

Welfare Benefits Adviser (Young Lives vs Cancer project)

RESPONSIBLE To:	Advice Services Manager
HOURS:	Part-time 15 hours per week (equivalent to two days per week)
TYPE OF CONTRACT:	Fixed term 1 year from appointment (possibility of extension subject to funding and performance)
SALARY:	£31-£33k (Pro rata for part time hours)
LOCATION:	Across Citizens Advice Hammersmith & Fulham sites with potential hybrid working following successful completion of six months probationary period.

About the Project

Young Lives vs Cancer (YLvC) is a national charity that helps children and young people (0-25) and their families find the strength to face whatever cancer throws at them.

Since 2006 we have successfully been delivering a pioneering project via various channels (face to face/telephone/email/web support) to provide welfare rights advice to families and support workers of children facing cancer. We are now expanding this service to include housing advice to YLvC service users who are located across England and Wales and build a team of benefits and housing advisers specifically for our YLvC project. See our website for details of all vacancies - <https://cahf.org.uk/work-us/>

YLVsC project team - Citizens Advice Hammersmith and Fulham (CAHF)

- Welfare Rights Digital Adviser 3 days/0.6fte (existing role)
- Welfare Rights Digital Adviser 2 days/0.4fte (new role)
- Housing Adviser Digital Adviser 3 days/0.6fte (new role)

The role

To provide benefits advice on a national level and where appropriate ongoing casework to families of children and young people affected by cancer and their social workers. To mitigate the financial impact of a cancer diagnosis for families of young people affected by cancer. The aim being to provide practical long term solutions and income maximisation which reduces the threat of loss of income and other negative issues.

Liaise and negotiate with other statutory and voluntary organisations to progress the client's case and ensure they receive all assistance available.

The Welfare Benefit Adviser role will:

- Provide an empathetic advice service to young people/families referred via YLVC social workers and centres.
- Knowledge or willingness to gain an understanding of all YLVC support services which are relevant to young people and families affected by cancer
- Work with the other YLVC project advisers to provide a coordinated accessible advice service across the week.
- Provide an efficient, effective and coordinated advice and casework service on the full range of benefit issues that meets funder requirements, quality standards and achieves performance targets.
- Identify and advise service users on the ways to maximise income and minimise expenditure
- Provide a full welfare benefits casework service to people affected by cancer, disability benefits, and other sources of financial support, such as charitable grants, energy advice and help with health and travel costs.
- Work with the welfare rights adviser(s) on the YLVC project to provide a seamless advice service to the project clients.
- Provide representation via digital channels for families and individuals facing crisis, in order to mitigate financial loss and maximise their income during the difficult times they are experiencing.
- Identify and highlight research and policy issues arising from the role.
- Engage with the wider YLVC staff to deliver short "benefit first aid" training sessions to YLVC front line workers.
- Recognise other implications in the clients case (such as debt or housing) and ensure that clients receive advice and assistance and/or make appropriate referrals where necessary.

- Build a rapport with external agencies and local authorities and make referrals to specialist local and regional agencies as appropriate.

Casework

Provide efficient and effective specialist advice and casework on the full range of benefit issues (including disability benefits, applications, appeal and other sources of support including charitable grants, energy advice and help with health and travel costs - this is not an exhaustive list) that meet funder requirements, quality standards and achieve performance targets.

- Identify key information about the problems presented including time limits, key dates and requirements for urgent advice or action.
- Interviewing clients using sensitive listening and questioning skills to allow clients to explain their problem(s) and empower them to make informed decisions.
- Complete benefit applications and appeals and applications for charitable grants.
- Use Citizens Advice and other approved resources to find, interpret and communicate relevant information to clients.
- Negotiate with third parties in writing and on the telephone.
- Assess and agree the appropriate level of service, taking into consideration the client's ability to take the next step themselves, the complexity of the problem and the organisation's resources.
- Assist clients with other related problems where they are an integral part of their case or make appropriate referrals or signposting.
- Liaise and negotiate with other statutory and voluntary organisations to progress the client's case and ensure they receive all assistance available.
- Refer clients on to colleagues or other agencies as appropriate for specialist help with issues that fall outside the remit YLVC project service offer.
- Act as a benefit specialist for volunteers and paid staff providing advice, information and support as needed.

Performance Targets and Quality Standards:

Ensure work meets the quality standards of:

- Citizens Advice Quality Assurance Assessment Scheme.
- The Advice Quality Standard (AQS).

- Support in producing reports for the project funder and other stakeholders on project progress and impact. Maintain accurate and appropriate records of all client work as needed.
- Manage and deliver the caseload in a manner that complies with Citizens Advice auditing standards.

Confidentiality and Data Handling:

- Maintain confidentiality and professional boundaries at all times.
- Ensure that all sensitive data is adequately protected and handled in accordance with the organisation's confidentiality systems and procedures, and in line with data protection regulations such as GDPR.

Administration and IT:

- Accept and abide by the terms of the organisation's Acceptable Use of IT policy and other associated Citizens Advice policies.
- Use IT systems software to analyse data and produce reports when required.
- Keep technical knowledge up-to-date and provide technical support to advisers and/or caseworkers.
- Proficiency in the use of digital technology.
- Maintaining case recording systems to permit supervision, monitoring and analysis of advice given.

Collaborative working with YLVs Cancer Team:

- To assist in the production of information/advice resources and templates. Review and check for accuracy and updates against Citizens Advice information resources.
- To occasionally deliver training, talks or webinars to YLV staff and assist in promoting the service as required by the funder.
- Work flexibly, undertaking occasional travel to the funder regional centre.
- Participate in funder events and Q&A sessions such as Facebook Live. Attending events occasionally outside usual working hours.

Research and Campaigns:

- To support YLV and Citizens advice campaigns work by providing case studies and feedback on issues of concern to families of children and young people affected by cancer.

- Provide statistical information on the number of clients and nature of cases and provide regular reports to the organisation's management.

Active Team Participation - Working with Others:

- Develop and maintain good working relationships with both the National YLVC team as well as the YLVC project team based at CAHF, sharing information and making a positive contribution.
- Develop and maintain good working relationships with the wider Citizens Advice Hammersmith and Fulham team to build knowledge of additional service to support housing advice delivered to YLVC service users.
- Build rapport with paid and volunteer colleagues.
- Engage with CAHF business objectives as outlined in the business plan and supporting strategies.
- Attend and participate in CAHF activities including service meetings, staff away days, AGMs and other staff activities.
- Work in line with the core values of Citizens Advice and CAHF.
- Willingness to work in a way that contributes to a positive working environment for all staff.

Professional Development and Training:

- Keep up to date with legislation, case law, policies and procedures relating to welfare benefits and other advice issues.
- Attend relevant internal and external meetings and training as agreed with the line manager .
- Maintain an awareness of policy changes and good practice.
- Ability to monitor and maintain standards.
- Identify and develop your own learning opportunities.
- Assist with service initiatives for the improvement of services.

Personal Attributes:

- Good interpersonal skills and the ability to relate to a wide cross section of people, including the ability to deal with potentially difficult or stressful situations, whilst maintaining a professional approach.
- A positive and adaptable approach to a changing environment.
- Self-motivated with an ability to work on one's own initiative.
- Willingness to identify own learning requirements and taking responsibility for identifying own training needs.

Duties required of all salaried employees of CAHF

Undertake any other reasonable duties as required by the post

- Exercise duties in accordance with CAHF core values, and the aims and principles of the Citizens Advice Service
- Abide by health and safety guidelines and share responsibility for own safety and that of colleagues and avoid contact which would put at risk the health and safety of themselves and other people including visitors, contractors and members of the public.
- Exercise Discretion in the handling of client and volunteers data in accordance with statutory duties of the GDPR and CAHF's applicable information assurance policies and procedures
- Gain familiarity with CAHF Safeguarding procedure, including understanding procedure for reporting safeguarding concerns affecting Children/Adult
- Keep abreast of organisational changes
- Must be willing to take a flexible and adaptable approach to service delivery. Making a positive contribution to the team, including providing cover during annual leave or staff sickness for the Team Leader
- Carry out any other appropriate tasks requested by the line manager, to ensure the effective delivery and development of the service, subject to any reasonable adjustment under the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Actively engage with CAHF performance management process
- The post holder must at all times promote the aims, principles, policies, interests and wellbeing of the organisation and protect the integrity and reputation and the confidentiality of the Service.

In addition to the tasks and duties outlined in this job description to undertake such duties as may be identified and which are generally compatible with the functions of the post. To ensure the effective delivery and development of the service, subject to any reasonable adjustment under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Job description - does not constitute a 'term and condition of employment'. It is provided only as a guide to assist the employee in the performance of their job. CAHF is a fast-moving organisation and therefore employee's duties may be varied from time to time.

This job description will be reviewed regularly as part of individual and organisational development, performance review and may be a subject to variation.

April 2024



Person specification

Listed below are the minimum essential requirements to do this job.

When shortlisting for an interview the selection panel will consider the information you give within a supporting statement/CV against the person specification set out below. It is therefore essential that you include information about your abilities relevant to these requirements and address each specification separately.

	ESSENTIAL CRITERIA
1.	Demonstrable in-depth knowledge of welfare benefits including those related to disability and sickness Essential
2.	Generalist Adviser certificate or equivalent Essential
3.	An understanding of the issues facing young people and families affected by long-term illness and disability, including cancer Essential
4.	An understanding of and commitment to the aims and principles and equality policies of the Citizens Advice Service Essential
5	Good professional boundaries and emotional resilience when faced with complex and potentially life threatening situations Essential
	Skills and Ability
6	Effective Communication skills: a) Ability to listen, interpret, research and feedback information to the client b) Sensitive listening and questioning skills to identify key issues c) Ability to communicate effectively in writing Essential
7.	Experience of working cooperatively, sharing information and effectively as part of a team, as well as using initiative Essential
8.	Proven ability to work autonomously, prioritising day to day work with minimal supervision Essential
9.	A disciplined approach to record keeping and data protection and an understanding of the need to monitor the experience of clients and the difference the project service makes Essential

10.	IT literate with a willingness to learn Citizens Advice case management systems Essential
11.	Strong numerical skills – able to analyse and produce data for reporting Essential
12.	Commitment to Citizens Advice Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policies, and the ability to incorporate into all aspects of your work Essential
	Desirable
13.	Certificate in Specialist Benefit Advice and Casework, or other equivalent qualification or training Desirable

Our Values

We expect all our employees to demonstrate and promote our values

- **Be Inclusive:**

Maintain a client focus.
Be respectful and professional.
Contribute to a positive team spirit.
Have an open mind.

- **Be Proactive:**

Be dynamic in our approach.
Embrace innovation and change.
Speak Up
Take responsibility.

- **Stay Connected:**

Connect with peers, with our community and with our stakeholders.
Keep up to date with changes and updates.
Give and embrace feedback.
Share information and improve collaboration.

- **Focus on Impact:**

Learn from failure.
Recognise effort and celebrate success.
Develop ourselves and empower others.
Evidence our results

Equality, diversity, and inclusion

Citizens Advice Hammersmith and Fulham recognises the positive value of diversity, promotes equality and challenges unfair discrimination. We recognise people with different backgrounds, skills, attitudes, and experiences bring fresh ideas and perceptions, and we wish to encourage and harness these differences to make our services more relevant and approachable.

Citizens Advice Hammersmith and Fulham will not discriminate or tolerate discriminatory behaviour on the grounds of race, colour, sex, trans status, disability, nationality, national or ethnic origin, religion or belief, marital/partnership or family status, sexual orientation, age, social class, educational background, employment status, working pattern, trade union membership or any other irrelevant factor in any aspect of employment.

Our values include a commitment to equality and fairness, and to valuing each other. All our employees are expected to have read and understood our Equality and Diversity Policy and to ensure they behave in accordance with its principles. Breaches of the policy may lead to disciplinary action.

Dignity at Work

CAHF is committed to providing a culture in which all staff value each other and are able to work together to their full potential in an inclusive environment free from harassment, bullying and other unacceptable forms of behaviour. Unacceptable behaviour in the workplace will be actively dealt with, all complaints will be taken seriously, confidentiality will be respected and victimisation of those that raise complaints will not be tolerated.

Our values include commitments to work together and value each other - all our employees are expected to have read and understood our Dignity at Work Policy and to ensure they behave in accordance with its principles. All staff are responsible for helping to create and maintain a positive and inclusive working environment free from bullying and harassment. All managers have a particular responsibility for ensuring a supportive and inclusive working environment in which dignity at work is actively promoted.

Probationary Policy

All new appointments are subject to a probationary period. At the end of the probationary period the outcome may be confirmation of post; notice of dismissal; or at our discretion an extension of the probationary period.

April 2024