

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Welfare rights advisor
Department	Support hub
Reports to	Welfare rights supervisor
Reports to you	n/a
Hours of Work	Full time: 37.5 hours, Monday – Friday, 9-5pm
Date	August 2022

The Royal Free Charity

Our vision

Our vision is for everyone served by the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust (RFL) to have access to world-leading healthcare, delivered by a thriving workforce, and driven by medical research that has a global impact. We support the 10,000 staff of the RFL and their 1.6 million patients across Barnet, Chase Farm and Royal Free hospitals and more than 30 NHS services.

What we do

Through the services we provide, and the programmes and equipment we fund, we make a profound and immediate difference to patients' experiences of care. Our volunteering, support hub, and complementary therapy teams enhance the hospital journey for all patients – whether they live locally, or come from further away to access the trust's specialist services. Our support of the RFL workforce enables staff to perform at their very best. Spanning individual professional development and training through to organisation-wide interventions, our initiatives bolster employee resilience and mental health so staff can achieve the best outcomes for patients. We fund ground-breaking research with the potential to change people's lives, whether it's through our small grants programme or delivering major capital funding appeals.

Our approach

We are a solution-focused strategic partner to the RFL, helping our hospitals to go further and faster than the NHS could do alone. We believe funding decisions should be made based on strategic priority and impact, with a strong focus on co-production.

The Royal Free Charity (the Charity) invests in:

- Enhanced support for patients
- Vital support for our staff
- Ground-breaking research and innovation
- Cutting-edge medical equipment

The generosity of our donors, fundraisers and volunteers enables us to do this.

The Charity, which employs about 80 people, is working towards becoming an employer of choice.

Support Hub Team

The Support hub department is here to support people affected by long term health conditions (patients and carers), to help them with the practicalities of living with a chronic condition; to improve wellbeing and quality of life.

We are here to transform patient experience and staff experience and change lives for the better.

We aim to play our part in addressing inequalities in health, through supporting with the wider determinants of health (e.g., finances, housing); areas which can have a direct impact on someone's health outcomes and recovery.

We are here for Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust staff through the support we provide for their patients, stepping in where they don't have the time or expertise.

The Royal Free Charity 'Support hub' is a novel concept, developed in 2018, following identification that there was a lack of support for people with long term health conditions (to the same level as cancer support services). A core part of the Support Hub is the welfare rights advice service.

In 2021-2022, our advice team supported over 300 Royal Free patients, averted homelessness for 15 people, and supported rehousing for 12 people. 96.2% of patients said they were satisfied with the support they received. Feedback from NHS staff is also overwhelmingly positive. We are excited to have seen growth in the Support hub welfare rights advice service and its team over the last four years.

Principal accountabilities / responsibilities: -

Welfare and benefits casework

- To provide welfare rights advice for people affected by long-term health conditions, including inpatients, outpatients, and carers
- To provide advice and support on: welfare benefits, some housing matters that do not require a solicitor, and non-FCA regulated debts (for example: council tax, rent arrears and benefit overpayments);
- To check whether clients are in receipt of all the benefits they are entitled to, and help them claim any relevant benefits that they haven't claimed yet, or obtain increases if their benefits are not paid at the correct rate;
- To help clients understand benefit decisions, and challenge them (where appropriate) by way of mandatory reconsiderations and appeals;
- To help clients ensure they keep to their responsibilities in respect of their benefit claims, for example by notifying any relevant changes of circumstances;

- To engage effectively with case work supervision, including by keeping accurate, up-to-date records on the case management system, following the Support Hub advice team's "case progress process" and keeping to the "terms of engagement" we send to all clients;
- To provide a combination of face-to-face, telephone and digital appointments, and drop-in sessions, dependent on the service needs
- To refer or signpost clients to other agencies or departments as appropriate, e.g., housing solicitors; community care cases involving social services and NHS duties, FCA-regulated debt (such as credit cards, bank charges and mortgages) and immigration services.
- To be aware of, and where appropriate, signpost or refer to other services that might be valuable to a client such as condition specific charities, or offerings in the local community that would improve their physical or health and wellbeing, such as opportunities for peer support and connectivity;
- To signpost or refer into mental health support services where appropriate
- To provide a high-quality service that is personal, responsive and sensitive, ensuring confidentiality and adhering to the Data Protection Act 2018 and GDPR
- To ensure that people accessing the service feel welcomed, valued and understood;
- Safeguarding – to be aware of your duty to protect individuals (both adults and children) to live free from abuse, harm and neglect, and to follow correct internal policies and procedures where you have concerns for an individual.

Working with others

- To offer first class customer service to patients and carers of the Royal Free London
- To effectively support RFL hospital staff, feeding back to referrers, and focus on building positive relationships across the Trust.
- To work with the other Support hub team members, offering peer support, sharing learnings, and participating in regular team meetings
- To support the administrator and volunteers in their roles where required
- To build effective working relationships with staff in other departments of the Charity
- To build good working relationships with other relevant organisations
- To maintain up-to-date knowledge of external agencies and changes in legislation, policies and practices and adapt and share this information as appropriate
- To liaise and establish contact with relevant national and local agencies and services.
- To help clients (RFL patients/ carers) understand the practical ways they can be a part of achieving the RFC and Support hub wider purpose (e.g., giving their feedback on how the Hub has helped them), thus contributing to the charity's wider vision and mission.

Administration

- To maintain case records to enable the continuity of casework; ensuring an accurate and up to date case work system, using our case management system (i.e. Advice Pro);
- To maintain an electronic diary for booking appointments and follow-up actions, using the case management system

- To respond to phone and email enquiries from clients and third parties in a timely manner (as per team operational policy/ guidelines); and
- To ensure that suitable confidentiality and data protection procedures are followed.

Other - All staff are expected to:

- To build relationships across the Charity and the Royal Free London to enable own work, and engage with internal and external stakeholders
- To take time for personal development, contributing learning and ideas to the wider team.
- To support your team and your other colleagues
- Attend meetings and training as required
- Attend supervision on a regular basis with the line manager
- To treat everyone equally, regardless of class, age, disability, gender identity or gender expression, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, or any other equality characteristic
- Read and adhere to the Charity policies, including the dress code, and all relevant legislation and ensure that any team members who report to you do the same
- Be aware of and have a good understanding of Health and Safety at Work and the Fire Procedure and understand the correct action to be taken in the event of a fire
- To work to the Charity's Vision and Mission
- To undertake any other tasks commensurate with the role

This job description is not exhaustive, and the role will include other tasks and responsibilities commensurate with the post and subject to change to meet legislative requirements.

Person Specification

Qualifications, experience, skills & knowledge

Qualifications

- CSE/GCSE in Maths and English or equivalent

Experience

- Extensive experience working in a welfare-rights related role and independently managing your own case load.
- Previous experience of supporting people with a range of welfare issues including benefits (applications, mandatory reconsiderations, appeals) and housing issues
- To have experience using a case management system; proficiency with Advice Pro would be advantageous
- Not for profit or NHS experience advantageous; and
- Experience of working with people affected by long term health conditions would be beneficial, as well as an understanding of the issues and challenges they face.

Skills & knowledge

- To be highly proficient in carrying out independent and varied case work
- Up-to-date knowledge of welfare benefits and rights

- Up-to-date knowledge of housing, debt, and employment law (considering what matters must be referred on)
- An understanding of legislation policy and practice
- Awareness of other pathways and services available to signpost or refer people (e.g., GP, psychological support, local support groups, appropriate medical support charities);
- To have excellent communication skills, including:
 - Excellent listening skills
 - Effective verbal skills- while adapting your approach to different audiences
 - Excellent written skills
- To have excellent numeracy, literacy, and administrative skills;
- To have excellent eye for detail and accuracy.
- Strong IT skills, including a through knowledge of Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook)
- To be able to deliver a high quality of customer service to agreed timescales; and
- The ability to help lead the future development of the Support hub and the welfare benefits service at The Royal Free Charity based at the Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust
- The ability to: -
 - empathise and support people going through difficult times
 - empathise and support RFL staff positively; and
 - build supportive and trusting relationships
- The ability to prioritise, organise and manage workload effectively whilst dealing with unplanned interruptions
- To be able to: -
 - work independently; and
 - work under pressure and to deadlines; and
 - problem solve
- To be willing to continue updating own knowledge and skills; including learning of new systems where required
- To be self-confident and willing to take responsibility
- Gaining insight from your role to inform the RFC's contribution to national conversations
- Able to deal with sensitive information in a confidential and professional manner

Other - All staff are expected to:

- To have a positive professional work attitude
- To be highly motivated and able to take the initiative
- Be enthusiastic and passionate for the Charity / Hospital environment
- To have a strong affinity with the NHS and philanthropic values
- Be flexible and respond to the needs of services