

## Job Description



<b>Job Title:</b> Benefits and Debt Advisor – Our Newham Money	<b>Service Area:</b> Community Wealth Building (Our Newham Money)	
<b>Directorate: Inclusive Economy and Housing</b>	<b>Post Number:</b> 24292	<b>Evaluation Number:</b> 5432
<b>Grade: PO1</b>	<b>Date last updated:</b> March 2020	
<p><b>People at the heart of everything we do</b> We are committed to putting people – Newham residents and Council staff – at the heart of all we do. Our approach is a collaborative joint enterprise between residents, the Mayor, Members, Council staff and the Corporate Management Team.</p> <p><b>Equality and diversity</b> We are committed to and champion equality and diversity in all aspects of employment with the London Borough of Newham. All employees are expected to understand and promote our Equality and Diversity policy in the course of their work.</p> <p><b>Protecting our staff and services</b> Adherence to health and safety requirements and proper risk management is required from all employees in so far as is relevant to their role. All employees are expected to understand and promote good health and safety practices and manage risks appropriately.</p> <p><b>Corporate parent</b> We believe that every member of staff working for Newham Council should understand and fulfil our corporate parenting responsibilities for our looked after children that we have under the Children and Social Work Act 2017.</p>		

### Newham Community Wealth Building

Newham has launched its Community Wealth Building strategy, underpinned by the principles of economic, social and environmental justice; so that long-term prosperity, wellbeing and fairness for all our residents in the Borough is achieved.

As well as attracting growth and investment into the borough, the Council's new Community Wealth Building strategy will help unleash the potential of residents, businesses and the voluntary sector because they are the source of wealth and talent that will drive a fairer and more prosperous Newham.

The new strategy will help the Council tackle injustices residents face with an unrelenting focus on poverty in the Borough, as well as addressing racial and gendered disparities that exists.

### Our Newham Money

Our Newham Money was developed and launched exclusively for Newham residents. Since opening Our Newham Money approach has transitioned from a focus on loans to a holistic approach putting our residents at the heart of everything we do. The service helps residents facing financial hardship

to meet their financial obligations fairly and efficiently by looking at their complete situation to determine the most appropriate course of action. This is achieved by providing advice, support and information on a range of topics.

Our Newham Money focuses on securing better financial wellbeing for our residents and forms part of the financial wellbeing pillar of Community Wealth Building.

### **Overall Purpose of Job**

To provide benefits and debt advice including casework up to specialist level to support in delivering the Community Wealth Building strategy for Newham residents. This services focuses on Newham residents who are unable to self-help using the Council's web resources, either because they do not have the personal capacity to do so or because of the nature of the issues.

Support in delivering "drop in" surgeries for debt and benefits advice.

To identify other issues that may be affecting clients' ability to improve their financial resilience and to facilitate these being dealt with, by signposting or referrals where appropriate.

As appropriate, to encourage clients to get paid employment, providing estimates of In Work benefits and signposting or referring to employment services.

To, wherever possible, encourage and enable clients to self-help and improve their personal and economic resilience.

To keep the Council's web based benefits advice up to date and to ensure the same is publicised.

To work in a co-ordinated and joined up way with other officers, Council services and external services, to help improve clients' financial capability and overall resilience.

### **Job Context**

1. The postholder reports to the Team Leader – Debt, Benefits and Employment Rights.
2. The post holder may be required to carryout home visits to provide advice on occasions
3. The postholder may be required to work from home according to the needs of the service.
4. The postholder does not have any direct line management but may have occasional supervision for people on work experience or in Apprenticeship/internship positions.
5. The postholder does not have any budget responsibility.
6. The post holder may be required to work occasional evenings and weekends.
7. The postholder may be required to travel to different Newham-based venues to deliver the service and to attend meetings both within and externally to the Borough.

### **Key Tasks and Accountabilities:**

Key tasks and accountabilities are intended to be a guide to the range and level of work expected of the post holder. This is not an exhaustive list of all tasks that may fall to the post holder and employees will be expected to carry out such other reasonable duties which may be required from time to time.

To undertake all responsibilities listed below:

1. Provide a benefits advice casework service, up to specialist level, to improve clients' immediate and future financial situations.
2. Provide information and advice on debt issues including casework.
3. Ensure that the service delivers advice in line with the its policy of encouraging and supporting clients to:
  - (i) self-help wherever possible, both immediately and in the future
  - (ii) improve their economic situation and financial capability.
4. Identify other issues affecting clients' ability to maintain or improve their economic well being and potential, then ensure these are dealt with through signposting or referrals wherever possible.
5. As appropriate, to encourage clients to get paid employment, providing estimates of In Work benefits and signposting or referring to employment services.
6. Keep accurate and comprehensive case records, recording all interactions and outcomes on the appropriate systems.
7. Keep the Senior Advice Officer informed of caseload size and other activities. Consult with the Officer when guidance is needed.
8. Stay informed of all changes to relevant legislation, regulations and practices of the DWP, HMRC and LBN Benefits.
9. Liaise with the Senior Advice Officer to ensure that both officers are aware of any changes affecting benefits.
10. Maintain the Council's web based benefits advice, ensuring it is kept up to date.
11. Develop and maintain a good working knowledge of the Council's web based debt advice.
12. Liaise with other Council departments and third sector organisations to develop and maintain an understanding of their customers' needs for information, advice and guidance on benefits issues.
13. Assist with the production of written procedures, guidance notes and other documentation, to support the smooth running of the service.
14. Provide support for officers at the 'front line', by giving a professional opinion when asked, and through direct involvement in the delivery of training sessions, as required.
15. General administrative work for all the above.

### **General/Professional**

1. To keep your line manager up to date with progress against targets and any issues
2. To manage own diary and the expectations of residents and partner organisations, ensuring that conflicting priorities are identified and managed in a way that promotes and supports the professional standards of the service.
3. To work effectively as part of a team, providing cover to colleagues as appropriate. Flexibility and adaptability to a constantly changing work flow is essential.
4. To attend meetings, representing Our Newham Money both internally and externally
5. To ensure that the work carried out is in accordance with the required Council's standards, General Data Protection Regulations, legal requirements, and Council's objectives.

6. To make effective use of ICT systems and processes to develop and provide monitoring information to enable effective performance management to take place
7. To ensure all data gathered is inputted into operational systems to enable monitoring of performance of Our Newham Money against Key Performance Indicators and for reporting progress to Elected Members.
8. To actively participate in team meetings and your own continuous professional development, identifying suitable development opportunities with your line manager.
9. To consistently promote and apply the Council's Human Resources Standards and Equalities Standards and to ensure that this is demonstrated and maintained throughout all areas of responsibility.
10. To undertake any other duties which may be reasonably required and within the capability of the postholder.

<b>Job Title:</b> Benefits and Debt Advisor – Our Newham Money	<b>Service Area:</b> Community Wealth Building (Our Newham Money)	
<b>Directorate:</b> Inclusive Economy and Housing	<b>Post Number:</b> 24292	<b>Evaluation Number:</b> 5432
<b>Grade:</b> PO1	<b>Date last updated:</b> March 2020	

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

The criteria listed in this Person Specification are all essential to the job. Where the Method of Assessment is stated to be the Application Form, your application needs to demonstrate clearly and concisely how you meet each of the criteria, even if other methods of assessment are also shown. If you do not address these criteria fully, or if we do not consider that you meet them, you will not be shortlisted. Please give specific examples wherever possible.

### EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

We are committed to and champion equality and diversity in all aspects of employment with the London Borough of Newham. All employees are expected to understand and promote our Equality and Diversity Policy in the course of their work.

### PROTECTING OUR STAFF AND SERVICES

Adherence to Health and Safety requirements and proper risk management is required from all employees in so far as is relevant to their role. All employees are expected to understand and promote good Health and Safety practices and manage risks appropriately.

CRITERIA	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
<b>KNOWLEDGE:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A clear understanding of ways in which people can improve their financial situation.</li> <li>In depth knowledge of benefits and tax credits, including claim procedures</li> <li>A demonstrable understanding of legislation relevant to benefits advice.</li> <li>In depth knowledge of debt advice, including creditor practices</li> <li>An awareness of the challenges of providing an advice service in a multi-cultural community</li> </ul>	<p>Application Form/Interview</p> <p>Application Form/Interview/Test</p> <p>Application Form/Interview/Test</p> <p>Application Form /Interview/Test</p> <p>Application Form /Interview</p>

<p><b>EXPERIENCE:</b></p> <p>Experience of providing benefits and debt advice casework at a specialist level, for at least two years.</p> <p>Experience of keeping accurate case records and providing accurate monitoring data.</p>	<p>Application Form/Interview</p> <p>Application Form/Interview</p>
<p><b>SKILLS AND ABILITIES:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to deal with complex casework, and apply and impart technical knowledge to colleagues</li> <li>• Ability to make decisions and resolve problems effectively, explore options and recognise implications.</li> <li>• Sound interviewing skills and ability to identify obstacles to clients' improving their economic situation</li> <li>• Ability to identify and pursue appropriate signposting and referral routes to Council colleagues and external organisations</li> <li>• Ability to motivate clients to improve their economic situation and potential as far as possible and avoid or deal with future crises</li> <li>• Ability to communicate information clearly, both orally and in writing.</li> <li>• Ability to work well under pressure, prioritise tasks and set own goals, working without supervision to achieve those goals</li> <li>• Ability to keep well organised records</li> <li>• Ability to use computer systems and learn new applications</li> </ul>	<p>Interview</p> <p>Application Form/Interview</p> <p>Interview/test</p> <p>Interview</p> <p>Interview</p> <p>Interview/test</p> <p>Application Form/Interview</p> <p>Interview</p> <p>Application Form/Interview</p>
<p><b>PERSONAL STYLE AND BEHAVIOUR:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintains a high standard of ethics and professional conduct</li> <li>• Demonstrates commitment to the achievement of equal opportunities in both employment and service delivery</li> <li>• Proactive and confident self-starter</li> </ul>	<p>Interview</p> <p>Interview</p> <p>Interview</p>

<p><b>OTHER SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check.</li> <li>• Able to work flexibly with some requirement to work evenings and or weekends</li> <li>• Ability to work remotely at home</li> <li>• Ability to work across a number of venues/offices within Newham</li> </ul>	<p>Satisfactory clearance at conditional offer stage</p> <p>Application Form and Interview</p> <p>Application Form and Interview</p> <p>Application Form and Interview</p>
---	--