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**JOB DESCRIPTION: Welfare Benefits Officer**

**Reporting to:** Head of Community Service

**Salary:** £17,486 for 28 hours **(**£21, 858 FTE)

**Terms:** 6 months initial contract with possibility of extension

**Hours of work:** 28 hours a week

**Background**

Age UK Buckinghamshire’s mission statement is *‘We put the interests of older people living in Buckinghamshire at the centre of everything we do by helping them achieve and maintain their independence and wellbeing’.*

We do this by working together to improve older adults’ physical, cognitive, social and financial ‘health’, so they can achieve and maintain their independence and sense of well-being for longer.

We currently support older people with a range of services, including Information and Advice, Welfare Benefits Service, Befriending Service and Discharge Support Service which features support to get home from hospital and up to 6 weeks practical community support aimed at preventing readmission. We also provide a range of Home Services provided by qualified agents in housekeeping, gardening, toe nail cutting, hairdressing, DIY and 1-1 computer training.

We have grown as an organisation recently, expanding our services and increasing staff numbers as we endeavour to meet the needs of older people in the county. We are under increasing demand for all our services, with particular emphasis on our Welfare Benefits Service, especially currently during the cost-of-living crisis. This role is intended to increase our capacity, reduce our waiting lists and extend our reach, resulting in supporting more older people to claim the benefits to which they may be entitled. At this current time, this may mean focusing on particular areas of need – Aylesbury, High Wycombe and Chesham.

**The role**

This new role will sit within our Community Services, within an established Information and Advice team and will work closely with the existing Welfare Benefits Officer. You will be responding to and processing referrals into the Welfare Benefits service, liaising with our clients, carers and key partners to ensure we provide timely and accurate information and advice and access to the most appropriate Welfare Benefits support. You will be working closely with a group of skilled and experienced volunteers, managing their caseload, monitoring their capacity and processing completed benefits applications. You will also be supporting the current Welfare Benefits Officer and Volunteer Coordinator to recruit, train and support more volunteers to the service. At times of increased demand, you will be carrying out face to face visits into older people’s own homes in order to support the completion of benefit claim forms.

It is an important time to be extending our services and if you are excited by this prospect, we would love to talk to you.

**Job purpose**

Help us expand the capacity in Age UK Bucks’ Welfare Benefits Service so we can support more older people with benefit eligibility and claims, increasing their financial resilience and supporting them to stay independent for longer.

**Main tasks and responsibilities**

* Provide welfare benefits information and advice to older people in Buckinghamshire, their families, friends, carers and key partners
* Working with the existing team, develop the service in terms of processes, reach and impact
* Access, process and monitor referrals into the service, allocating them to trained volunteers for face-to-face support with benefits applications
* Respond to welfare benefits queries by telephone, email, face-to-face or home visits
* Recruit, train and support established and new volunteers
* Carry out face to face and digital support to older people in order to promote benefits applications and access, sometimes delivering home visits
* Support home visiting volunteers to deliver benefits information and advice to clients, including being on-call for supervision and support
* Liaise with Dept for Welfare and Pensions with regards to Alternative Office status and requirements
* Maintain physical case records and database (Charitylog) records in accordance with the requirements of the organisation
* Regularly update the Head of Community Services, providing qualitative and quantitative data and ensuring great stories and case studies from our beneficiaries
* Support and develop grant and fundraising income through the service
* Attend meetings and training sessions when required
* Deliver service presentations and attend outreach events
* Such other duties and projects as may be required

**Person specification**

Essential requirements

* Experience of dealing effectively with telephone and in-person callers
* Sensitivity to older people’s needs and callers in distress
* Ability to prioritise tasks with good organisational skills
* Personable and able to motivate and support colleagues and volunteers
* Ability to remain calm under pressure and manage a wide range of tasks
* Ability to work as part of a team

Desirable

* Knowledge of welfare benefits system and processes
* Experience of providing Information & advice
* Experience working with volunteers
* Experience of inputting data onto database systems and the ability to retrieve statistical information as required
* General administrative experience
* Knowledge of health and social care systems
* Excellent standards of literacy and numeracy

**Organisational requirements**

* Commitment to the aims and values of the organisation:

**Enabling:** We assist older people to live independently and exercise choice

**Influential:** We listen to older people, represent their interests and ensure their voices are heard

 **Dynamic:** We are innovative, driven by results and consistently deliver for older people

 **Caring:** We are passionate about what we do and care about each individual

 **Expert:** We are authoritative, trusted and quality orientated

* Awareness of health, safety and welfare of staff, volunteers and members of the public

This job description may change from time to time according to the needs of the organisation.