

RUGBY BOROUGH COUNCIL

JOB PROFILE

Post No.

Post Title: Benefits Officer (Quality Assurance)

Unit/Team: Housing Advice and Benefits Team

Grade: E

Service: Communities and Homes

Reports to: Benefits Team Leader

Issue Date: August 2024

PURPOSE OF THE JOB

The purpose of this role is to support Benefits Officers with the administration and payment of claims for Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction and Discretionary Housing Payments. Ensuring all decisions are made in accordance with legislation, local policies and procedures. The postholder will be required to work closely with the Benefits Team Leader to deliver a holistic service that meets the needs of the client and the CANDO values of the Council.

1. ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.1 Support and Guidance

- 1.1.1 Being a point of contact to support team members delivering financial support activities, helping identify their training requirements and providing them with written and verbal guidance.
- 1.1.2 To work with the Benefits Team Leader to ensure that the team is meeting its aims and objectives.

1.2 Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction

- 1.2.1 To support Benefits Officers with the administration and payment of claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction
- 1.2.2 To work with the Benefits Team Leader to deliver a service that meets the needs of clients and safeguards public funds
- 1.2.3 To ensure that all decisions are made in accordance with legislation, local policies and procedures.
- 1.2.4 To undertake risk-based quality checks of Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction and Discretionary Payment claims to ensure that the right award is

made to the right person at the right time. As well as identifying training and performance issues.

- 1.2.5 To produce performance management reports bringing to the attention of the Benefits Team Leader issues of concern regarding accuracy or processing delay.
- 1.2.6 To produce and monitor monthly speed of processing statistics in preparation for the Department of Work and Pensions.
- 1.2.7 To regularly check and correct SHBE statistics reported to the Department of Work and Pensions.
- 1.2.8 To undertake NFI checks and record findings on the NFI system.
- 1.2.9 Referring claims of suspected irregularity to the Single Fraud Investigation Service and responding to requests for information / evidence and queries from the SFIS and implementing investigation outcome decisions.
- 1.2.10 To work with the Benefits Team Leader to complete audit work in preparation for the annual Housing Benefit subsidy audit.
- 1.2.11 To produce written guidance and training notes for team members, as well as keeping them up to date in line with legislation and procedure changes.

1.2 Discretionary Financial Support Schemes

- 1.3.1 To support Benefits Officers with the administration and payment of applications under Discretionary Financial Support schemes
- 1.3.2 To deliver a service that meets the needs of clients and safeguards public funds.
- 1.3.3 To undertake risk-based quality checks on decisions to ensure that they are made in accordance with legislation, local policies and procedures.

1.3 Financial Inclusion Support

- 1.4.1 To support caseworkers with the provision of financial support activity for residents of the Borough

1.4 Service Delivery and Improvement

- 1.5.1 To work across the Housing Advice and Benefits Team and wider Communities and Homes Service to ensure that services are robust, harmonious, and meet the needs of clients
- 1.5.2 To work across the Housing Advice and Benefits Team to ensure that there is a holistic approach to service delivery putting the client at the centre of what we deliver.

- 1.5.3 To work with the Benefits Team Leader on the development and timely recording of robust key-performance data to identify blockages to service delivery at an early stage.
- 1.5.4 To encourage a culture of continuous improvement within the team, with all team members involved and responsible for taking the service forward.
- 1.5.5 To be innovative and creative with trialling new ways of delivering a service that meets the needs of clients.
- 1.5.6 To ensure that changes to legislation, policies and procedures are documented and disseminated to the team in a timely and consistent manner.
- 1.5.7 Working with others across the Communities and Homes Service to make best use of IT solutions to assist the work of the team, ensuring it meets our needs and the needs of clients.
- 1.5.8 To integrate equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practices into all aspects of the post and in particular, work with disadvantaged groups and socially excluded communities to increase resident activity and involvement.

1.5 External Relations

- 1.6.1 To work with the partners across the region, sub-region, County and Borough, clients and other stakeholders in taking a proactive and innovative approach to the development of the service.
- 1.6.2 Represent the Council at meetings with internal departments and external organisations
- 1.6.3 Arrange and attend case conferences involving other agencies and statutory bodies.
- 1.6.4 To represent the Council at Tribunal and Court as and when required.

1.6 Developing Self and Others

- 1.7.1 To ensure that you are up to date with legislation and best practices for the service area.
- 1.7.2 Demonstrate commitment, vision and leadership to delivery of the Community Advice and Support service.
- 1.7.3 Ensure that team members are highly trained in their areas of responsibility and monitor the quality of decision-making within the team, taking action to improve this where necessary.

1.7 Customer Care

Ensure that the Council's "CANDO" values, Equality and Diversity policies are embedded in service delivery.

2. OTHER DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 2.1 Any other reasonable duties as requested by your manager, in line with individual skills and knowledge, including one off projects.
- 2.2 To support the efficient uses of resources within the Housing Advice and Benefits Team you may be required to undertake other roles within the team commensurate with your grade.

3. SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 Coaching and mentoring of less experienced team members.

4. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsible for protection of public funds through correct administration of the benefits system and other financial assistance.

5. RESPONSIBILITY FOR ASSETS AND DATA

Responsibility for all the assets within the team, such as IT and office furniture and equipment, and data, especially confidential personal data of all customers

6. EXTENT OF PUBLIC CONTACT

- Residents
- The Police and Department for Families and Children.
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Voluntary and statutory agencies.
- GP's, Health Visitors, Mental Health Resource Centre, Occupational Therapists, Housing Associations.
- Other local authorities, solicitors and other professional organisations.
- CAB and Mediation Services.
- Other services within the Council and Senior Officers within Housing and other services.
- Councillors and the MP.

7. WORKING CONDITIONS AND ENVIRONMENT

- 7.1 Hybrid working

- 7.2 Travel to and from external training courses and meetings
- 7.3 You will be required to have a Basic Disclosure and Barring Service check

8. CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITIES

All staff have to act within the Council's rules and follow all reasonable management requirements. These are contained within: the Council's Standing Orders, Employment Policies, Constitution and Code of Conduct for Employees. Other documents may be introduced at times setting out rules of the Council. These will cover responsibilities and requirements for the following:

Financial Accounting
Equality and Diversity
Health and Safety
Risk Management
Anti- Fraud
Data Quality and Data Protection
Business Continuity
Major Emergency Plan
Procurement and Contract Management
Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults

Copies of the relevant rules and policy are available on the staff intranet or from your manager

In addition, all employees are expected to behave in line with our Values and Behaviours and challenge other employees whose behaviour is against our values.

9. KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, EXPERIENCE AND QUALIFICATIONS

Refer to Person Specification attached.

Signed as agreed:

Postholder

Date

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Post: Benefits Officer (Quality Assurance)



For effective performance of the duties of the post the postholder will be able to demonstrate that they have the skills and/or knowledge detailed in 'Essential Criteria'.

| Criteria | Essential/ Desirable | Method of Assessment |
|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Extensive experience of making decisions and processing Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction claims | E | A, T, I |
| A good understanding of the legislation used for decision making regarding Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction and Discretionary Financial Support Schemes | E | A, T, I |
| Experience of coaching team members with the delivery of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction | E | A, I |
| Excellent listening and communication skills with a wide range of people of all ages and background | E | A, I |
| Experience of explaining complex issues in a face to face, telephone based or video-based environment | E | A, I |
| Good time management skills and the ability to work effectively under pressure and prioritise to meet deadlines | E | A, I |
| Ability to work in partnership, network, influence, problem solve, overcome barriers and apply solution focused approaches | E | A, I |
| The ability to work well within a team and under own initiative and of maintaining professional boundaries with clients and partner agencies | E | A, I |
| Proven analytical skills and the ability to produce statistical data | D | A, I |
| A good understanding of the importance of confidentiality, safe practice, safeguarding, anti-discriminatory practice and equal opportunity | E | A, I |

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|--|---|
| Application | A |
| Interview | I |
| Test (written, presentation, practical – eg word processing) | T |
| References | R |
| Documentary – eg certificates | D |