes.
* Carry out relevant research and/or consultation exercises.
* Assist in developing and gathering evaluation feedback from service users and partners.
* Take responsibility for delivery of training and marketing.
* Undertake any other reasonable duties as requested by the Bureau Manager.

**Self-Management**

* Assist the manager to implement policies, procedures and protocols of the organisation.
* Take responsibility for personal safety in and out of the office in accordance with the organisation's health and safety procedures.
* Provide written reports on project progress and for other publications.

**Team work**

* Share relevant information and give support and encouragement to colleagues.
* Participate in team meetings and Annual General Meeting.
* Assist in the development of the organisation by participating in development days, task groups etc. when required.

**Personal Development**

* Keep up to date knowledge of Legislation, Policies and case law relevant to post
* Identify own learning needs and participate in identified learning opportunities when required.
* Feedback on learning opportunities.
* Assist with delivery of training when required.

**Promoting the service**

* Present a positive image of the Bureau at all times.
* Establish effective working relations and networking with other organisations and stakeholders ensuring a collaborative approach in service delivery.
* Assist in raising awareness of the service.

The above job description is not exhaustive but includes the broad duties inherent in the post as reasonably requested by the bureau manager.

**Person specification**

**Knowledge, skills and experience**

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|  | **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| **Qualifications** | Relevant qualification and/or training  Good standard of general education | Generalist Adviser Certificate of Competence  Evidence of training/qualification: Money Advice/ Welfare Rights/ Housing |
| **Experience** | In depth Welfare Benefits advice experience, particularly with vulnerable clients gained within the last two years.  Good awareness and understanding of how rights and advice issues impact on the local communities | Experience of partnership working in the voluntary and statutory sectors.  Experience of preparing for and providing Tribunal representation  Experience of CASTLE case recording system  Experienced in using and constructing Spreadsheets and Databases; using word processing packages. |
| **Skills, Knowledge and Attributes** | An excellent working knowledge of Welfare benefits and better off calculations.  Ability to research, understand and explain complex information both orally and in writing.  Effective oral communication skills with particular emphasis on advocacy and representation.  Effective writing skills with particular emphasis on drafting reviews, legal submissions, reports and correspondence.  Ordered approach to casework and an ability and willingness to follow and develop agreed procedures.  Understand the issues involved in and confident in interviewing vulnerable clients.  Ability to prioritise own work, meet deadlines and manage caseload.  Ability to use IT in the provision of advice and the preparation of reports and submissions. | Awareness of the social needs of local communities and services provided by the voluntary sector  Commitment and ability to taking part in social policy, research or evaluation |
| **Values and Attitudes** | Ability to give and receive feedback objectively and sensitively and a willingness to challenge constructively.  Ability to support and encourage vulnerable individuals.  Ability and willingness to work as part of a team.  Ability to monitor and maintain own standards.  Demonstrate understanding of social trends and their implications for clients and service provision.  Understanding of and commitment to the aims and principles of the CAB service and its equal opportunities policies. | Proven ability to work within a community development or volunteer setting  Experience of implementing equal opportunities policies and practices.  A willingness to learn and develop and reflect on practice. |
| **Other** | Willing to be flexible and adaptable in meeting the needs of the service.  Able to work on own initiative. |  |