

	JOB PROFILE NJC SCHEME	Job Title: Benefit Team Leader/Manager	Job No:
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IDENTITY:

Job Title: Benefit Team Leader/Manager

Group:

Division/Section: Revenues & Benefits Service

MAIN PURPOSE OF JOB:

The Benefit manager has a responsibility for the day to day running of the Benefit section within Revenues and Benefits, to ensure accurate assessment of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction.

The post holder will be required to ensure the team are delivering a consistently high level of customer service and that all staff maintain a good understanding of Housing Benefit regulations and Local Council Tax Reduction.

The role will involve interpreting complex technical legislation and cascading this down to differing abilities within the team in an understandable and easy to read format.

The post holder will require a good understanding of Discretionary Housing Payments, Subsidy and Fraud and Error. To ensure the Local Authority maximise potential income through Subsidy grants and payments.

The role will entail managing a team of up to 8 staff, including bi-monthly 1-2-1's, annual PPD's, absence recording in line with current policies and be responsible for maintaining office cover for business needs and the smooth running of the department.

The post holder will be required to respond to complaints and call backs as they arise and look to improve processes to avoid similar situations occurring again.

The post holder will be an integral part of the annual billing process to ensure the correct parameters and benefit amounts for the year ahead are in place. This will include afterhours/weekend work as required to complete the task so flexibility will be essential.

As the Benefit Manager, the allocation of reports and work-related tasks for the team will need to be monitored and reported by collection of statistics to ensure DWP payments are received as allocated and that the department achieves the targets set by the DWP for SHBE, VEP, ATLAS, UC downloads and HBAAI.

The post holder will be responsible for quality assurance via the PMQA module within the NEC system, the setting of attainable KPI's for each process and raising concerns with staff in relation to under performance.

The role involves liaising with external and internal stakeholders, such as the DWP, Counter Fraud and Enforcement Team, social and private landlords, housing department and customer services.

A good understanding of the NEC is essential and hold the ability to work to deadlines, especially when DWP returns are due for completion.

The post holder must possess the ability to make sound confident decisions where support is required and be confident in mentoring and train staff as required to ensure accuracy and investment in the individual member of staff.

The Benefit Manager will be required to support the Head of Service and subsidy officer as and when the need arises during audit preparations and for completion of Government statutory returns.

Due to the sensitive nature of the data the department collect, a high level of confidentiality and a good understand of GDPR is required.

The post holder will have responsibility to maintain access to searchlight and ensuring staff who have access to the data via this system are complaint within the DWP rules and regulations.

KNOWLEDGE:

The post holder will be required to work across multiple IT platforms/systems and should have a familiarity with Microsoft Office suite.

A good level of experience of working within a high demand customer focused office environment.

Literacy for composition of letters, emails, forms and website amendments with the ability to communicate complex technical legislation in a clear manner to differing audiences.

The post holder must have a good knowledge of safeguarding policies, GDPR and how this impacts the role and responsibilities.

The post holder will require an excellent understanding and technical knowledge of complex legislation surrounding Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, and the Welfare system, to understand how the information is interpreted and possess the ability to implement changes to processes as required.

They will also be required to understand and assimilate circulars and other documents issued by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

The ability to develop a team which can deliver a high level of customer service in line with the Councils Customer Care Charter.

The role will require excellent organisation to ensure business needs are constantly met with a desire to improve and the ability to implement and negotiate change.

The post holder must have experience in analysing data and identify areas of improvement, possessing the ability to deliver on team objectives as agreed with the Head of Service.

Maintain technical knowledge around Housing Benefit subsidy, audit and government returns.

To support the Head of Service with implementation of departmental change and be confident in their own knowledge to challenge new processes, ensuring the reputation of the council is at the forefront of any suggested improvement.

MENTAL SKILLS

The post holder must possess the ability to make prompt, clear and consistent decisions which may involve tough choices or considered risks.

The role requires a wide knowledge of Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, DWP welfare benefit regulations, the post holder must have the ability to quickly interpret and understand the information to enable them to implement changes as required.

The post holder will require a high level of analytical and critical thinking as the need to resolve complex situation will be a regular occurrence, good problem-solving skills will be essential. The ability to provide a solution is essential.

The ability to take responsibility for actions, project outcomes and team improvements will be a requirement of the post holder, to be aware of the critical areas of any project and provide solutions and prompt action will be paramount.

Ability to take the initiative, act with confidence and work under own direction meeting deadline set by the Head of Service and the Department for Work and pensions.

The post holder must have the ability to manage their own time and that of the team effectively to meet deadlines.

The role will demand reconciliation of payments and claims and the need to provide Head of Service with monthly statistics, the post holder will have a good attention to detail and the ability to interpret information to ensure the desired outcome.

INTERPERSONAL AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS INCLUDING CONTACTS

Highly developed, flexible, and effective communication in all formats is essential to the job.

The post-holder will be required to communicate complex, sensitive, or contentious issues on a regular basis and must have the ability to read and adapt to their audience, this will be face to face, in writing or via the telephone.

The ability to speak and write in a well-structured and logical way to ensure complex legislation is made easier to understand.

The post holder will be required to write and deliver training material to staff as and when the need arises, the training material must be written in a clear, precise manner and communicated in a way that is understandable to the audience. The ability to adapt to differing training needs of individual staff is required.

A high level of listening skills is essential, to enable the post holder to quickly interpret the question and respond in a confident and encouraging manner. The ability to share knowledge and build confidence in everyone to repeatedly make accurate decision is paramount in developing and empowering staff.

The role requires the post holder to liaise with internal and external stakeholders, ability to adapt to situations and tasks whilst remaining professional will be required to maintain reputation of the department.

To remain fair and consistent when carrying out 1-2-1's with the ability to make constructive comments to improve the individual or team.

A positive attitude to work and demands with the ability to cascade this message to the direct team to create a harmonious working environment for everyone.

The post-holder will require well-developed sensitive and flexible interpersonal and leadership skills in order to lead and influence at all levels. The ability to adapt style to suit audiences and situations will be essential.

PHYSICAL SKILLS

The post holder will be expected to possess keyboard skills necessary for meeting tight deadlines.

The demands of the role will require the post holder to have the ability to work at speed whilst always maintaining a high level of accuracy.

INITIATIVE AND INDEPENDENCE

This post will require a significant amount of initiative and independence – the workload is varied, and prioritising workload is key to ensuring the department is run effectively and deadlines are met.

The post-holder will be required to manage their own priorities and those of their team.

The post-holder will operate within a general policy framework including agreed plans and programmes but with a high level of independence and initiative. The post-holder will be required to plan their own long-term work schedule and the work loads of others in the Benefit team.

The post holder will be required to make decisions on how work is allocated without reference to the Head of Service, including responding to customer complaints, appeals and reconsiderations, fraud referrals and the day-to-day management of the benefit team.

Changes to policies and procedures in line with new legislation should be implemented without delay to ensure accuracy when assessing entitlement is not interrupted.

They will refer to their line manager for advice and guidance on policy or resource issues, they will be required to contribute to the solution.

The post holder will be responsible for identifying their own training and development needs to fully achieve the aims/tasks required of the role.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Ability to manage a high level of customer contact, always remaining professional and courteous.

Requirement to sit at a desk in front of a computer for long periods for the majority of the week.

The emotional demand involved with assisting vulnerable residents may affect physical health and the post holder will need to have the ability to identify and raise any concerns they have around stress and effect on mental health, so that support can be provided to assist the post holder.

MENTAL DEMANDS

The role requires a high level of accuracy, and the post holder must possess the ability to remain focused for lengthy periods whilst managing complex tasks. The post holder must remain up to date with constantly changing legislation and have the ability to interpret the information available in order to cascade these instructions/changes to staff/claimants as required.

The post-holder will be required to work to very strict deadlines which will regularly be unplanned, which will require the post-holder to manage the conflicting demands of the job in a pressurised environment. There will often be competing priorities, which the post holder will be required to manage.

Frequent interruptions occur and the post holder will regularly be required to adapt and manage changing priorities and needs of the department, examples include, responding to customers enquiries, either telephone or face to face, supporting members of the team with complex matters, deadlines and system issues.

The post holder must remain focused on multiple tasks throughout the day and have the ability to manage their own workloads.

EMOTIONAL DEMANDS

The role will involve contact with our most vulnerable residents, who may be facing homelessness and/or financial difficulty and conversations may be difficult or distressing.

In addition, the post holder will be responsible for carrying out call backs and managing complaints, this will be demanding and often the content of information provided can be of a highly sensitive nature.

The post holder deals with customers (e.g. applicants, agents, neighbours, objectors, members of the public) who can be difficult, angry and emotional regarding the progress of Housing Benefit or Council Tax Reduction applications and decisions on them.

These interactions can take place in person, over the phone or electronically. It is usual to receive several difficult telephone calls and emails a day to deal with.

The post holder will often need to communicate with unsuccessful claimants in relation to non-entitlement, this will involve advising customers of negative outcomes and the reason behind the decision.

As the manager of staff, the post holder may be required to manage conflict within the team and must have the ability to deal with these matters in a consistent and fair manner, always remaining impartial and within TBC policies/procedures.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR PEOPLE

The Benefit team will be in contact with our most vulnerable residents and the post holder must possess the ability to remain calm, fair and consistent when in contact with our claimants.

The outcome of Housing Benefit/Council Tax Reduction applicants can have a positive or negative impact on the wellbeing of the applicant and their family.

The post holder will be responsible for raising any safeguarding concerns in line with current policies and procedures.

Signposting to other areas of support/benefit will be required daily and the post holder will need the ability to remain empathetic and non-judgemental when faced with these situations.

The sensitive data required to assess Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction may at times be difficult to process and any data must be treated with the utmost confidentiality and in line with GDPR.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR EMPLOYEES

The post-holder will be responsible for a team of high skilled officers. To include

5.43 FTE Housing Benefit Assessors

1 Subsidy Officer

1 Discretionary Housing Payment Officer

1 FTE x Revenues and Benefit Support Officer

The role requires the Benefit Manager to lead, instruct, mentor and train staff to ensure consistent accuracy is maintained.

The Benefit Manager will require the skills to adapt to individual team members, ensuring each member of the team feels confident in decision making and supported in the role.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR FINANCIAL RESOURCES

Responsibility to ensure benefit claims are assessed correctly to minimise subsidy loss and ensure correct Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reductions awards.

The post holder will be responsible for Housing Benefit and Discretionary Housing Payment runs, including the raising of weekly/monthly reports, reconciliation, and the loading of payments via the BACS facility.

Ensure officers are trained in benefit regulations, the benefit system, a working knowledge of the council tax system and associate regulations and ongoing training is undertaken to minimise the risk of fraud and error.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR PHYSICAL RESOURCES

The post holder is responsible for secure processing of sensitive personal data submitted for the purpose of assessing Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction in accordance with GDPR.

The post holder has responsibility to follow Council procedures to ensure that all data is handled appropriately, ensuring any breaches are reported in line with current procedures.

Data must be inputted accurately onto our database with great attention to detail and used only for the purpose it is obtained for.

WORKING CONDITIONS

The post is based on Hybrid working pattern of 60% office based/40% home based – the post holder is responsible for ensuring the workstation is correctly set up at home to accommodate a safe and secure environment.

The post holder will encounter people who may not be happy with the outcome of their application/appeal, this may be challenging and unpleasant.

Occasionally the post holder may be exposed to verbal abuse and aggressive behaviour, this may be over the telephone, in written communication or face to face in our office.

Prepared by:

Operational Manager(where appropriate)

Approved by (Group Manager/Chief Officer):

Date:

Date:

Date:

(This is the effective date of any changes in salary)