

 **Job Description**

Job Title: Generalist Adviser

Responsible to: Head of Advice and Support Service

Location: STEP Offices: Magherafelt or Cookstown

Salary Starting Salary £25,000 - £27,900 depending on qualification/experience

Pension 6% Employers contribution to pension

Hours: 15hrs – 37.5hrs per week, these will normally be worked between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm Mon-Fri. Evening work and weekend work may be required occasionally. NB: We have full time hours available but are willing to accept a part time worker.

Probationary Period: The probation period for this post is 6 months.

Allowances: Travel and subsistence expenses are paid, in accordance with STEP travel and subsistence policy, when the post holder is absent from the organisation’s premises on the organisation’s business.

Holidays: 36 days inclusive of statutory holidays, (10 of which are office close down periods, Christmas & Easter) as identified in the STEP employee manual.

Flexibility The post holder is expected to be responsive to STEP policies, priorities and the changing needs of the organisation and will be expected to adapt their workload as required.

Start Date: Immediate vacancy

**Summary of Role**

To provide information, guidance and advice to the resident population of Mid Ulster requesting this support from STEP across a range of enquires. These include but are not limited to enquiries relating to:

• Welfare Benefits – all types

• Debt

• Housing

• Immigration

• Legal rights

• Family issues

• Employment rights

• Education advice

• Health and mental health

• Tax

• Consumer

• Advocacy

The general advisor is not required to have specialist knowledge in these areas but should be competent in providing accurate, appropriate and relevant information and advice at the first stage of resolving the query.

STEP provides advisors with access to resources; up-to-date information and support enabling them to fulfil their role.

**Key Responsibilities**

You will be required to:

* Accurately identify, assess and record the nature and urgency of the enquiry.
* Assess the welfare / wellbeing support needs of the enquirer and provide information, support and advice.
* Access available information, knowledge and resources to respond to enquiries accurately and effectively and in a timely manner.
* Provide advocacy and undertake casework as required, including assisting in support to complete applications, complaints in paper or on-line format.
* Refer customers to other sources of information, guidance or advice where appropriate, ensuring referrals are made in such a way as to enable the person making the enquiry to access the next stage. Follow up accordingly ensure the client query is appropriately addressed.
* Work flexibly in a multi-channel environment to provide an efficient and effective service that meets the information and support needs (including emotional support needs) of those seeking support, demonstrating understanding and empathy.
* Contribute to managing customer enquiries within the advice team.
* Assess the social security support needs of customers and provide information, support and advice.
* Provide information and advice on benefits entitlement; income maximisation and the NI Benefits/Welfare system.
* Provide practical guidance on claiming specific benefits, including welfare eligibility checking, full benefits checks, grant eligibility assessment
* Be responsible for maintaining awareness of current topical issues including wider legislative developments and understanding the implications of these for customers of the service.
* Work in line with agreed quality and customer service standards
* Provide follow-up support to customers.
* Comply with industry quality standards (Advice quality standard adherence)
* Contribute to ongoing service development ensuring that the support we provide meets the evolving needs of clients.
* Maximise the collection of data on customer records in accordance with agreed standards of documentation and data protection
* Be familiar with, and adhere to all relevant organisational policies and procedures, at all times.

Any other duties as reasonably required in line with skills, knowledge and experience to contribute to the organisation’s wider success.

**To undertake this role, you will need to have or be willing to develop:**

* Customer enquiry handling skills, including the ability to navigate, signpost and provide information, including on the welfare benefits system to and on behalf of the person making the enquiry / seeking advice.
* An understanding and appreciation of the needs of the customer and the importance of a customer focused service.
* Sufficient knowledge and ability to provide up-to-date, accurate and concise advice as outlined in the role description.
* Ability to accurately and appropriately retrieve information from relevant sources including electronic databases and the Internet.
* Knowledge and understanding of the legal requirements around data protection, confidentiality & safeguarding.
* Excellent verbal and written communication skills.
* Proficiency in the use of organisational recording systems to meet the needs of both the person seeking information and advice; and the organisational reporting requirements.
* Experience of using the MS Office.
* Experience of working in a customer- facing environment and advice setting.
* Experience of liaising, mediating and negotiating with government departments on behalf of customers.
* Emotional intelligence, including the ability to provide empathetic support and handle emotionally complex situations in a professional and supportive way, maintaining appropriate boundaries and adhering to relevant policies and guidance.

**In this role, you will work with different people and teams:**

**Internally:**  Housing and Homelessness; Family Support team; Community Infrastructure; Welfare Rights teams; Mental Health Support team; Prevention of Destitution / Hardship; Line manager; Senior management team

**Externally:** HMRC; Jobs & Benefit; DfC Social Security teams; NIHE; Housing Associations; Labour Relations Agency; a range of Voluntary and Community organisations including Advice NI; Housing Rights NI; Law Centre NI; Consumer Council; Disability Action and other specialist advisors; Jobs & Benefits; Tribunal Service.

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

**Essential Criteria:**

Qualifications, knowledge and experience

 You Must:

* Have a good level of general education including Maths and English
* Hold a Generalist Qualification at level 3 provided by Advice NI, Law Centre NI or equivalent\*
* Have a minimum of 6 months proven experience (paid or unpaid) in welfare advice work

\*This training can be provided to the right candidate with considerable relevant experience however preference will be given to those with the qualification.

Technical Skills

You must:

* have demonstrated capacity to use ICT as an integral part of your everyday work.
* Be able to prepare and present persuasive evidence-based argument.
* Have excellent organisational, communication and report writing skills
* Good IT skills – especially word-processing, and database entry

**Please note STEP routinely uses Microsoft & Advice Pro packages. If you are not already familiar with these, you will be required to be sufficiently ICT competent to adapt to using them within your first 4 weeks of employment.**

**Desirable Criteria**

You hold an additional accreditation at level 3 or 4 in a second area of specialised advice e.g. money advice & debt; consumer rights; employment rights; housing; immigration

**Application for Employment**

**Please complete and return as a word document.**

**Section 1 - PERSONAL DETAILS**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| First name |  | Surname |  |
| Email address |  |
| Telephone |  | Mobile |  |
| Address and post code |  |
| How would you like us to contact you (email, telephone, post)?  |  |
| Where did you see this job advertised? |  |
| Are you a UK/Irish or EU citizen? | YES [ ]  NO [ ]  | If not, do you have a permit to work in the UK? | YES [ ]  NO [ ]  |
| For this job, you will need to have the right to work in the UK or have a valid UK work permit. If you are not a UK, Irish or EU citizen, you will be asked for documentation to support your right to work in N. Ireland |
| Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence, other than a spent conviction under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974? | YES [ ]  NO [ ]  | If so, please give details:Date/Offence/ Penalty. |  |
| Are there any cases pending against you? | YES [ ]  NO [ ]  | If so, please give details: |  |
| Is there any reason why you cannot work in regulated activity? |  |
| Note: A criminal conviction not relevant to the duties of the post will not exclude you from consideration/employment. Failure to disclose any conviction will. |
| Do you consider yourself to have a disability relevant to the position applied for? YES / NO If so, please give details. | Yes/No | If selected for interview, do you have any particular needs to enable you to attend?  |  |
| Are you currently employed:  | Yes/No | If so, what is your notice period that you must give your employer if leaving?  |  |
| Do you hold a clear driving license? |  | With access to a car for purposes of work? |  |
| Are you applying for full time hours 37.5 or part -time? If part-time, please specify the number of hours |  |
| Should your application for this post be unsuccessful, Do you wish your application be held and considered for other positions available? |  |
| **SIGNIFICANT DATES**Earliest date I could commence work: Dates not available for interview: Existing holiday bookings: No of days sickness absence during past two years:  |

**1.2 – REFEREES**

Please give the names of two people who can be contacted to give references for you (e.g. line manager, tutor). References will only be sought if an offer of employment has been made.

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|  | Referee 1 | Referee 2 |
| Name |  |  |
| Relationship to applicant |  |  |
| Company |  |  |
| Job Title |  |  |
| Address |  |  |
| Telephone |  |  |
| Email |  |  |

**2.0 EDUCATION / SCHOOL QUALIFICATIONS**

(full time education /vocational training between 10/11 years of age and 18/19 years of age) courses taken and successfully completed.

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|  **Subject studied**  | **Duration of study**  |  **Examination Results / Certification**  |  **Date of qualification** |
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 **HIGHER EDUCATION-** This applies to attendance & qualifications from university or other third level College

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| **Level – Degree/Diploma/ Certificate etc. studied** | **Dates****From To** | **Subject** |  **Qualification obtained** | **Year Obtained** |
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**Give details of any short courses or training attended within the last 3 years**

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|  **Course Title** |  **Content/ Purpose** | **Duration (hours)** | **Accreditation level** | **Accreditation achieved**  |
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**3.0 EMPLOYMENT HISTORY:** *Start with your current or most recent employment, and work backwards through your career. Please state month and year for employment e.g. (01/12/06 – 01/02/07). Also include any significant periods of unpaid work / volunteering you have undertaken*

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| **Dates*****From To*** | **Employer and** **Location of Job** | **Position** | **Salary** | **Reason for Leaving** |
| **DD/MM/YY** | **DD/MM/YY** |  |  |  |  |
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**3.1 Employment Gaps:** Please detail reasons for any gaps in employment.

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| **Dates*****From To*** | **Detail gaps in employment.** |
| **DD/MM/YY** | **DD/MM/YY** |  |
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**4.0 ESSENTIAL CRITERIA: Please evidence how you meet the criteria below.**

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| **1. Essential -** Qualifications, knowledge and & experiencePlease use this space to detail how you meet the essential criteria in the job description. |
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| Please use this space to provide details on how you meet the skills required for this post as detailed in the job description. |
|  |
| **Desirable Criteria**If applicable, please use this space to provide details on how you meet the desirable criteria  |
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**NOTES:**

Where the number of candidates meeting the essential criteria warrants further reduction before selection for interview, STEP reserves the right to select for interview, only those candidates meeting the essential criteria who, based on the desirable criteria and their overall standard of application, best meet the needs of the organisation.

STEP reserve the right to draw inference of capacity to meet the demands of the position from the standard of presentation of the application.

**Access NI Checks** - If your application is successful and you are offered employment with us you will be asked to consent to an Enhanced Disclosure check (AccessNI). This is to ensure we safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults with whom we work. You do not have to consent to these checks being carried out but, if consent is withheld, STEP have the right to withdraw the offer of employment.

**Data Protection Statement** - The information that you provide on this form and that obtained from other relevant sources will be used to process your application for employment. We may also use the information if there is a complaint or legal challenge relevant to this recruitment process. We may check the information collected, with third parties or with other information held by us. We may also use or pass to certain third parties’ information to prevent or detect crime, to protect public funds, or in other ways as permitted by law. By signing the application form, you are agreeing to the processing of sensitive personal data in accordance with our registration with the Data Protection Commissioner.

**DECLARATION**I declare that, to the best of my knowledge, the information given in my application is correct. I understand that providing misleading or false information will disqualify me from appointment or, if appointed, may result in my dismissal.

By completing this form, I understand that I give my consent under the Data Protection Act 2003 for this information to be processed in accordance with STEP policy for the purpose stated above.

I have completed this form myself. To the best of my knowledge the information given is correct. I understand that providing misleading or false information will disqualify me from selection or if appointed, may, on discovery, result in my immediate dismissal.

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| Signed |  | Date |  |

Completed applications should be returned by the closing date of **4.00 pm on Thursday 27 March 2025** either by email to alison.mccann@stepni.org or in hard copy to the Dungannon office at the address above. If you submit an electronic application, please ensure to also send hard copy with signature by Thursday 06 March 2025. Please note that late applications will not be considered.

**Please place this form in a separate envelope and mark: EO Monitoring Form.**

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FORM**
 STEP is fully committed to the active promotion of equality and diversity in its employment practices, in the work that it undertakes and in the provision of all its services. STEP treats all employees, service users and the people with whom we engage fairly, irrespective of their age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, faith, disability or impairment, including HIV status and mental health.

STEP needs to record these details which will only be used to fulfil our equal opportunities obligations and as a guide to developing inclusive recruitment strategies. The information contained in this form is completely confidential.

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| Job Title of post applied for |  |

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| Your age range (please tick box) |
| 16 – 21 | 22 – 30 | 31 – 40 | 41 – 50 | 51 – 60 | 61 – 65 | 65+ | Not stated |
| [ ]  | [ ]  | [ ]  | [ ]  | [ ]  | [ ]  | [ ]  | [ ]  |
| Gender | Male [ ]  Female [ ]  |
| How do you identify your ethnic group? Please tick the most suitable box or complete the section below |
| White | [ ]  | Black other | [ ]  | Bangladeshi | [ ]  | Caribbean | [ ]  |
| Irish Traveller | [ ]  | White other | [ ]  | African | [ ]  | Other European | [ ]  |
| Chinese | [ ]  | Pakistani | [ ]  | Indian | [ ]  | Other (state) |  |
| Do you consider yourself to have a disability? | YES [ ]  NO [ ]  PREFER NOT TO DISCLOSE INFORMATION [ ]  |
| If ‘YES’ Please state, the nature of the disability. |  |
| If you are a UK/ Irish citizen habitually resident in N. Ireland Please state your community background |
| Protestant/ Unionist |  | Catholic/ Nationalist |  |
| Are you a person with / without dependents (either children or adults)?  |
|  With dependents |  | Without dependents |  |
| If you wish, you may disclose information about yourself in this section about your religion and sexual orientation. |
| Religion  |  | Sexual Orientation |  |
| Date form completed |  |  |  |  |  |  |

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| --- | --- |
| Address | Monitoring Officer, STEP, the Junction, 12 Beechvalley Way, Dungannon |
| Email | pamela.mcginn@stepni.org |

**PLEASE RETURN YOUR COMPLETED FORMS TO:**