

## Job Description

<b>Job title</b>	<b>Social Security Technical Officer</b>
<b>Department</b>	<b>LITRG</b>
<b>Reports to</b>	<b>Head of LITRG team, LITRG</b>
<b>Location</b>	<b>Home/Remote (pandemic restrictions permitting, there will be a requirement to travel to London and other parts of the UK for meetings on occasion)</b>
<b>Working hours</b>	<b>21</b>

### Job Purpose

The Low Incomes Tax Reform Group (LITRG) is an initiative of the Chartered Institute of Taxation (CIOT) to give a voice to the unrepresented taxpayer ([www.litr.org.uk](http://www.litr.org.uk)). In 2020, we had over 5.5. million visitors to our LITRG websites. The CIOT is an educational charity ([www.tax.org.uk](http://www.tax.org.uk)).

The purpose of the job is the pursuit of LITRG's key objectives: the provision of comprehensive information, guidance and support to taxpayers, tax credit claimants (including those transitioning to universal credit) and their advisers; and working towards a better tax system for the unrepresented and one that is more friendly to their needs and works cohesively with the welfare benefits system. LITRG do not give advice directly to individuals, although where resources permit, we do answer website queries by directing people to relevant information.

The CIOT is a tax organisation, so although it considers the needs of people on low incomes, LITRG does not focus on traditional benefits work. However, those on low incomes frequently come into contact with both the tax and benefits systems, so for LITRG's work it is essential for the team to have knowledge of the benefits system.

We are also interested in those parts of the benefits system that have an interaction with the tax system, are based on tax principles or are administered by HMRC – for example tax credits, tax-free childcare, child benefit, the use of real time earnings data in universal credit and how universal credit works for the self-employed.

The purpose of this role is therefore to bolster that knowledge of the wider benefits system, lead our work on tax credits, universal credit and childcare schemes, to support other team members where the tax and benefits systems interact and to ensure tax legislation, policy and processes are designed with social security (and other) interactions in mind.

## Key accountabilities

- Researching and writing technical copy for our websites and print media, relating to the welfare benefits system (mainly child benefit, tax credits (including the transition to universal credit and certain aspects of universal credit such as the self-employed rules) and how it interacts with the tax system. This will include technical review and updating of existing materials and preparation of new commentary.
- Keeping up to date with developments in welfare systems that may affect our low-income constituents and drafting/contributing to other material as required, for example relevant news articles, press releases and consultation responses. To include reviewing and commenting on draft legislation and official guidance.
- Checking content written by other team members for technical accuracy and completeness where interactions with welfare benefits are in point. Providing feedback on such reviews and generally helping to increase other team members' knowledge of welfare benefits and potential tax interactions as required (eg by joining in with, or leading discussions at, team meetings).
- Contributing generally to the quality of written content, for example giving views about the readability of materials.
- Considering 'softer' issues, such as how best to communicate with taxpayers, including people with disabilities, older people, and those with other language or communication difficulties such as migrant workers – many of whom might be on low incomes and lack access to support and advice.
- Answering website enquiries by providing links to appropriate information on our websites.
- Analysing website enquiries (from both individuals and their advisers) to identify potential information gaps and producing appropriate material to fill them. Also identifying and feeding back trends in enquiries that can inform our representational and campaigning work, for example problems in tax or welfare benefits administration and processes (particularly thinking about how the systems interact) or where the law is deficient and has created a trap for low-income taxpayers.
- Identify issues within LITRG's remit that affect low-income people and suggest ways to take the issue forward, for example via meetings with the relevant officials, taking follow-up action as required.
- Contribute to LITRG reports on low-income issues, with a particular focus on tax and welfare benefits interactions aspects of the subject matter.

- Attend consultation meetings, workshops and conferences with HMRC, DWP and others as required, reporting back to the main group as required and carrying out any necessary follow-up work.
- Contribute reports to LITRG newsletters and attend LITRG meetings, ensuring any allocated actions points are followed up.
- Liaise with LITRG volunteers and other third parties (eg other organisations representing people on low incomes) where appropriate.
- Liaise with other departments within CIOT (eg technical, external relations) on matters of joint interest as required.
- Develop and maintain relationships with LITRG's stakeholders including relevant officials in HMRC and other Government departments and relevant external organisations.
- Occasionally to get involved in promoting LITRG's aims and objectives through presentations.

### **Job impact (desired impact of this role)**

To support:

- LITRG's reputation as the primary source of information and expertise on UK personal tax, tax credits and related welfare benefits for people on low incomes, with a particular focus on interactions between systems.
- The effectiveness of LITRG's work as a representative body for taxpayers and tax credit claimants (and those transitioning to universal credit) on low incomes who cannot afford to pay for professional tax advice, helping LITRG to achieve changes in legislation, policy and practice that benefit those whom it aims to serve.

### **Skills needed to fulfil the role**

#### ***Essential***

- To be able to demonstrate wide-ranging experience of complex benefits casework (at least three years' experience).
- A deep understanding of tax credits and universal credit legislation, especially transitional issues.
- Practical experience of universal credit operation and processes.
- Some existing knowledge and experience of the tax system would be ideal (though not essential). A willingness to learn about the tax system is paramount, and the candidate will be expected to study for and pass Association of Taxation Technician (ATT) foundation certificates in personal tax and business tax (study support will be provided, but some self-study will be required)
- Good writing skills – being able to translate complex concepts into plain language.
- Excellent communication skills and ability to put across LITRG's views at various meetings, and to develop good working relationships with colleagues, volunteers and external stakeholders.

- Ability to work on one's own, using one's own initiative. Sometimes having to work to tight deadlines without loss of precision or accuracy.

***Desirable***

- Previous experience of writing website materials or other copy.
- Previous experience of policy work – identifying systemic issues and proposing/presenting possible solutions to them.
- Previous experience of working with officials at a policy level – perhaps within local government, or at a national level (eg DWP, HMRC and/or devolved administrations)
- An interest in digital matters and the problems faced by the digitally excluded is important.