



JOB PROFILE

Post Identification: Senior Benefit Advisor

Reports to: Operational Teams Manager

Job Purpose: To lead and participate in the work of the SFS Benefits Team. Assisting individuals with sensory loss to undertake comprehensive benefits assessments and apply for benefits to maximise their income.

Principal Accountabilities:

Supervising

- To provide supervision, including review of casework, feedback, advice and support to staff to help them to develop their skills.
- To monitor performance to ensure that a consistently high standard of service is provided to clients, and essential recording and reporting is completed by Benefit Team personnel (staff and volunteers)
- Contribute to the Team's learning and development plan.

Provision of Welfare Benefits Information and support

- Provide knowledgeable and accurate welfare benefit support to clients, including the specific specialist information required due to their sensory impairment.
- Assess their entitlement to benefits in order to maximise income.
- Support clients to make welfare benefit claims by the completion of applications.
- In addition support clients to make appeal applications to the relevant body, following a decline of the original application
- Manage appointment scheduling to ensure timely completion of all applications in order to meet deadlines.
- Deliver a service which promotes equality and diversity by giving equal and fair access to all.
- Be proactive in remaining up to date with changes in welfare benefit provision and legislation, advising line manager of change and training needs of Welfare Benefits Team.

Administration

- Oversee casework allocation, prioritisation and closure.
- Undertake quality assurance including case checking.
- Keep records of all interactions with clients and maintain confidentiality.

- Manage client appointments diary system.
- Support with the preparation of accurate monitoring reports for management, Trustees and funders to show demand for, and evidence case work of the Welfare Benefits Advice service, and emerging themes and trends observed during each reporting quarter.
- To comply with Sight for Surrey policies & procedures at all times including but not exclusive: Lone Working, Health & Safety, Risk Assessment, Adult & Child Safeguarding.

Other

- Support and lead on key projects if requested including revisiting of the use of Benefit Volunteers to support the service.
- Behave in a manner that enhances the good standard of the Welfare Benefits support service and the reputation of Sight for Surrey as a whole.
- Liaise with internal and external support services and partners.
- Take all available opportunities to acquire knowledge and experience relevant to the area of work.

Work Context:

To deliver the Welfare Benefit Contract, the post holder will need to effectively lead the Team, in addition to carrying out detailed interviews with clients, at their home or at the office if required, and provide appropriate information and support, according to their needs. To work in partnership with individuals to undertake comprehensive benefit assessments and assist people with sensory impairments in applications of benefits claims to maximise their income. The post holder must adhere to all necessary legal requirements.

Sight for Surrey constantly needs to reassess its priorities in line with a changing funding environment and the needs identified by the people it supports. These factors are crucial to SFS's survival and need careful attention. In order for SFS to successfully manage these pressures there is a need for all staff to be flexible and work wherever their core skills are needed most. No one will be asked to carry out work for which they are not properly trained. The post-holder will report to the Operational Teams Manager with whom targets and a work plan will be agreed.

Competencies Required

Strategic/Operational Management

Provide effective leadership of the Team. Thinking ahead and engaging in regular forward planning. Working towards the targets in SFS's Strategic Plan and the Contract requirements set by funders. Reviewing the effectiveness of work undertaken in relation to the plan. Developing innovative approaches to the service development. Thinking ahead and understanding how the work of the project impacts on the work of others in SFS.

Inspiration

Establishing plans, organising and prioritising activities of self to ensure that intended results are achieved in line with the available funding and resources. Demonstrates a constructive and consultative approach to problem solving.

Making Things Happen

Dealing realistically with staff, volunteer and service user needs. Making the best use of available resources. Negotiating with and successfully persuading agencies and organisations of our aspirations in order to ensure outcomes.

Communication

Communicating information to the right people in a positive, persuasive, accessible, timely and clear manner. Listening actively, demonstrating understanding of communications they receive and responding to them appropriately.

Developing Others

Supervising, supporting, coaching and developing others, including volunteers. Sharing knowledge and skills with others, where possible. Supporting others in their development and contributing positively to the development of the work of the SFS.

Managing/Embracing Change

Continuously seeking ways to improve performance of self. Suggesting ways where improvements in service could be made. Being open to new ways of doing things. Able to feed back to the CE and SFS staff on the impact of an effective benefits service. Managing change based on feedback, flexibly and efficiently.

Innovation

Produces creative ideas and solutions to problems. Thinks creatively so as to find new ways of developing a benefits service for SFS service users.

Personal Impact

Presenting themselves effectively. Striving to develop the competencies they require to do their job. Acting with integrity and in line with the principles of equal opportunities. Respecting service users and acting politely and helpfully at all times. Respecting the opinion and expertise of others.

Service User Focus

Building good professional relationships with service users and outside agencies. Taking the greatest care to understand what they want and helping them to make contact with the most appropriate person. Encourages colleagues to continuously reflect on the services provided and how best to deliver them. Respond positively to feedback.

Use of IT

Using relevant technology proactively and effectively to do their job and support SFS. This includes excellent IT skills including Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Access database management, Outlook).

Skills and Qualifications

Experience and education:

Experience of work in a welfare benefit advice setting.
Experience of work in health, social care, education or voluntary sector settings.
Evidence of up to date Welfare Benefit training.
Understanding and commitment to equal rights.
Experience of supervising staff/volunteers.
Experience of working with a diverse selection of clients and professionals.

Knowledge:

Understanding of issues around social inequality
Sound understanding of current welfare benefits
A clear understanding of both the Social and Medical Model of disability

Skills:

Ability to complete complex welfare benefit claims and communicate effectively with clients
Ability to listen effectively and communicate with a wide range of people
Ability to access information
Ability to work to targets and objectives
Ability to publicise and market a service
Ability to develop services which promote equal opportunities
Ability to work in an organised way and manage time effectively
Ability to keep organised and comprehensive records of every case

Ability to respond to feedback and use constructively
Working in a transparent way
Ability to embrace change and support organisational development

Special Requirements:

Able to travel around the county.
Ability to work occasional evenings and weekends.

Working Environment

Based at Rentwood, Fetcham. Hybrid working to be considered in the future.

Dimensions:

Staff: Two part-time Benefits Advisors and volunteers as necessary to achieve targets.

Financial: N/A.

Statistics: To be developed.

Organisation: Available at induction.

Goals and Targets: Goals and targets will be agreed based on the funding arrangements and according to the business plan.

Verification:

Post Holder:

Signature:

Date:

Line Manager: **Operational Teams Manager**

Signature:

Date: