

JOB DESCRIPTION

POST: I'M IN! Advocacy & Tribunal Officer (fixed contract to 31.3.25)

GRADE: £17.50/hr contracted for 18 hrs/wk

RESPONSIBLE TO: Advice & Advocacy Team Leader

MAIN PURPOSE OF THE POST:

As part of the AHAC Housing Advice Staff team you will provide a Type III accredited Advocacy and Tribunal Advice and Representation service to private rented tenants at risk of homelessness within East and South Ayrshire areas and work in partnership with SeAscape. Through negotiation and legal tribunal representation you will improve mental health through reducing homelessness and alleviating poverty. Detailed legislative and housing knowledge is required to advocate with Landlords and third parties to facilitate homeless prevention or ejection delays to secure suitable alternatives. Compliance with the Scottish National Standards on Housing Information and Advice and confidence in representing at Tribunal Hearings is essential for this post. Flexibility is required to attend meetings with tenants, Tribunal management discussions, evidential hearings, I'M IN! partners and other parties.

Perform the following functions:

- Ensure compliance with National Standards for Housing Information and Advice
- Develop and improve service delivery including strategies and plans
- Promote the organisation's and I'M! reputation and principles
- Work collaboratively with SeAscape I'M IN! Support Workers and Co-Ordinator to ensure early intervention and timely assistance is given
- Collaborate with the Advice Team to ensure service users receive a quality service
- Complete internal and external referrals to ensure a holistic approach
- Provide peer reviews, share learning and provide in-house training to promote good practice
- Participate in Team and external Meetings, outreach and events
- Input accurate data into AdvicePro to ensure quality assurance monitoring
- Report to Advice Team Leader and Operations Manager on ongoing issues
- Develop internal and formal Reports
- Provide essential information including case studies and feedback as required
- Provide assistance and support to Management where necessary
- Actively encourage referrals to improve digital inclusion and mental health
- Take a trauma informed, holistic, person-centred approach, taking into account the Service Users needs, aspirations and expectations

Specifics:

Work with existing Advice team (in particular the Caseworker and other Tribunal Officer) to provide a quality, free, confidential and impartial housing advice service to often vulnerable private rented tenants at risk of becoming homeless while maintaining type III National Standard quality case notes through the provision of:-

Referral/Signposting Where the person's needs are better met by another specialist agency information about that organisation along with help to make contact with them through formal or informal referral. We have developed a network of advice and support to ensure all sectors of South Ayrshire have access to appropriate advice services. Link particularly with existing supports and encourage reengagement and develop links in East Ayrshire area.

Information Presenting verbal or written basic facts and information to allow informed decisions and action to be taken. Decisions, choices and actions are left to the service user but explain a clear outline of possible outcomes. Provide information on other services and actively refer them for help.

Advice Providing information together with recommendations on options for future action or decisions, spelling out the likely implications and where necessary providing information on legal implications/rights. Providing knowledge of legislation or regulations which allows the Service User to exert their rights and make informed decisions. Decisions and choices are left to the person. Action may be by, with or for the Service User with consent.

Practical Help Providing practical assistance at the request of the service user. This may require writing, calling or visiting others on their behalf, acting as a mediator between the service user and e.g. a Local Authority, Landlord, DWP or other form of practical help such as passing the case to the Caseworker for type II help including budgeting advice, income maximisation, grants, etc. Liaise with SeAscape designated support worker to facilitate support and gather necessary papers.

Advocacy Liaising with third parties to negotiate or improve situations including income maximisation, delays in ejection or preventing homelessness. Represent a service user with their permission to assist their case through negotiation or mediation with a Tribunal, Landlord, Agency or other body.

Representation Provide written and/or in person representation within a formal setting such as a Tribunal. Understand the key process and dates and legislation/regulations including case law and good practice.

- Work with others to develop network of advice, sustainment and support to ensure access to appropriate services through streamlined referral protocol arrangements
- Work with Advice Team Leader/Operations Manager in developing adequate quality delivery
- Provide consistent, quality information, advice, and advocacy service to ensure their needs are fully considered, and housing difficulties are dealt with in compliance with the Scottish National Standards on Housing Information and Advice including detailed case notes to demonstrate accurately advice and representation provided including various formats and meetings online and in person
- Liaise and respond timeously with Tribunal services, Solicitors, Landlords and other interested parties including managing diary effectively and liaise with other workers
- Circulate knowledge and information gained through providing staff training sessions. Promote knowledge and skills sharing and training within the team to promote consistency/good practice
- Represent the Centre at external events and deliver sessions when required
- Represent Ayr Housing Aid Centre's SCIO aims and objectives and carry out such other reasonable duties as may be required

This job description may be altered over time by agreement to reflect the changing requirements of the post and the Centre therefore a flexible approach by the post holder is essential.

April 2024

Person Profile

Job Title: Advocacy & Tribunal Officer

Date: April 2024

Project: Housing Information, Advice and Advocacy Service (I'M IN!)

Requirement

Desirable/Essential

1. Qualifications/Education/Knowledge/Experience

Housing Tribunal/Housing Property Chamber Representation	Essential
Housing, Homelessness, Benefits and Welfare Legislation	Essential
Proficient IT, Microsoft and case management skills	Essential
Experience in advice and advocacy and/or third sector	Essential
Working with a wide range of agencies	Essential
Driving licence, use of a car, business insurance	Essential
Relevant Degree level education	Highly Desirable
Managing expectations, empowering and promoting positive choices	Highly Desirable
Awareness of Scottish National Standards and private rented sector	Highly Desirable
Professional or lived experience of homelessness or poverty	Highly Desirable
Completed or be willing to gain relevant Qualifications (e.g. Shelter PDA in Housing Law, etc)	Highly Desirable

3. Abilities

Establish good relationships with service users, agencies and partners	Essential
Provide clear and accurate records and promote consistency	Essential
Use Microsoft Office and case recording platforms	Essential
Able to adapt and evolve the service to meet changing needs	Essential
Commitment to professional development & share experience and skills	Essential
Efficient research skills and understanding of legal processes and caselaw	Highly Desirable
Social and Political awareness surrounding homelessness	Highly Desirable
Be Successful, self-directed, flexible and tactical	Highly Desirable

4. Personal Qualities

Excellent interpersonal skills and able to negotiate	Essential
Non-judgemental, caring and approachable	Essential
Maturity, patience, resourceful and confident	Essential
Passionate about Social justice and alleviation of poverty	Essential
Assertive Mediation/Negotiating ability and confidence in legal processes	Essential
Flexibility where required	Essential

5. Ayr Housing Aid Centre SCIO Values

Candidates should respect Centre values and core objectives	Essential
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