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| **Job Description** |



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| **JOB TITLE** | Benefits Officer | |
| **REPORTS TO** | Benefits Team Leader | |
| **DIRECT REPORTS** | None | |
| **INDIRECT REPORTS** | None | |
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| **PURPOSE OF THE JOB ROLE** | | |
| The Benefits Officer will work within a team that provides assessment for both Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction claims as well Discretionary Housing Payments. The postholder must ensure that assessments are dealt with promptly, balancing the need to support the delivery of a personalised service to claimants with the need to protect the council’s financial interests. | | |
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| **MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES** | | |
| Service delivery accountabilities  1. Accurate and prompt assessment of Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction and Discretionary Housing Payment claims in accordance with relevant regulations and the performance indicator targets.  2. Responsible for balancing priorities against subsidy loss for overpayments caused by delays and errors.  3. To ensure that overpayments of Housing Benefit have effective recovery set or are identified as not being recoverable in line with legislation.  4. Use the council document imaging system to manage all correspondence and documents associated with a claim and ensure that documents are managed as directed by the team leader.  5. Maintaining a sound knowledge of the benefit legislation by keeping up to date with Government led changes as notified in DWP Circulars.  6. Ensure that the Council Tax account information relating to the customer has the correct liability and, if not, resolve any discrepancies that would affect the financial award.  7. To develop fraud awareness and refer cases where necessary to the Single Fraud Investigation Team and Internal Audit Team to identify potential fraud.  8. Deal with customer enquiries received in writing, face to face and by telephone by providing accurate information in a polite, friendly and efficient manner in order to meet the service commitment to a high level of customer care.  9. Using best practice and responding to all requests and enquiries in a professional, timely and effective manner. | | |
| This job description outlines the main duties and responsibilities but does not detail every task required for service delivery. You may be asked to take on additional duties at an equivalent level, on a temporary or permanent basis. | | |
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| **GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES** | | |
| Standard responsibilities that apply to all council staff or specific groups are set out in the [Employee Handbook](https://www.rbwm.gov.uk/media/2074/download/), these include:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | * Corporate management * Information governance compliance * Whistleblowing * General Safeguarding Statement * Project and work management * Working in a team | * Risk management including Health & Safety * Business continuity * Equality of Opportunity * Our corporate values * Budget management * Specific responsibilities for managers |   Local operating procedures and specific activities/tasks will be supplied by the service. | | |
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| **PERSON SPECIFICATION** | | |
| **Qualifications/Education/Training** | | **Essential-** Good basic qualifications with 4 GCSE passes to include English and Maths. Level 2 NVQ in Customer Service Level or compensatory experience.  **Desirable-** IRRV Technician or above. |
| **Experience** | | **Essential-**  Previous experience in Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction assessments  Knowledge of Welfare Benefits Legislation  **Desirable-**  Experience using Capita Advantage assessment and Civica Document Imaging Software |
| **Skills, Abilities and Competencies** | | **Essential** - Good telephone manner with a clear voice  Ability to communicate clearly and concisely (orally and in writing)  Ability to handle sensitive, difficult situations considerately  Ability to handle upset or aggressive customers’  Ability to present a professional and cheerful manner to the public and colleagues and remain calm under pressure  Aware of the need for and capable of prioritising work and meeting deadlines  Driven by individual and team targets  Acts with honesty, integrity and discretion.  Taking ownership for and resolving customer issues.  Takes a proactive approach to meeting the needs of customers Contributes to effective teamwork.  Aligns behaviour to the needs/priorities/goals of the organisation as a whole,  Proactive approach to work and a “can do” attitude. |
| **Specific Working Requirements** | | Ability to work flexibly at certain times including outside core hours and across various channels or locations. |
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| **OTHER/SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS ROLE** | | |
| **DBS check required for this role** | | Standard |
| **Is this role “politically restricted”?** | | No |
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| **ADDITIONAL JOB DETAILS** | | |
| **Job Grade** | | Grade 5 |
| **Directorate** | | Resources |
| **Service Area** | | Revenues and Benefits |