

# Disability Law Service

## JOB DESCRIPTION

<b>Post title:</b>	<b>Welfare Benefits Advisor</b>
<b>Hours:</b>	35 hours per week (usually working from 9.30am to 5.30pm)
<b>Contract type:</b>	Permanent
<b>Annual Leave:</b>	25 days per year + public holidays + 1 day per year for each completed year of service
<b>Purpose:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. To provide welfare benefits advice and information to disabled people, their carers and family. Give guidance on matters relating to welfare benefits, tax credits, Local Authority financial assistance and grants.</li><li>2. To provide feedback and to monitor and develop the service to ensure those needs are effectively met.</li></ol>
<b>Responsible to:</b>	Senior Welfare Benefits Adviser
<b>Location:</b>	You can choose between remote working, hybrid working or <a href="#">working at the Disability Law Service office in Vauxhall, London</a>

### About Disability Law Service

We are a small but growing disabled persons organisation – this means that at least 75% of our trustees are disabled people and over 50% of our paid staff are disabled people. We have charitable status.

We provide free legal advice to disabled people and their carers. Established in 1975 we provide advice covering employment, discrimination, welfare benefits, community care and housing. Our advice service is why we are here and is at the heart of what we do. But it is not all that we do.

Our practical experience with our clients together with our legal expertise means that we are well placed to be involved in advocating for changes in laws and policies, whether at our own initiative or in collaboration with other disability charities.

## **About the role**

This role is part of our welfare benefits service. This is primarily a helpline, giving one-off advice via phone, email and video call, but some casework may be involved. In general the Senior Welfare Benefits Adviser will take on the more complex cases, sometimes including representation at Tribunals. You will work collaboratively with them ensuring that, across the team, the client gets support from the most appropriate person.

You will work as part of a small but collaborative team with the Senior Welfare Benefits Adviser and the other benefits advisers at DLS. The rest of the staff at DLS are lawyers.

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## **MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Welfare Benefits Advice**

- Work with the Senior Welfare Benefits Adviser to respond to welfare benefits enquiries from people and their carers across the UK, via phone and email within agreed set times.
- Assess needs of enquirers and provide relevant, up to date advice. Write up advice given to clients on Advice Pro (training will be provided).
- Provide detailed accessible information on welfare benefits and sources of financial income, complete benefit calculations for clients.
- Maintain up to date knowledge of changes to welfare benefits law and policy in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland, undertaking training as required.
- Participate in regular support and supervision sessions with the Senior Welfare Benefits Adviser.
- Signpost or refer clients to DLS services and external agencies where applicable.
- Monitor all advice enquiries, maintain comprehensive records and files in line with DLS policy. Ensure that all monitoring data and information resources meet required needs, are up to date and accurate.
- Work with the Senior Welfare Benefits Adviser to monitor the service, prepare and produce reports, monitoring and evaluation surveys and other information as required for the funder, DLS trustees and other stakeholders.

- Provide and review content for DLS information resources, website and other publications, which provides accurate and appropriate technical information on benefits and help some clients address easier queries themselves.
- Attend relevant meetings as required.
- Maintain an up to date knowledge of relevant changes in law and policy and undertake training as required.
- Ensure that all work done complies with the standards, policies and relevant quality assurance standards used within DLS.
- Participate in the training and support of volunteers who can help deliver parts of the service.
- Carry out regular reviews of volunteers' work and provide supervision.

#### **Occasional duties**

- Provide support to the Senior Welfare Benefits Adviser (sometimes with them and sometimes instead of them) at outreach sessions in different locations and/or online.
- Provide cover for other projects and helplines in the benefits team in the event of staff sickness and/or annual leave, which may be between 9:00 and 19:00.
- Provide training on welfare benefits (including form filling) to other organisations and their volunteers.

#### **Other**

- Develop, maintain and comply with key policies within DLS. Comply with all other policies and procedures identified within the organisation's office manual.
- Participate in DLS team meetings and annual appraisal.
- Develop and maintain professional and supportive relationships with all DLS colleagues and external stakeholders as required.
- Work with line manager to identify own training needs, sources of training and opportunities for personal development.
- Carry out any other reasonable duties relevant to the post as required.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

### Essential

#### Experience

- At least 2 years' experience of providing benefits advice and information over the phone and in writing
- Experience of using a case management system to record your work
- Ability to answer a high volume of advice calls each day
- Experience of working with disabled people and people who are situationally vulnerable

#### Skills

- The ability to demonstrate empathy with disabled people and their life experience
- Clear written communication and be able to disseminate complex information in a manner that engages people
- Ability to work well with colleagues
- Demonstrable commitment to inclusive working, ensuring equality and valuing diversity
- Excellent interpersonal skills, including sensitivity when speaking with clients who may be distressed
- Excellent communication skills, with the ability to communicate effectively and sensitively in a wide range of media and audiences, and tailor advice to the needs of individual clients
- Well organised and able to plan and prioritise your work effectively
- Good numeracy
- High computer literacy including advanced use of MS Word, Excel and Outlook and able to adapt to new systems
- Use of Advice Pro or similar case management system
- Able to quickly and effectively research answers to questions you are not familiar with, using reliable sources, and being able to demonstrate the robustness of your answers based on them

**Knowledge and Qualifications**

- Detailed knowledge of welfare benefits in England and Wales (knowledge of the Scottish and Northern Ireland systems are desirable)
- A sound knowledge of issues and procedures around client confidentiality and safeguarding procedures
- A thorough understanding of and strong commitment to the social model of disability
- Evidence of continuous professional development, ideally with NVQ level 3 or above in advice and guidance, or equivalent