**Penicuik Citizens Advice Bureau**

**Job Title:** Hospital Welfare Advice Services - Welfare Adviser

**Responsible to:** Assistant Manager

# Responsible for: The development and delivery of the Hospital Welfare Advice Service in Midlothian

# About the role

The post is funded by the NHS Lothian Charity and is part of wider Hospital welfare advice services at acute sites across Lothian:

**Purpose:** To tackle health inequalities through the reduction of poverty, maximisation of income and reduction of household expenditure by increasing uptake of welfare benefits and improving access to employment, housing and debt advice.

Hospital welfare advice services provide free, confidential, independent and impartial welfare rights advice service for patients, carers and staff at the Midlothian Community Hospital and Highbank Intermediate Care Facility

**Aims**

* Tackle health inequalities through the reduction of poverty by maximising income and reducing household expenditure (e.g. debt management, review of utility bill expenditure)
* Increase uptake of welfare benefits and improve access to employment, housing and debt advice.
* Increase financial resilience and capacity among clients to help prevent future issues
* Improve self-reported health status and well-being of clients
* Reduce impact of financial, employment and housing problems on physical and mental health
* Improve use of clinical staff capacity where a referral to an adviser frees up time

**Key responsibilities**

* Provide responsive, on-site, person-centred advice and support
* Provide free, independent, impartial and confidential advice to those on low incomes and those who are most vulnerable; where feasible managing case work and referring to community services as appropriate.
* Work to promote and embed the service across each hospital site by attending team meetings and providing training, promotional materials and ward visits where necessary and within specialities where patients are known to be adversely affected by welfare reform.
* Establish and maintain effective relationships with hospital staff to ensure continuity of service and the development of effective, secure referral pathways.
* Promote financial wellbeing among NHS staff.
* Represent and negotiate (where needed) for clients.
* Provide a minimum of **20** client appointments per month
* In conjunction with the Bureau Manager, manage a hardship fund on behalf of the NHS Lothian Charity (formerly Edinburgh and Lothian Health Foundation) to meet clients immediate financial needs.
* Maintain expertise in relevant legislation e.g. welfare rights, debt and bankruptcy and identify any changes that would impact on users of the service and disseminate that information
* Work in partnership with other advice agencies in Lothian and beyond where appropriate.
* Refer (where specialist advice is needed) and signpost clients to other organisations relevant to their needs and work in partnership with those organisations where necessary.
* Actively obtain, utilise and act on feedback from clients, service users and NHS staff including the development of a complaints procedure.
* Provide support for workforce development to enhance the knowledge and increase the competence of hospital staff (e.g. ward staff, allied health professionals including Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Speech Therapists, outpatient staff and Social Work) to identify issues around welfare rights and refer as appropriate.
* Work with Lothian Heath Board staff wellbeing leads to promote financial wellbeing among hospital staff.
* Provide support for workforce development to enhance the knowledge and increase the competence of hospital staff (e.g. ward staff, allied health professionals including Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Speech Therapists, outpatient staff and Social Work) to identify issues around welfare rights and refer as appropriate.
* Work with Lothian Heath Board staff wellbeing leads to promote financial wellbeing among hospital staff.
* maintain accurate records of all advice and casework on CASTLE the Scottish CAB service electronic case recording system
* keep records of benefit income raised, levels of indebtedness, client profiles, details of referrals and other statistics for both the CAB service and project reporting
* contribute to the bureau’s social policy work ensuring that issues affecting outreach areas are taken up locally, regionally and nationally

**Activities**

* To run regular, confidential holistic advice sessions. Locations, number, duration and venue to be determined in consultation, both with the bureau manager and through liaison with NHS staff at the Community Hospital and Highbank Intermediate Care Facility.
* accept self-referrals from individuals and referrals from clinical or social care staff, with patients’ consent. The latter can be made through staff contacting the advisers by phone/email (NHS Lothian email address only for patient identifiable information) or verbally when the adviser visits the ward.
* The advisers will regularly visit wards at each site to source referrals, particularly those areas treating patients with chronic conditions which may increase the likelihood of welfare issues. During periods of pandemic-related restrictions, advice may be delivered remotely by phone and email.
* The suitability of referrals will be determined by the advisers, based on the type of advice issue(s), length of stay in hospital and the degree of casework required. If the adviser feels that a specialist or community-based service is more suited to the client’s needs, they will be signposted or referred accordingly. The service will be available to clients at short notice therefore the advisers will avoid carrying a large caseload. If ongoing work is required then the advisers will make an appropriate onward referral.
* carry out other duties and responsibilities which may be reasonably determined by the bureau manager and board of directors

*The above job description is not exhaustive and is clarified to include broad duties inherent in the post as reasonable requested by the bureau manager.*

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| Person specification | | |
|  | ESSENTIAL | DESIRABLE |
| QUALIFICATIONS | * Good general education * Ability to type and use a computer * Evidence of competencies to achieve case worker/specialist accreditation under MASQF. | Working knowledge of CASTLE and the CASTLE Debt module.  Knowledge of a Benefit Programme. |
| EXPERIENCE | * Income maximisation and money advice debt/counselling experience * Experience of completing benefit applications including Universal Credit. * Experience of undertaking “what if” benefit checks. * Experience in casework and case management in a busy environment * Work or voluntary experience in the advice sector * Experience in representation work * Experience of developing and delivering workshops. | Experience as a generalist CAB adviser (paid or unpaid)  Experience of project development work.  Experience of preparing reports, plans and proposals  Experience in the preparation and presentation of training courses. |
| SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES | * Ability to manage a large caseload in a demanding and busy work place. * Ability to work without close supervision and prioritise work. * Ability to work in a crisis situation (such as evictions) and meet deadlines. * Ability to work within a team framework. * Ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing, with particular emphasis on negotiation and representation skills * Understanding of the main principles and methods of statistical gathering and service evaluation * Good interpersonal skills and client empathy. | Ability to work hours flexibly as required by the needs of the service  Ability to plan and introduce change as appropriate  Ability to support and motivate |
| KNOWLEDGE | * A sound working knowledge of welfare benefits and of the legal rights of debtors and creditors. * A knowledge of money advice strategies * A working knowledge of computers and related packages * An understanding of and commitment to aims, principles and policies of the CAB service. |  |
| OTHER | * Responsible, reliable, good humoured and general good health. * Ability to work under pressure * A willingness to undertake training identified in collaboration with the Bureau Manager. |  |

**The post subject to a PVG Disclosure check**

**The Penicuik Citizens Advice Bureau is committed to equal opportunities both in service provision and employment.**

**Charity number: SC014421**

**Charity name: Penicuik Citizens Advice Bureau**