



Recruitment Pack: Welfare Rights Officers

About GDA

GDA is a multi-award-winning disabled people's organisation (DPO) controlled by over 6000 disabled members; the largest groundswell of disabled members in Europe. With foundations in Glasgow, GDA also supports disabled people in surrounding areas and has national reach and influence, frequently partnering with national organisations and acting as a strategic advisor to public authorities such as Glasgow City Council, Glasgow Life, NHS and Scottish Government.

Our work over 25 years is built on foundations of Human Rights and Community Development: individual and collective community empowerment, based on peer support, developing and drawing on disabled people's own strengths by:

- Building individual capacity: delivering Lifelong Learning & Personal Development; Wellbeing supports; Digital Inclusion and cost reduction support; Welfare Rights information, advice and representation; and support to navigate social care and wider services.
- Building Collective Capacity: knowledge building and consciousness raising to understand rights and identify structural inequalities; movement building to amplify collective and marginalised voices of disabled people; delivering support to articulate and share lived experience, participate in dialogue, deliberation and collective advocacy & challenge inequality and exclusion.
- Collaborating for change with local and national government, communities and third sector: sharing insights, research and evidence as well as bringing disabled people together with powerholders to shape policy and co-design accessible services and decisions which affect us.

Our mission is to promote and uphold equality, rights and social justice for disabled people. **Our vision** is that disabled people participate in and lead their own lives, connecting with peers, services, opportunities, contributing to families, communities and wider society.

GDA brings diverse and marginalised disabled people together. Our common bond is our shared experience of disabling barriers and of working for solutions to break these down. We are a leading example of a **community of identity**, united around a sense of belonging and trust, shared experiences of exclusion and inequalities and

with a common and shared purpose to overcome these and achieve improved equality and human rights.

GDA is proud to be part of the disabled people's Independent Living Movement, founded on the **social model of disability**. This liberating model is a way of understanding "**disability**": impairments and conditions are a normal part of life – inequality is not. Disability results from the barriers we face, living in a society that was not designed with us in mind- a society which disables us. Equality is not about fixing disabled people's bodies or impairments – but removing the barriers in society.

GDA Rights Now Project

Since 2018, Glasgow Disability Alliance has been delivering our accessible Rights Now project which was initially delivered in our role as a **Strategic Partner to Glasgow City Council**, mitigating impact of Universal Credit and maximising income for disabled people. The model was held up by Glasgow City and others as an exemplar of participative democracy and unique accessible service delivery,

"I was delighted with the help that I received, including GDA agreeing to take on representation at fairly short notice. The extra money will be extremely helpful since my drop in income from when I ran my own business. Most of all, I am delighted that my difficulties have been recognised. The previous decision made me feel like I was being told that my difficulties were not significant. Thank you so much!" **GDA member on Rights Now support.**

Rights Now is currently funded by Scottish Government, Advice UK, and The Robertson Trust.

Job Description and Person Specification

Job Title: Welfare Rights Officer

Salary: Circa £30K depending on experience

Reports to: **Welfare Rights Manager**

Hours: 35 hours per week

Location: Templeton Business Centre, with home visits where required to support client access requirements.

Outline of the Role

We are looking for an experienced, flexible and multi skilled individual who is proactive, collaborative and has excellent communication skills to join Glasgow Disability Alliance at an exciting and dynamic time. The successful candidate, alongside an experienced Welfare Rights Manager and small Welfare Rights Team will deliver GDA's welfare rights advice service to maximise income and improve financial security of disabled people across Greater Glasgow.

The main role of the WRO is to work alongside GDA staff to engage disabled people, and to provide independent and accessible welfare benefits information, advice and representation over the phone, online and via face-to-face appointments at the office, during home visits and through outreach in the community.

The successful candidate will be dedicated, skilled and enthusiastic, committed to equality and human rights, with experience of providing high quality welfare benefits and advice services as well as an understanding of community led approaches and issues affecting disabled people.

The appointable candidate will be digitally skilled and confident with the ability to deliver online supports to disabled people as well as telephone and face to face supports.

This post is a 'Regulated Role' supporting protected adults and requires the postholder to be a member of the PVG Scheme.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Specific duties:

- Deliver a comprehensive welfare rights service for disabled people across Greater Glasgow by phone, from GDA offices, online and in community based or other suitable locations including the person's home.
- Provide information, advice and advocacy to disabled people on welfare rights issues to maximise income.
- Maintain an up to date knowledge of relevant welfare benefits legislation, particularly in relation to disability benefits.
- Prepare and carry out appeals cases, including securing helpful evidence and representing people at Tribunals.
- Engage with GDA's membership as well as wider communities of disabled people and their organisations to identify and engage disabled people needing support from the project.
- Assist in the organisation, coordination and delivery of learning and training programmes on welfare rights and income maximisation.
- Assist with the development and promotion of benefit take up campaigns.
- Refer service users to other statutory and voluntary partners to provide specialist support where required.
- Coordinate, develop and where appropriate, deliver accessible activities or events for disabled people.
- Develop and distribute accessible promotional material and resources to support the engagement of disabled people.

Partnerships and Collaboration

- Work collaboratively with others to ensure internal and external referrals, joint working and accessible services e.g. GEMAP.
- Contribute to partnership working which focuses on improving or developing accessible services for disabled people.
- Work alongside GDA staff to draw out learning from Rights Now and share this learning- where appropriate – to influence policy and practice around social security.
- Develop and maintain information on relevant local services, facilities, resources and networks utilising and contributing to GDA's database to make referrals as appropriate.

Recording and Monitoring

- Maintaining client records on Advice Pro case management system to enable ongoing casework and reporting of financial gains.
- Communicate regularly with Admin team to ensure accuracy of GDA membership database.
- Gather evidence and information to report progress towards project outcomes including impact on take-up, case studies, testimonies and impact reports.
- Prepare and provide reports to Welfare Rights Manager & CEO in order to report to funders as requested.

General

- Complying with GDPR at all times, maintain accurate records of all project activity, contributing to and leading monitoring, evaluation and reporting.
- To work collaboratively with GDA colleagues, contributing to the positive, proactive and supportive culture of GDA.
- To subscribe to the ethos, vision and mission of GDA, taking individual and collective professional responsibility to champion GDA's equality and human rights agenda.
- To commit to developing and maintaining specialist knowledge for the role and to keep alert to developments in policy and practice impacting on disabled people
- To deliver talks and presentations at briefings, roadshows, and other events to promote GDA and Rights Now in particular.
- To work at all times with integrity and to the highest professional standards.
- To ensure that services are provided in accordance with GDA's Policies.
- To undertake such other duties as may be required by the Welfare Rights Manager, the CEO and/or GDA's Board of Directors within the overall aims of the post.

Person Specification: Welfare Rights Officer

Skills & Abilities

1. Investigative Interviewing: to assess needs & agree actions in a supportive way.
2. Excellent Communication and interpersonal skills and ability to develop positive and productive relationships with clients and partners
3. Ability to produce written materials to a high standard e.g. applications, reports and maintain accurate client records.
4. High level of analytical skills: skilled ability to analyse and build reasoned arguments and submissions to decision makers at all levels in the benefits system, including tribunals.
5. Advocacy skills – representing the rights and entitlements of disabled people.
6. Planning and Organisational skills including ability to meet deadlines and manage workload.
7. Problem solving skills.
8. Listening and informal Counselling skills.
9. IT skills including Microsoft Office or equivalent and ability to input to systems.
10. Able to work independently and proactively on own initiative and as part of the team, including at the same time being willing to take direction.

Knowledge and Experience

1. Experience of providing welfare rights or rights based work either in a paid or voluntary capacity.
2. Up to date knowledge of welfare benefits issues at Scotland and UK levels including understanding and applying the law to the circumstances of individuals
3. Understanding of the needs of ill and disabled people and the range of benefits available to support them
4. Experience of managing a complex caseload and maintaining up to date recording.

5. Experience of providing advocacy or welfare rights representation e.g. at tribunals or similar.

6. Understanding and sensitivity to issues facing appellants during tribunal processes.

7. Understanding of disabled people's independent living philosophy, the social model of disability, equality and human rights.

8. Experience of using Advice Pro.

9. Knowledge of wider issues facing disabled people.

Personal Attributes

1. Self-motivation self-drive: ability to work on own initiative

2. Commitment to ethos of GDA and a passion for working with disabled people to overcome barriers and achieve positive changes in their lives.

3. Kindness, patience and empathy when dealing with people facing difficult circumstances.

4. Teamwork: contributing to and supporting your colleagues utilising individual and shared learning and development.

5. Flexible and adaptive to change.

6. Enthusiasm, ability to motivate others and connect with people.

7. Accountability: taking responsibility for your actions and behaviour and willingness to learn and develop.