

## JOB DESCRIPTION

### JOB DETAILS

**Directorate: Corporate Services**

**Post title: Benefit Manager**

**Post number: \*\*\***

**Post grade: H**

**Section: Revenues and Benefits**

**Responsible to: Head of Revenues and Benefits**

**Responsible for: Benefit team**

### MAIN PURPOSE OF JOB

To provide effective management of all functions of the council's Benefit service.

Duties include liaising with staff at all levels across the authority, problem solving and decision-making to improve processes and ultimately the customer experience.

To provide effective technical and professional guidance that enables the service to maintain the high standards and meet statutory requirements.

As a member of the Council's team, contribute to the achievement of the Council's corporate vision, behaviours and priorities and the development of the Council's positive high performing culture.

### SPECIFIC DUTIES

Specific

- Manage Assessment Team staff so they meet statutory requirements, TBC's standards for service and team targets.
- Deal with complex Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support cases / queries and monitor and advise on Discretionary Housing Payment claims.
- Interpret Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support legislation, keeping abreast of changes and advise / train the team as necessary.
- Engages with Supported Accommodation providers to review new and existing rental charges, ensuring charges are transparent and reasonable for Housing Benefit subsidy purposes.
- Assists the System and Controls officer with annual benefit and support uprating.
- Ensure the accuracy of subsidy information on the system including monthly assessment accuracy checking with support from the Subsidy Officer
- Completes and submits monthly SHBE reports.
- Conduct annual appraisal reviews for and conduct regular one to one sessions with Benefit Officers. Identify and ensure that all training needs are met.
- Keeps monthly statistics of work completed on all DWP initiatives and ensure targets are met, providing regular progress updates to the Head of Revenues and Benefits

- Manage and investigate audit queries to resolution with support of Subsidy Officer
- Acts as a system administrator for the software used by the Benefit Section where necessary.
- Works with the Systems Officer and Head of Service to ensure digital and automation opportunities are identified and implemented.
- Liaises with other departments, partners and stakeholders, e.g. Department for Work and Pensions, Citizens' Advice, Housing Associations, etc.
- Represents the Council at HM Courts and Tribunal Service and Valuation Tribunal appeals.
- Prepares documentation for ombudsman/members enquiries.
- Deals with fraud referrals identified by the Centralised Fraud and Enforcement Team
- Assists the Head of Revenues and Benefits with responses to complaints.
- Create and run and reconcile weekly/4 weekly Housing Benefit payment reports.
- Provide information requested by customers and interested bodies under the Freedom of Information Act.

#### Main Duties and Responsibilities

- Take day to day management of operations of a team to support with the delivery of the corporate plan, vision, behaviours, corporate identity, and key messages and promote effective corporate working across the organization.
- Guide, instruct, direct, and enable the team to deliver high quality services that put the customer first, safe, and low risk in line with relevant legislation.
- Assist the Head of Revenues and Benefits to plan and organise the logistics of the team and lead and delegate to each employee in order that agreed work schedules and key performance targets are met in a very busy and frequently changing environment.
- Use practical knowledge, experience and understanding of the work to provide helpful direction and guidance to each team member when it is needed.
- Evaluate and measure the performance of the team and undertake regular 1-2-1's and annual PPD's.
- Be part of the delivery team and fulfil the work schedule and key performance targets set for the service and follow procedures, industry standards and professional licences qualifications and relevant training.
- Ensure the team has sufficient capacity each day to deliver by assisting in the provision of structured on the job training and induction including the use of relevant equipment.
- Take a day-to-day lead for ensuring that the team are adhering to good health and safety practice and accurately complete associated paperwork to current legislation.

- Work with the Head of Revenues and Benefits to actively promote HR policy and practice to ensure good employment practices are embedded in day-to-day operations.
- Assist in the development of ideas and recommendations for doing things more efficiently recognising and furthering the feedback from the team.
- Deal with claimant/staff queries/concerns as they occur, taking instruction when required to ensure a speedy response.
- To attend regular training sessions to keep abreast of all legislation in order to provide accurate advice and services in specialist areas.
- To deal with colleagues openly and fairly at all times and support mutual respect within teams
- To operate in accordance with Council proprieties and compliance policies relating to Health and Safety, Equal opportunities and Customer Care. Carry out risk assessments as required.

#### Professional

- Retain a professional qualification and membership and participate in learning that is required to perform the role effectively and in line with statutory requirements.
- Use technical and professional knowledge to help ensure council statutory obligations are adhered to through investigations, inspections, and enforcements in accordance with relevant legislation, codes of practice and other regulatory instruments.
- To provide general advice and support to the organisation in relation to service specific requirements.
- To seek, build and maintain good relationships with senior managers, business partners, other Councils, and all levels of staff.
- Manage issues and processes to a conclusion effectively protecting the Council's interests.

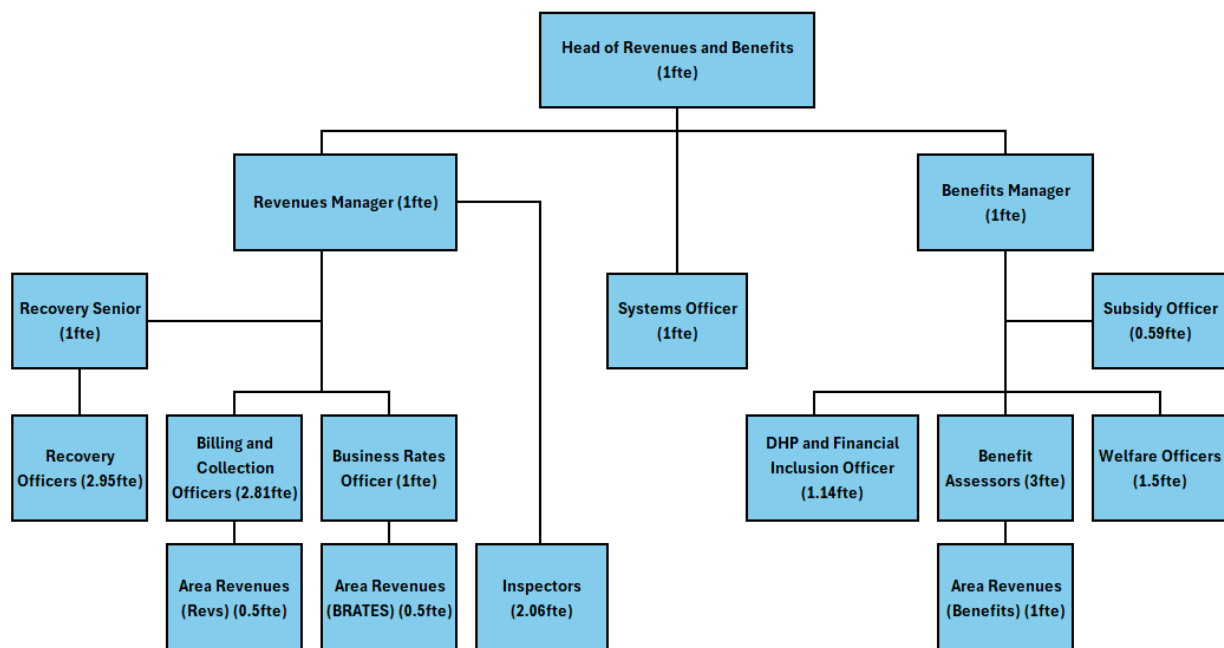
#### The key decision-making areas in the role

- Monitor decisions and provide guidance on awards of Benefit and Support to achieve compliance with legislation, maximise subsidy for the council, minimise expenditure of the council, and to pay residents their correct entitlements.
- Use Discretionary Housing Payments appropriately and keep within the allocation.
- Manage high volumes of personal and sensitive data.
- Develop plans and strategies, and implement practices and procedures, to improve the service.

### Customers and contacts

- Contact with Benefit and Support claimants including difficult customers, being appreciative of their needs and paying particular heed to vulnerabilities, disadvantages and the wide-ranging detrimental effects of financial need.
- Knowledge of and regular contact with other service areas, in particular Finance, ICT and HR.
- Contact with external agencies/companies such as the Department for Work and Pensions, Job Centre, Housing Associations

## ORGANISATIONAL CHART



## KEY WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Internal – Head of Service, Team Leaders, Revenues department, Customer Service, Finance, Housing, Electoral Services, ICT

External – Claimants, Councillor's, Jobcentre plus, Department for Works and Pensions, Housing Associations, Landlords, Counter Fraud and Enforcement Unit (CFEU), food bank, other support charities/networks

## RESOURCES

Access to confidential or sensitive data required to determine eligibility to Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction must be treated securely and in line with GDPR and Department for Works and Pensions Memorandum of Understanding.

The post holder will be responsible for supporting the team with enquiries relating to the accurate assessment of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction and protecting Local Authority yearly subsidy by ensuring fraud and error is identified and avoided.

The Benefit Manager will be responsible for ensuring staff are aware of changes in regulations and to implement changes in policies and procedures as the need arises.

### **PHYSICAL DEMANDS**

The post holder will generally be sat in a limited position at a desk due to the requirements of the post.

The role involves telephone/reception duties and the post holder may be required to sit for long periods of time carrying out this task.

### **MENTAL DEMANDS**

The role requires the post holder to assist some of our more vulnerable residents within the Borough, this can often involve upsetting conversations, which may result in challenging customer situations.

The post holder will need to understand, process and interpret constantly changing complex legislation and be able to explain the information in an understandable manner to residents, landlords and staff.

The role involves working to tight deadlines and is often stressful due to the nature of the post, the post holder will need to be able to prioritise workload and identify critical situations to ensure Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction is awarded accurately and in line with SHBE targets.

The post holder will be required to remain calm and empathetic to customers and staff requirements and have the ability to manage situations in a confidential and compassionate manner.

Due to the nature of the post, the post holder may be made aware of safeguarding situations and they will need to understand the process of reporting these in a confidential and sensitive way and signpost/guide staff as and when required.

### **WORKING ENVIRONMENT**

The post is hybrid and will involve working 60% of the time in the office and 40% home working.

The role involves occasions when the behaviour of others may be challenging, and the post holder will be provided with support to help manage these situations.

Occasional duty cover will be required involving face to face visits from our residents to the office.

### **ALL STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES**

To adhere to all Council Policies, in particular Equal Opportunities.

To undertake any other duties properly assigned from time to time by your line manager which are appropriate to the grade and character of the post.

To be committed to the principles of equality, diversity and the ability to treat everyone who you come in contact with dignity and respect.

Tewkesbury Borough Council is committed to the principles of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children, young people and vulnerable adults; therefore, all employees have a responsibility and duty of care to report safeguarding issues they become aware of or witness.

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

Ensuring that services are delivered in compliance with existing and new Health and Safety legislation and the Council's Health and Safety Policy and ensuring that duties are pursued in a safe manner with due regard to the Health and Safety of yourself and others.

To manage risk and to help formulate and comply with the Council's Corporate Health, Safety and Welfare Plan, and to ensure that both systems and premises under your control are maintained in an acceptable standard to ensure the risk management and health and safety of staff and visitors.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

QUALIFICATIONS	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	ASSESSMENT METHOD
GCSE Grade C or above in English and Mathematics, or equivalent.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Application form
Full or part qualified IRRV or other relevant professional qualification	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Application form
Management Qualification	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Application form
EXPERIENCE	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	ASSESSMENT METHOD
Significant management experience at a senior level.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Application form and Interview
Proven ability to lead, manage, develop and motivate staff.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Application form and Interview
Experience of delivering effective training.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Application form and Interview
Ability to analyse facts and situations and problem solve.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Application form and Interview
Experience of handling customer complaints and resolving complex issues.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Application form and Interview
Experience of business/service planning establishing performance targets and monitoring procedures.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Application form and Interview
Experience of completing Government Returns.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Application form and Interview
Experience of writing policies and reports.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Application form and Interview
SKILLS	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	ASSESSMENT METHOD
The ability to develop and maintain computer systems to deliver services.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Application and Interview

Excellent communication skills both written and oral.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Application and Interview
Knowledge of current Revenues and Benefits legislation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Application and Interview
A high degree of computer literacy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Application and Interview
Customer focused and the ability to deal with internal and external customers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Application and Interview
The ability to work flexibly, effectively time managing projects and duties in order to meet all competing deadlines.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Application and Interview
The ability to understand and interpret policies so that they can be implemented effectively within a service	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Application and Interview
An understanding of local government services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Application and Interview
The ability to handle sensitive and confidential information professionally, discreetly and within the law.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Application and Interview
The ability to re-engineer business processes so that flexible and streamlined services are delivered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Application and Interview
Experience of representing an organisation externally both operationally and strategically with experience of providing politically neutral information to Elected Members.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Application and Interview
<b>BEHAVIOURS / ATTRIBUTES</b>	<b>ESSENTIAL</b>	<b>DESIRABLE</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT METHOD</b>
Builds effective and professional working relationships with staff, customers, internal and external stakeholders	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Application and Interview
Embraces and helps to support others through periods of change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Application and Interview
Remains fair and consistent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Application and Interview