

POST TITLE	SENIOR ADVICE OFFICER
DIRECTORATE	PLACE
SERVICE	HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS
RESPONSIBLE TO	LOCALITY LEAD OFFICER
NUMBER OF POST HOLDERS	8
ACTING UP/ SECONDMENT	N/A

PURPOSE OF JOB

To alleviate poverty and promote social inclusion by providing advice, guidance, support advocacy and representation to households on matters of personal finance, debt, and welfare issues.

To provide information, advice and advocacy on Welfare Benefits and debt advice to members of the public, through in person advise session, by phone, video calls and home visits. In appropriate cases visit the homes of people seeking Welfare Rights advice. Follow up individual enquiries through negotiations and advocacy with appropriate agencies.

Provide support and advice on Welfare Rights and debt issues and changes in legislation to stakeholders including the Housing Service, Council, external agencies and volunteers.

THE WHAT - MAJOR TASKS/JOB ACTIVITIES

- Deal effectively with customers who have debt related problems by identifying appropriate formal and informal debt options and prioritising debts appropriately where necessary.
- Maximise the income of people in debt and ensure that they are in receipt of all benefits due.
- Negotiate with creditors to reschedule debts and arrange methods of repayments based on detailed financial statements and in compliance with both FCA Regulations and The Common Financial Tool, etc. (Scotland) Regulations 2014 (as amended).
- Provide representation on behalf of clients at First Tier Tribunal for Scotland Housing and Property Chamber including interviewing customers, researching, and preparing cases.
- Provide lay representation on behalf of clients at Sheriff Court in relation to actions under Debtors (Scotland) Act and in the Heritable courts.
- Acting as an approved advisor, complete and witness Certificates of Sequestration under the Bankruptcy (Scotland) Act 2016 and maintain specialist knowledge of associated Regulations.
- Facilitate customer to access, apply for, and monitor the progress of alternative formal debt options which can only be accessed through an approved adviser.
- Submit Debt Payment Programmes under the Debt Arrangement and Attachment (Scotland) Act 2002
- Provide a Type I/II/III service across all benefit and debt related SNSIAP competencies.
- Keep accurate and up to date records of all enquiries, casework and customer contacts in compliance with the SNSIAP, using the appropriate case management system.
- Conduct Surveys, research and compile reports on the take up of welfare benefits and debt advice services, and the consequent implications for any changes in policy ad compile and contribute to reports on debt and welfare rights issues.
- Assist in the preparation of responses to formal consultations on new and impending legislation.

- Keep apprised of legislative and policy changes in welfare rights and debt advice and ensure compliance as well reporting matters of social policy to appropriate key stakeholders and develop resources in these matters.
- Work in partnership with colleagues across the Council and organisations and promote access to the service, support new referrals, manage casework and provide specialist information on welfare rights and debt advice.
- Provide occasional presentations or briefing sessions on welfare rights and debt advice issues to a variety of audiences and contribute to the development and maintenance of public information material including web based information.
- Maintain and update records and information systems timeously, record monitoring information, statistical information and develop and maintain information materials for use by internal and external stakeholders.
- Participate in local advice sessions, open appointment systems, meetings and surgeries in locations across the city.
- Participate in training of staff or volunteers in other similar or related advice giving projects and agencies to raise awareness and provide support to ensure that a high quality advice service is as widely available as possible.
- Provide information, advice, guidance, assistance and advocacy to internal and external stakeholders and participate in city wide advice sessions ..
- Following up individual enquiries through negotiation and advocacy with appropriate agencies
- Work with colleagues and external agencies to provide specialised skills to assist them with the resolution of welfare rights, benefit and debt related issues.
- Prepare detailed assessments, including calculating benefits entitlement, to advise on action that meets the needs of individual customers.

THE HOW - KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS (E.G. CREATIVITY & INNOVATION, CONTACTS & RELATIONSHIPS, DECISION MAKING)

- Educated to degree level or relevant job experience. Evidence further training or qualification related to the post.
- The postholder is expected to employ a creative approach to, and in the execution of money advice work. The postholder is expected to contribute to the development of community based debt advice services imaginatively and thoughtfully.
- When involved in training will require adapting the presentation to meet the needs of the staff/groups involved.
- Must ensure up to date and accurate records are held for all case work.
- Referral on to other professional staff/agencies.
- On a day to day basis the postholder will be involved with operational direction at a local level, from the organisation to which they are assigned.
- The postholder is expected to work independently in particular areas and on specific projects when no immediate supervision will be provided. The postholder will be expected to exercise initiative in processing individual workloads and in contributing to the overall development of the project.
- The postholder is expected to contribute to performance analysis, monitoring, evaluation and audit tasks and provide comprehensive statistical information.
- Supervision will be provided on a planned basis and consultation will be available on a regular basis.
- Flexibility will be a key element of this post. Accordingly, the postholder may be assigned on a regular basis to different locations across Edinburgh to work with partner agencies and services. The post involves regular contact with creditors, landlords, national and local government, and revenue agencies. The post will involve considerable contact with other council departments, voluntary agencies, debt collectors and court officials.
- Referral of cases to and from other agencies and colleagues with money advice.
- Hold a formal qualification in an advice related field such as debt advice, consumer advice, welfare benefits or law.

ENVIRONMENT (WORK DEMANDS, PHYSICAL DEMANDS, WORKING CONDITIONS, WORK CONTEXT)

- Although the post may be exposed to some physical demands these will be predominantly within the range of normal office based activities.
- The post will have some requirement to take care in relation to the working environment, work activities and dealing with people this will not be more than the normal required of a council employee.
- Undertake visits to clients in their own homes complying with the Lone Working Policy. 10% of time

SUPERVISION AND MANAGEMENT OF PEOPLE (NUMBERS AND TYPE OF STAFF)

- No direct staff management responsibility.
- Whilst there is no direct responsibility for staff postholders will be expected to provide support and training for staff/volunteers in voluntary organisations, other agencies etc.

RESOURCES

- The post will be responsible for a range of office equipment and will update and maintain data.'

HEALTH AND SAFETY (DO NOT ALTER THE WORDING OF THIS SECTION)

Protecting the health and safety and welfare of our employees, and our third parties including members of the public, contractors, service users and pupils, is the starting point for a forward-thinking Council.

All employees are responsible for:

- Taking care of their own health and safety and welfare, and that of others who may be affected by their actions or omissions;
- Co-operating with management and following instructions, safe systems and procedures;
- Reporting any hazards, damage or defects immediately to their line manager; and
- Reporting any personal injury and work related ill health, and accident or incident (including 'near misses') immediately to their line manager, and assist with any subsequent investigation, including co-operating fully with the provision of witness statements and any other evidence that may be required.

Line managers have additional responsibilities for ensuring all health and safety risks under their management are identified, assessed and controlled, with specialist input from H&S Advisers and others including Occupational Health where required. Where the risks cannot be adequately controlled the activity should not proceed.

Additional information can be found in the [Council Health and Safety Policy](#).