

LONDON BOROUGH OF HACKNEY

Job Description

POST TITLE:	Appeals and Debt Recovery Officer
DIRECTORATE:	Housing, Climate and Economy
SERVICE:	Parking, Markets and Street Trading
GRADE:	SO1
LOCATION:	136-142 Lower Clapton Road, E5 0QD
RESPONSIBLE TO:	Appeals and Debt Recovery Team Leader

PURPOSE OF THE JOB

This job plays a critical role in ensuring that Hackney Council achieves fair outcomes each and every time for drivers.

You will be tasked with ensuring that the council puts forward clear and compelling cases at ETA and at court, which demonstrate the high quality of the schemes we have in operation, and mark us out as one of the best performing authorities in London.

You will also be responsible for responding to correspondence received after the statutory appeal stage has been concluded, showing a real appreciation of the complexities involved in many of these cases and always working to try and support drivers in paying early wherever possible, whilst also recognising and identifying vulnerable drivers and helping them wherever possible.

Finally you will be responsible for aspects of the management of the council's contracts with external enforcement providers.

ETA appeals cases

- To be responsible for logging and investigating all ETA appeals, including those logged by the appellant and Statutory Declaration Appeals. The latter will require a decision to be made as to whether the case should be taken forward or not, and actioned accordingly.
- To prepare and collate legal evidence packs for Tribunal Appeal cases, in response to drivers' and the council's submissions to the Independent Adjudicator. As an officer in a quasi-judicial function, you will be required to investigate and prepare high quality tribunal case summaries and evidence

packs. All tasks have to be performed in accordance with legal and procedural requirements, ensuring comprehensive records of all tribunal activities are maintained and regularly updated.

- Ensuring that lessons are learned from cases that are 'not contested' at tribunal, where an error has been made in the enforcement or notice processing stages. Having checked all case information, you are expected to provide feedback directly to your colleague or your Team Leader to ensure continuous service improvement.

Debt recovery correspondence

- To serve as an Authorised Officer of the Council in respect to its elective and statutory obligations for the processing of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs).
- To thoroughly investigate legally contested cases and reply to all correspondence arising from Penalty Charge Notices from the appeals stage onwards. All investigations and responses will comply with the most current legislative requirements, best practice, Council regulations, internal procedures and service standards, and address all the points raised.
- To communicate directly with our customers, including residents, businesses, ETA, enforcement agencies and visitors to the borough, often conveying the outcome of your decision making in a sensitive way, understanding that many customers may be unhappy with decisions made. You should retain high standards of customer service at all times, delivering high quality and courteous responses to the public, primarily in writing but also by phone and email.
- To ensure that you meet or exceed your daily caseload target, which is subject to change depending on the needs of the service and benchmarking with other boroughs, and in so doing contribute to the meeting of the team's Performance Indicators (PIs).
- To ensure that the quality of your responses meets or exceeds quality targets specific to the team to which you are assigned. These targets are subject to change depending on the needs of the service.
- To ensure that all duties are carried out within the Council's policies and frameworks, while ensuring compliance with up to date parking legislation, financial regulations, codes of practice and other statutory instruments.
- To respond to all enforcement workstreams, including: On-Street Parking Enforcement and Removal of Vehicles, Bus Lane, CCTV Static and Moving Traffic Contraventions.
- Undertake all case types including but not limited to: charge certificates, order for recovery, warrant, together with Independent Tribunal Appeals, and Statutory Declaration Appeals initiated as a result of court revocation orders.

- You will positively contribute to the council's Performance Management Scheme, assisting in the development of SMART targets and realistic standards. To positively contribute to targeted training for the wider team and your own personal development plan. To participate in proposing of innovative solutions and implement necessary changes to the parking policies, which are necessary to maintain high service standards.
- You will maintain constant awareness of the most current relevant parking legislation, and keep up to date with any changes to parking practices, policies and any other initiatives that could be used to deliver best value. To gain and maintain a working knowledge of legislation relating to Parking Enforcement and Debt Recovery, i.e. the Traffic Management Act 2004 the Enforcement of Road Traffic Debts 1993, the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and the various London Local Authority Acts specific to traffic enforcement.
- Proactively identify opportunities to contribute to a 'one service' approach, by building positive working relationships with the teams across the service. Through your complex investigations, you will identify issues affecting enforcement and will need to raise them to the relevant Parking and Markets Services team in a constructive, solution driven manner. This will include: Parking IT systems, Parking Policy, Consideration Guidelines, Permits, Markets/Traders, Traffic Management Orders, Signs and Lines Maintenance, Suspensions, Enforcement by Civil Enforcement Officers or Approved Devices and Parking Finance.
- To be a positive and helpful colleague, where Parking and Markets Services interact with other Council Services. Key relationships include the Challenges and representations team, Enforcement agents, TEC, ETA and London Councils, the Hackney Contact Centre and ICT.

Court cases

- To prepare legal documentation (Statutory Declaration, Statement of Truth and N244 Applications) relating to specific cases those are to be submitted as evidence to County Court.

Enforcement Agency contract management

- To attend meetings as required, taking and issuing notes and minutes of meetings including action points and to follow up action points as well as be responsible for the preparation and effective distribution of key documentation, reports, correspondence and other relevant material.
- Support, evaluate, guide, coordinate and direct front-line contractors responsible for the delivery of Debt Recovery Enforcement and other services.

- To reduce the capacity of vehicles contravening parking regulations by providing the persistent evaders report to the contractors.
- To be responsible for auditing contractors' performance and compliance, ensuring the contracts with enforcement agents are running smoothly, including mystery shopping.

Improving our processes

- To assist the Appeals and Debt Recovery Manager in the development and maintenance of computerised information systems and financial data collation for KPI and other management reports to ensure that high levels of performance are attained.
- To continuously strive to bring about improvements in how we do business, bringing forward solutions that make our processes more efficient, or improve our customer service by recommending systems, process and performance improvement measures, and putting these into place within your own team.
- To support your line manager in developing strategic vision for the team, and putting such plans into practice.

Project and Management Support

- To examine new system releases, perform systems integration and testing and present final test results, document and obtain agreement and approval. Check results and undertake user acceptance tests.
- To support the Appeals and Debt Recovery Manager in the delivery of efficient, effective and timely services e.g. debt collection, budgetary and other financial services, ensuring compliance of the council's financial regulations, codes of practice, audit and other statutory requirements.
- To carry out and manage administration duties such as scanning, indexing, warrants reseal, weekly update for cases on hold, processing revocation orders, insolvency documents, to process the VAT invoices, Transfer of vehicle liability and to be fully responsible for monitoring the Debt Recovery and CJSM mail box.

Customer Service

- To deal with customer complaints and solicitor queries ranging from legislation queries, enforcement, administrative issues, payment investigations and complex compensation claims.
- To assist and support the Parking Complaints Team and the Corporate Complaints team by carrying out thorough investigation and provide recommendations based on the investigation results.
- To support the Appeals and Debt Recovery Manager in ensuring compliance of the Council's financial regulation, codes of practice and standards, audit and other statutory requirements such as the scheme of delegation. To take responsibility and act as project resource for any special projects, such as procurement, as required.
- These duties and responsibilities should be regarded as neither exclusive nor exhaustive as the post holder may be required to undertake other reasonably determined duties and responsibilities commensurate with the grading and scope of the post.

Person Specification

POST TITLE: Appeals and Debt Recovery Officer

DIRECTORATE: Neighbourhoods and Housing

Guiding principles and the Council's Vision & Values

For us to achieve the most efficient operation and provide an exceptional customer experience there are 3 key themes or guiding principles that must be brought to life by every member of the team, regardless of post.

1. **Provide fair outcomes for customers**
2. **Get things done 'right first time'**
3. **Simplify and continually improve our processes**

These guiding principles support the Council's Vision and Values and align the behaviours all Council staff should model so we achieve the best for residents and customers.

Our values

Our staff vision is to make Hackney a place for everyone. Where all our residents, whatever their background, have a chance to lead healthy and successful lives; a place of which everyone can be proud, with excellent services, thriving businesses, and outstanding public spaces; a place where everyone feels valued, and can make their voice heard.

Complementing this vision, the Council has adopted a set of values. These were developed through consultation with people who work here and now form a cornerstone of our job descriptions as they underpin our roles with 'how we work and what we do'.

In Hackney you will embody these values in how you behave and approach your work, through being:

- **OPEN**, honest, and accountable, working with others, listening, showing trust in each other and in our residents
- **AMBITIOUS** for Hackney, and for ourselves, always seeking to be the best at what we do, and to get the best for the people of Hackney
- **PROACTIVE** and positive in the way we approach problems and challenges, and take up the opportunities that come our way
- **INCLUSIVE** both as an employer and a service provider, celebrating diversity, and treating colleagues and residents with respect, and with care

- **PIONEERING** and innovative, always seeking new solutions and making space to be creative, to learn and to share ideas.
- **PROUD** of what we do, of the Council, of each other, and of Hackney

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS and ABILITY

1. Possession of a relevant professional qualification or proven equivalent experience (e.g. BTEC or NVQ).
2. To play a full part in the team to which the post holder is assigned, attending team meetings, briefings and working co-operatively with colleagues. To demonstrate a commitment to the organisational values and culture, including trusting and empowering staff and colleagues. To promote an environment of continuous learning and improvement.
3. To keep up to date with developments in relevant areas of law, legal practice and relevant local authority services and take responsibility for self-development
4. To have full comprehension and understanding of all relevant bailiff law including, statutory instruments such as the civil enforcement of parking contraventions (England) representations and Appeals regulations 2007 and the civil enforcement of parking contraventions (England) general regulations 2007.
5. Working knowledge London Local Authorities and Transport for London Act 2003
6. Demonstrate experience of technical skills associated with the post, e.g. manipulating financial data accurately; developing and maintaining computerised information systems; familiarity with collection, banking and reconciliation.
7. Full knowledge of legislative statutes (PCN workflow).
8. Ability to deal in a calm and focused way with conflicting demands, and manage multiple priorities within competing deadlines to ensure positive outcomes.

9. Demonstrates commitment to remaining customer focused and performance oriented, in order to deliver the service to the highest standards.
10. Flexible and responsive to working times, patterns, locations and methods when necessary.
11. Demonstrate ability to be articulate, tactful and sensitive in written and oral communication.
12. Knowledge and ability to use Microsoft products, such as Word, Excel, Access, and Windows based IT processing systems and understanding of parking business system.
13. Ability to demonstrate competent report writing skills and contribute to the preparation and submission of complex management reports.
14. Have effective telephone skills and be used to dealing with the public face to face.
15. Adhering to and promoting Hackney Council policies such as the Equal Opportunities, Health & Safety, Financial regulations and any local departmental instructions that may be in force.
16. The post holder will be expected to undertake such additional duties or responsibilities, consistent with the role and grade, as may be allocated.

NB: All employees are expected to adhere to the Council's Diversity & Equality and Health and Safety Policies.