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Introduction

Dear Candidate

Advice Space has come a long way since it rebranded in 2018. It still retains the values and ethos of the Citizens Advice movement from which it emerged, but with a modernised structure, and an even greater emphasis on the quality of the services it provides. At the heart of these improvements is a focus on the development of the staff and volunteers who deliver the positive impact on the community that is its mission.

We are proud of the trust placed in us by our partners who help us increase our impact every year, reaching more people with a wide range of increasingly important advice and referral services. In looking back over the previous 2-year period 2021-2023, Advice Space has:

- Secured >£2.3 million of incoming funding to enable service provision
- Assisted 60,055 people
- Dealt with 183,555 different problems for those people
- Helped them receive >£17.5 million back in unclaimed benefit entitlements

With our focus on sustainability, we ended the year with nearly £600k in unrestricted reserves.

We are now looking for an Advice Team Leader to manage and develop the team of advice staff and volunteers.

You will be joining a highly effective team of 30 staff and many more volunteers, supported and guided by a committed board of trustee directors.

If you have the skills and experience and share our passion for making a difference to our community, we very much look forward to hearing from you.

Who we are

The name Advice Space has been around for five years, but our ethos and values are still based on our fifty-year legacy as part of the Citizens Advice movement. Our focus is about helping people – no matter who they are – to exercise their rights and obtain fair treatment under the law.

Advice Space grew out of 'Citizens Advice Belfast' in 2018, taking the opportunity to rebrand and grow following the closure of Northern Ireland's regional support body for CABx. Since then, as part of the Advice NI family, it has evolved into a real success story for the community it serves in Belfast and beyond, with 25 staff and a turnover of more than £1.1m and largely unrestricted reserves of nearly £600k.

Ultimately, the purposes of the charity are to promote any charitable purpose for the benefit of the community in Northern Ireland by the advancement of education, the protection and preservation of health and the relief of poverty, sickness and distress.



Belfast
City Council



Belfast Health and
Social Care Trust



Department for
Communities
www.communities-ni.gov.uk



We provide our services through six different offices around Belfast. In our most recent reported year, we fulfilled our purpose by providing those services to people who collectively raised 89,374 queries that they needed help with. Through our interventions, we were able to help clients claim more than £10.5m in previously unclaimed entitlements.

Finally, Advice Space believes partnership working is essential in delivering effective services to people when they most need it. We currently provide solutions for Pension Wise, Macmillan Cancer Support and Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. We partner with Chest Heart and Stroke providing an e-referral advice service to their users. We deliver for Cystic Fibrosis, Positive Life and Cedar. Further, we are supported by Belfast City Council and the Department for Communities in delivering advice services to the citizens of Belfast.

What we do

Advice Space offers free and up-to-date factual advice to anyone who needs it. We give people the knowledge to help them fight their corner and move a difficult situation forward or act on their behalf if it helps.

If clients need help with a debt problem or a social security tribunal, we put them in touch with our specialist advisors.

Clients get help through face-to-face appointments at any of our six offices and outreach sessions, or they can opt to receive help by telephone, text or email. We work closely with our partners to further deliver online digital triage and appointment services.

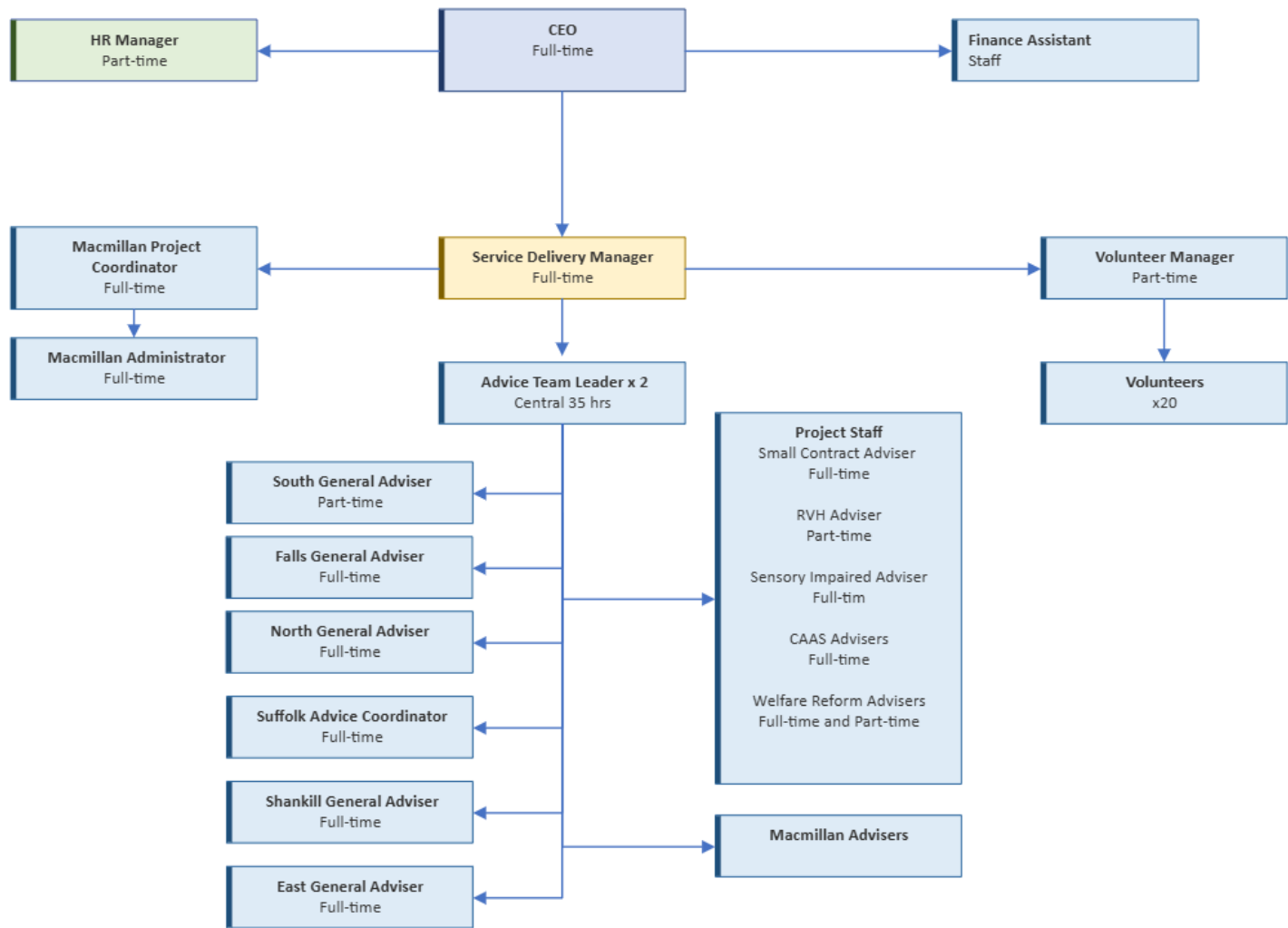
To maintain the quality of the services we provide year after year, we invest in the best training we can for our staff and our volunteers.

Benefits advice is the key plank of our service provision. Every year we help thousands of people navigate the complex benefits system to ensure they get all the financial and other support to which they are entitled.

We also help with a range of other subjects including through the provision of employment advice. We remain the go-to organisation in the community for people with debt and money issues, and with our partners can secure assistance on housing, immigration and health matters.

Our frontline experience and expertise also equips us to help influence policy and contribute to campaigns aimed at improving the quality of life for our community.

How we're organised



Strategy

Aims

We provide free advice to people with problems, and we listen to what stakeholders say when things don't work. We speak up to improve policies and practices that affect people's lives by challenging decision-makers.

Principles

Our advice is free, independent, confidential and impartial. We help people get access to the information they need to fight their own corner and, where appropriate, act on their behalf.

Mission

Providing high quality, free, independent advice enabling people to move towards positive life solutions.

Objectives

Our current 2024-2029 objectives are centred on:

- Improving lives and promoting well-being by delivering an independent high-quality comprehensive welfare rights service and in partnership with trusted partners.
- Using evidence to inform and influence positive change.
- Being recognised as highly motivated, reliable and trusted experts.
- Ensuring effective governance
- Minimising waste & maximising use of existing and emerging digital technology.
- Having appropriate accommodation that meets organisational need.
- Achieving Financial Sustainability.

ADVICE SPACE - ADVISER

JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

JOB TITLE: Adviser

LOCATION: Belfast

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Service Delivery

- Provide advice covering a broad subject range.
- To keep up to date with new developments, social trends and local needs that might affect demand for advice or suggest opportunities for service development.
- Maintain detailed case records necessary for the continuity of casework, information retrieval, statistical monitoring and report preparation.
- Use a range of information resources to find, interpret and communicate the relevant information.
- Research, explore options and implications so clients can make informed decisions.
- Act for the client where necessary by calculating, negotiating, drafting, writing letters and telephoning, negotiating with third parties as appropriate and making referrals.
- Provide outreach support where necessary.
- Maintain confidentiality of information in line with our policies and legislative requirements.
- Ensure your work conforms to quality/compliance standards.

Operational

- Production of statistical and other reports as required.
- Liaise with the Advice Team Leader and Service Manager on meeting targets.
- Work flexibly and collaboratively, cooperating with your co-workers to ensure the smooth operation and delivery of the service.
- To be proactively involved in the development of the service including partnerships and fundraising initiatives.

Volunteers

- Ensure volunteers are supported and motivated in keeping with our policies, good practice procedures and legislation.
- Ensure good communication.
- Encourage volunteers to be proactively involved in the development and improvement of our service.

Office Management/Health and Safety

- Ensure the effective operation of office, health and safety, fire procedures as required.
- To take reasonable care for the health and safety of self, employees and others who may be affected whilst in our premises.
- Offer suggestions on improvements in reduction of costs and opportunities to increase income.

Developing a local presence

- To maintain and build effective local relations with appropriate authorities, agencies, organisations and individuals at local and regional level, including councilors and local government officers and act as an ambassador for the organisation.

General

- Keep up to date with our aims, policies and procedures and ensure these are followed.
- Abide by health and safety guidelines and share responsibility for own health and safety and that of colleagues.
- Contribute to maintaining good relationships with partners and actively seeking out potential partners to develop referral relationships with.
- Monitor and evaluate activities appropriate to the role and contribute to the service planning process by providing regular reports and feedback on areas of responsibility.
- To provide flexibility and be prepared to work across any of Advice Space offices in Belfast to meet organisational needs.
- Undertake any other reasonable tasks within the post holder's capacity.

PERSONNEL SPECIFICATION

Education/Qualifications

1. Educated to GCSE Level or equivalent standard.
2. Recognised qualification in Advice work provided by Advice NI or Law Centre NI

Experience

3. 1 year experience of advice giving.
4. Experience of receiving feedback objectively.
5. Experience of creating and understanding reports and spreadsheets, as well as the ability to present findings and trends.
6. Experience of using a range of IT Systems including Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Sharepoint.
7. Experience of using telephony platforms, database software and online information resources.

Knowledge

8. Good knowledge of GDPR and client confidentiality.

Skills

9. Good interpersonal and communication skills, verbal and written.

10. Excellent customer service orientation.

11. Good attention to detail.

12. Good time management skills with the ability to prioritise effectively.

13. Proven ability to build relationships at all levels.

14. Proven ability to prioritise effectively, to multi-task and to cope well under pressure.

15. Numerically astute and analytical.

Other

16. Ability to commit to and work within the aims, principles and policies of Advice Space.

17. Commitment to reflective performance and continuing professional development.

18. Ability to attend all Advice Space sites on an ongoing basis as required.

How to apply

Please send your CV along with a brief cover letter outlining your suitability for the role in line with the Job Specification above to recruitment@advice.space

You will also be asked to submit a separate equality monitoring form.