

BENEFITS OFFICER

JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

Job Title	Benefits Officer
Reports to	Operational Manager / Chief Officer
Responsible for	N/A
Department	Casework Services
Tenure	Fixed Term (12 months with potential extension, funding dependant)
Hours	Full time, 35 hours per week
Salary	£25,607 per annum

About Cwm Taf Care & Repair

Care & Repair is the older persons champion in Wales and actively works to ensure that all older people have homes that are safe, secure and appropriate to their needs. Cwm Taf Care & Repair is a not-for-profit organisation that is a wholly owned subsidiary of Cynon Taf Community Housing Group. The agency is funded by Welsh Government, Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council, Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council and Cwm Taf University Health Board. Our role is to provide a free support and advice service for older and disabled people that assists the client's choice to remain living in their home. A client led, individually tailored package of support will be identified and delivered by an experienced team of Case Officers, Technical Officers with the aim of ensuring clients remain in their own homes with greater independence, warmth, security and safety.

Main Purpose of the Role

The main purpose of the Benefits Officer role is to provide older and disabled people who live in Cwm Taf with comprehensive information, advice and support on welfare benefits.

You will be responsible for supporting and communicating with the client in line with our Advice & Guidance Standards from initial enquiry stage to completion of referral.

You will deliver an effective and efficient service ensuring clients receive the best advice and solutions to maximise income.

You will work with partners to ensure the following:

- Maximise Income
- Reductions in Water Payments
- Fire Safety checks
- Energy Advice
- Befriending & Social Isolation
- Falls Prevention
- Digital Inclusion

Key Responsibilities

1. To be responsible for visiting clients in their homes and complete a Welfare Benefit Check.
2. Advise and support clients on relevant welfare benefits and discuss options thus enabling the client to choose an appropriate solution, and act as advocate for the client.

3. To provide expert advice to staff members on welfare rights and related matters.
4. To Liaise with the Department of Works and Pensions, plus other statutory and partnership organisations to ensure a solution to clients' needs.
5. Advise on and assist clients to complete the appropriate forms i.e. Benefit Applications, Agency Agreement, GDPR Privacy notices etc.
6. Keep up to date with developments in the relevant fields of Welfare Benefits through attendance at courses, seminars and conferences as agreed by the Operational Manager / Chief Officer.
7. To assist in the promotion and expansion of the activities of the Agency in accordance with the aims and objectives specified in the Business Plan.
8. Update organisations database as appropriate.
9. Take personal responsibility within organisational boundaries for the reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others around them and co-operates with Cynon Taf Community Housing Group on all relevant Health and Safety issues.
10. Carry out other specific tasks that may be reasonably required, from time to time, by the Operational Manager or otherwise under the authority of the Chief Officer.

Key Measures of Performance

- To achieve a minimum of 400 Welfare Benefit submissions per year.
- To visit clients within a national baseline of 15 working days.
- To ensure that processes for all service areas are adhered to.
- Ensuring all information is recorded timely on the database and spreadsheets to allow Senior Officers to report.
- To attend bi monthly team meetings.
- To attend 4 support meetings per year.
- To attend national forum meetings as requested.
- To attend national & local training as requested.
- To remove computerised and paper files on a yearly basis in line with the agency Data Retention policy.
- To ensure the AQS Quality manual is adhered to.
- To endeavour to resolve clients concerns informally and swiftly.
- To attend events and networking at the request of Senior Officers or partners.
- Maintaining accurate records of all client interactions, adhering to professionalism, commercial confidentiality and GDPR.
- To ensure that Agency Agreements and any other relevant authorisation forms are signed before agency intervention

Key Capabilities

- Time Management skills
- Customer service expertise (AQS)
- Performance management
- Networking
- IT Skills
- Communication Skills
- Knowledge & understanding
- Professional confidence & competence
- Health & Safety

Person Specification

All our staff are expected to commit to and exhibit values, attitudes and behaviours that contribute positively to our vision and mission and the values set out in our organisational Values (see Annex 1).

Key Attributes

- Business skills – understanding of business operations, policies and processes advantageous
- People skills – ability to understand, build relationships with and work productively with a broad spectrum of people and a strong understanding of working with older people
- Commercial focus – drive to sell and deliver profitable work which clients really value
- Comfortable in ambiguity – at ease with the challenges in complex, changing situations and working with clients who face similar challenges
- Balanced self-assurance - confidence in own abilities, able to provide friendly challenge, tempered with humility and the desire to improve and develop
- Development orientated - constant focus on self-development and openness to new approaches and ways of working
- Pro-active attitude – able to adapt to challenges and can work independently to deliver against agreed targets and outcomes.
- Highly organised with the ability to communicate confidently at all levels.
- Purpose-driven - with a passion for Care & Repair and our mission, our purpose, our clients and our way of working together with a strong underlying motivation to achieve a warm and secure home for all older people.
- Change focused - experience of organisational change through positive influence, challenging perceptions and making evidence based recommendations.

Technical Abilities

- Advice & Guidance level 4 or equivalent through training or experience.
- Experience of working with partners to achieve shared goals.
- Experience of working with older/disabled people with health issues.
- Experience of managing projects and performance reporting within strict timescales.
- Experience & understanding of the Welfare Benefits system.
- General administration experience.
- Understands relevant organisational goals and looks to achieve own targets and standards within this structure.
- Takes action to develop knowledge and skills through formal and informal training and learning opportunities.
- Experience of partnership work.
- Possesses a full driving licence and has access to a car.
- Able to create high quality material on key Microsoft Office packages – Excel, Word, Teams and PowerPoint.
- Able to use all key virtual meeting and messaging platforms independently and effectively – e.g., Teams, Zoom.
- Uses social media and blogging sites effectively, including Linked-In and other relevant networking sites - where applicable.
- Experience of using Case Management systems; specifically, Caris would be advantageous.
- Able to become proficient swiftly and confidently with new platforms / systems as required, for example to support new digital learning products.
- Demonstrates appropriate range and level of skills and knowledge for the role including working within relevant professional standards.
- Knowledge and experience of delivering good quality advice and knowledge of legislation relating to welfare benefits, grants, loans and charitable sources.
- Understanding of what excellent customer service looks like meeting standards to Advice & Quality Standards (AQS)

Desirable

It would also be beneficial for the post holder to;

- Have an understanding and practical experience of Equality and Diversity, Agile Working, Culture Change, Change Management and Modern Working practices.
- Ability to speak and write Welsh.

Annex 1

Our Vision Healthy valleys communities where everyone feels connected, supported and hopeful about the future

Our Mission To provide quality homes for current and future generations and be an inspiring, trusted community partner and employer

Our Values

- **We are committed** We are kind and care about making a positive difference for our tenants, communities and people
- **We are respectful** We believe we can only work well together if we respect each other
- **We show integrity** We work hard to earn trust by being clear, honest and responsible for our actions