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# Welfare Benefits and Housing Advisor

# Job Description and Person Specification

# Job Title: Welfare Benefits and Housing Advisor

**Salary:** NJC SCP 11 – 17 currently £27,693-30,484 per annum inclusive of Inner London Weighting. Based on

**Hours:** 37.5 hours a week – (Role may require flexible working)

**Contract: Until August 2024 (Extension pending funding)**

**Accountable to:** Services Manager – Mental Health Services

**Supervised by:** Advice and Engagement Coordinator

**Location:** Head office in Tower Hamlets, E3 4DA

**Closing Date:** Friday 13th October 2023

**Interviews:** Week commencing 30th October 2023

**Job description**

Mind in Tower Hamlets, Newham and Redbridge (MindTHNR) have been commissioned to deliver the Information and Co-Production – Connecting Communities service which is an element of the larger Mental Health and Wellbeing Service in Tower Hamlets.

**Purpose of role**

The post holder will work under a Governance structure with Hestia: 1:1 Support; Working Well Trust: Work Hub and ELFT: Recovery College. Our service model will ensure that people can access the “right support at the right time” and will be the first point of contact for people living with mental health in the Borough.

A diagram of support services

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**Adopting our organisational culture**

We have a strong reputation for delivering high quality Welfare Benefit and Housing Advice services Our advice and support practices are underpinned by our Professional Code of Ethics, Code of Conduct and Organisational Values. We expect everyone to embrace our culture, ethos and our anti-racist, anti-discriminatory and inclusive practices throughout their work.

**Key Performance Indicators for Welfare Benefits**

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| --- | --- |
| **KPI’s** | **Commitments** |
| Increased economic wellbeing through enabling access to the correct welfare benefits | Specialist Welfare Advice case work that supports 300 complex cases per quarter with welfare problems, including supporting appeals, writing letters etc. |
| Positive outcomes as defined by the service user | **80%** of clients will report  positive outcomes achieved as defined by the service user. |

**Key Responsibilities**

The post holder will be committed to supporting our clients through their recovery and developing greater resilience and wellbeing. This role will offer a personalised approach to accessing welfare and housing related advice and information, through casework, workshops and advice surgeries.

Recovery can mean different things to different people, however for many, recovery is about the realisation of goals, and the development of relationships and skills that support a positive life, with or without ongoing mental health problem. We are committed to a strength-based approach that does not focus solely on symptoms and which emphasises resilience and control over life’s challenges.

A diagram of the four components of a life cycle

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1. Assist individuals with mental health challenges to maintain an independent life in the community by providing advice on welfare and housing matters in general.
2. To provide support to people with mental health issues to cope with difficulties relating to their welfare benefits and to ensure that they are receiving their correct entitlement to benefits.
3. To work with the Connecting Communities navigators to deal with enquiries, referrals from people who drop into our service, demonstrating a supportive approach to those who may be in distress by providing the “right support at the right time”.
4. Effectively connect people to mainstream services and other local mental health providers
5. Effectively monitor the activity of the service and produce quarterly monitoring reports including outcomes monitoring information
6. Undertake ongoing welfare benefits and housing casework and to act as a link between clients, professionals and other service providers, and to refer clients to statutory, legal or advice agencies where appropriate.
7. Run workshops and groups related to welfare benefits as appropriate including facilitating advice surgeries and money management workshops
8. Develop the service including the role of volunteers, partnership opportunities and working with Mind in Tower Hamlets and Newham senior staff on preparing funding applications to expand the service provision.
9. Draw attention of the appropriate policy makers and service providers, to any service deficiencies in relation to welfare benefits, by networking with other agencies and attending relevant forums.
10. To keep well informed and up to date with the relevant legislation and local and national service developments in relation to welfare benefits, housing and debt.
11. Assist mental health service, housing associations and other providers in the borough (e.g. Community Mental Health Teams, supported housing projects etc) with welfare benefits issues. This may involve offering training, accepting referrals, providing information etc.
12. Maintain relevant monitoring and casework records, and to participate in the organisation’s ongoing monitoring and evaluation practices.
13. Perform necessary work (e.g. improvements to case recording systems) in support the AQS achievement in collaboration with the services manager, and implement revised procedures etc.
14. Ensure the project meets all targets and monitoring deadlines.
15. Work as part of the Team and specifically:
    1. Provide advice and assistance to other members of Mind in Tower Hamlets and Newham staff on matters relating to welfare benefits.
    2. Publicise the work of the service throughout the Borough and attract referrals from outside of the organisation.
16. Liaise with referral agencies regarding information and referrals and explaining the work of the wider team
17. Work closely with the Coproduction Coordinator and Service Manager to ensure that the principles of coproduction underpin our service delivery.

**General**

* Act as an ambassador and represent Mind in Tower Hamlets, Newham and Redbridge at external functions, events.
* Comply with, promote, and contribute to the development of MindTHNR’s: Aims and Values, Equality, Diversity and Inclusive principles and all organisational policies.
* Attend appropriate internal, external training courses, E-Learning, supervision, and staff team meetings and away days.
* Other than where central administrative support is available, to be administratively self-servicing.
* A respect for difference and an understanding of and commitment to anti discriminatory practices
* Commitment to supervision, ongoing development, and training relevant for the post.

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**Welfare Benefits and Housing Advisor**

**Person Specification**

Outlined below are the experience, skills and knowledge required to carry out the tasks in the job description. Please ensure that you use examples to demonstrate that you meet each individual criteria within the application form.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| No. |  | **Essential/**  **Desirable** |
| **Qualifications** | | |
|  | To have attained a minimum Level 3 in Health and Social Care or equivalent | E |
| **Experience** | | |
|  | A strong commitment to Mind in Tower Hamlets, Newham and Redbridge’s aims and mission | E |
|  | A strong commitment to our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policies and Practices | E |
|  | A Strong understanding of mental health topics, with the ability to engage in sensitive conversations | E |
|  | Demonstrable experience of giving information and advice in welfare benefits and housing rights. | E |
|  | Experience of working within advice work protocols such as confidentiality, record keeping and case note recording in line with GDPR | E |
|  | Experience of managing and supporting and training volunteers and experience of delivering workshops and presentations to a variety of audiences. | E |
|  | Knowledge of housing and homelessness legislation, rights and policies (i.e. Homelessness/Housing act). | D |
|  | Experience of developing website and delivering social media messages across a range of platforms | D |
| **Skills/Ability** | | |
|  | A working knowledge of Welfare Benefits system including legislation, guidelines and entitlement. | E |
|  | Excellent communication skills and ability to engage and communicate effectively with a diverse range of people who may be distressed. | E |
|  | Proven time management and organisational skills and IT and Microsoft Word proficient | E |
|  | Excellent people skills, building strong customer /client relationships and being ambassador for Mind Organisations and services. | E |
|  | Ability to work flexibly in response to changing project /community needs and a qualification in Information, Advice and Guidance or a similar equivalent | D |
| **Personal** **Attributes** | | |
|  | Sound judgement and the ability to handle competing priorities and a challenging workload | E |
|  | Excellent judgment and problem-solving skills. | E |
|  | Demonstrable ability to engage with people from all backgrounds and a commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion practices. | E |
|  | A proven track record of taking an innovative and solutions-based approach to challenges, whilst considering the thoughts and experiences of others | E |