

Folkestone & Hythe District Council Job Description

JOB DETAILS	
Job Title	Council Tax, Benefits & Welfare Team Leader
Service Area / Team	Finance
Reports to	Council Tax, Benefits & Welfare Team Manager
Post Number	RB033
Grade & Annual Salary	Grade F (£37,204 -£42,285)
Politically Restricted Post	No
DBS Requirement	Basic

JOB PURPOSE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that the Council Tax administration and collection service for Folkestone & Hythe District Council is delivered effectively, efficiently and offers excellent customer service. • To ensure that customers entitled to Housing Benefit (HB) or Council Tax Reduction (CTR) receive prompt and accurate payment. • To ensure service telephone lines and webchat are monitored and answered within service targets. • To lead the team of Council Tax & Benefits Officers delivering continuous improvement in working practices, customer service, efficiency and value for money. • To manage the allocation of work to Council Tax & Benefits Officers on a day to day basis taking into account deadlines for work completion, performance indicators, days to process for benefits and customer expectation. • To assist the Council Tax, Benefits & Welfare Team Manager in delivering the objectives set out in the annual Service Plan. • To maintain consistently high standards of customer service when dealing with our customers. 	

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- To manage the day-to-day and forward work plans of the Council Tax, Benefits & Welfare Team and to act as the focal point for queries from the team and Customer Services for Council Tax, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction. This includes creating rotas to ensure all duties and workloads are managed effectively including work allocation.
- Monitor report mailboxes, team mailboxes (such as Housing and Revs.Bens) and Department for Work and Pension (DWP) emails and ensure prompt responses are completed.
- Monitor webchat and ensure responses are answered in a timely manner by officers.
- Monitor service telephone lines and ensure calls are answered within service targets.
- To manage the Visiting Officers day-to-day workloads and responsibilities.
- To ensure that the collection of Council Tax, administration of the service and customer queries are processed quickly and accurately in accordance with current legislation and the operating procedures of the service.
- To process all Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction applications and customer queries quickly and accurately in line with current legislation and the operating procedures of the service with a particular focus on more complex claims such as self-employed or first stage appeals.
- To adjudicate on fraud cases for Housing Benefits, Council Tax Reduction & Council Tax and provide guidance on fraud related matters to the wider team.
- To ensure new properties and amendments to properties are reported to the Valuation Office Agency to ensure the New Homes Bonus is maximised and no property is excluded from the council tax banding list and is in the correct band.
- To ensure the Council Tax banding update schedules are downloaded regularly from the website of the Valuation Office Agency and processed in accordance with the service level agreement.
- To handle escalated Council Tax, Benefits & Welfare calls & complex correspondence in a professional manner, placing the customer at the forefront of our service delivery by focusing on their needs.
- To analyse new legislation, court cases, tribunal decisions and adapting or suggesting adaptations to policy and procedures, including the training and sharing of relevant changes.
- To be available to offer guidance on complex case guidance and assistance referring to caselaw for officers, seniors and managers
- To work with the Revenues & Benefits Strategic Manager to ensure that local partnership arrangements with the Department for Work and Pensions are maintained and the Council are kept up to date with any changes in welfare reform including Universal Credit
- To oversee data cleansing and the production of key performance indicators such as Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction days to progress figures
- To be available to assist in amending and correcting decisions and offering advice or giving instructions to officers
- To oversee the daily work management of the Compliance &

<p>Development Officers, ensuring targets are met and workloads balanced accordingly</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that all staff within the responsibility of the post holder are effectively managed in accordance with the Council's Human Resources Policies, including staff sickness and annual leave records. Identify staffing issues, including performance issues, and produce relevant action plans.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To authorise and check Housing Benefits and Council Tax "write offs" and refunds as permitted.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To monitor and allocate welfare duties and work such as support schemes and community work,
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To allocate Welfare duties and work as appropriate, including scheduling telephone duties as required.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To manage the LIFT product and campaigns to support low income households in the district.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assist with the checking of officer's work to support the Compliance & Development Team and to solve disputes between officers and the Compliance and Development team which may arise on a piece of completed work.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To attend court when required to assist the Corporate Debt Team, be able to represent the Council in the magistrate's court and to attend court in the capacity of a benefits or Council Tax expert witness as required relating to fraud cases.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify training needs of the Council Tax, Benefits & Welfare Officers and Visiting Officers and to deliver training when required to do so.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulating training plans and the delivery of training on a one to-one basis and in group training sessions. (Incorporating legislative, procedural and system training).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To report to Service Leads on progress of officer training and highlights any concerns or good performance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To manage the relationship with external partners and training providers to develop training and new training materials. This will include working closely with all service areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assist the Council Tax, Benefits & Welfare Manager to control the issue of reminders and finals ensuring all pre list preparation work has been completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assist the Council Tax, Benefits & Welfare Manager in the control and issue of Council Tax summonses including all pre list preparation work as well as ensuring all work relating to the issue of the summons has been completed prior to the court date.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify and refer irregularities of information to the Council Tax, Benefits & Welfare Manager or to the Investigations Officer as appropriate.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where appropriate, to assist and complete responses in the investigation of any complaints received.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To manage and carry land registry checks as required for the service.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To oversee and process matching of Council Tax address records to GIS, amending if incorrect and advising the VOA of any changes as required.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assist the Council Tax, Benefits & Welfare Manager in managing the annual billing process, checking bills, processes and work as required.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To oversee and allocate and FOI, data or subject access request as required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To consider appeals received relating to Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, Discretionary Housing Payment and Financial Support Payments.

- To prepare legal paperwork for the Tribunal Service and Valuation Tribunal hearings.
- To complete the preparation and representation of Benefit appeal cases to the appropriate bodies and to represent the Council and prepare cases for the Valuation Tribunal for Council Tax matters.
- To work in partnership with the Corporate Debt Team to provide an efficient, joined up service and to share information to ensure shared records are kept up to date.
- To process Folkestone & Hythe District Council staff Council Tax accounts and Benefit Claims, ensuring confidentiality at all times.
- To work with the Support team to identify reports required and to solve any systems issued that may arise. To ensure that the team is advised of any changes to the system which will affect their way of working and processing.
- To monitor the indexing of scanned documents, import of emails to the document management system, issue of bills and letters and identify any other administrative functions that may be transferred.

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Adhere to the council's safeguarding policies and procedures and undertake relevant training in order to help protect children and vulnerable adults within the district.
- To comply with legislation, council policies and procedures including the Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act, Information Security Policy, the Code of Conduct for Officers and to participate in any Emergency Planning activities as required.
- To actively demonstrate the values and behaviours of the council.
- To ensure our customers are valued by taking into account their views and needs in all that we do.
- To contribute to the development and achievement of relevant corporate and service objectives by suggesting ideas for service improvements.
- To communicate openly and honestly with colleagues, members and customers.
- To undergo any training necessary to be able to fulfil the requirements of the job.
- To carry out other duties commensurate with the grade, skills, experience and qualifications of the post holder as directed and as may be required from time to time.

Folkestone & Hythe District Council Person Specification

Post Title: Council Tax, Benefits & Welfare Team Leader

Important Information for Applicants:

The criteria listed in this person specification are the requirements for the post. Where the method of assessment is stated to be the application form, your application needs to demonstrate clearly and concisely how you meet each of the criteria, even if other methods of assessment are also shown. **If you do not address these criteria fully, you may not be shortlisted. Please give specific examples wherever possible.**

Factors	Criteria	Means of Assessment		
		Application	Interview	Test
Qualifications	<p>Essential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A – C Maths and English GCSE (Grades 4 – 9), (or equivalents) or recent and relevant experience that demonstrates proficiency in English and Maths. 	✓		
	<p>Desirable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant job specific qualifications, such an IRRV Technician Award or NVQ. Relevant management or team leadership qualification or equivalent training. Membership (through experience or qualification) to a relevant professional body. 	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓
Experience and Knowledge	<p>Essential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed knowledge of Council Tax legislation and/or Benefits legislation including local schemes. Five years recent and relevant experience in a Revenues and/or Benefits environment. A proven track record of delivering an excellent Revenues and/or Benefits service. Experience of operating MS Office systems. An excellent working knowledge of Northgate, or equivalent systems. 	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓

	<p>Desirable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A good working knowledge of welfare reform. ▪ Experience of court attendance and representation of the Council at relevant appeal / valuation tribunal hearings. ▪ Experience or competency in research and policy design/redesign. ▪ Demonstrable experience of leading, developing, training and motivating staff. 	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Skills and Abilities	<p>Essential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrable ability to manage individual and team performance effectively. • Excellent research, administrative and analytical skills. • Accurate and demonstrable attention to detail. The ability to identify errors and discrepancies relating to Benefits and/or Council Tax cases. • Excellent customer service skills: The ability to interpret and explain complex information, including relevant legislation, Council policies and procedures, and the effects on specific cases, accurately and clearly. Demonstrable ability to offer customers an effective, efficient and consistent service. • The written and oral communication and interpersonal skills required to effectively liaise with stakeholders, customers and colleagues at every level and through a range of mediums • Ability to organise and prioritise workload and competing demands effectively in order to meet deadlines and maintain high standards at all times • Demonstrable commitment and enthusiasm for personal improvement. The ability to develop skills and knowledge essential for the role. • Demonstrable commitment and enthusiasm for service improvement. • The ability to seek out best practice from within the Council and externally. Ability to interpret Management Information and feedback and take 	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

	<p>proactive action. Understanding of, and commitment to, data protection and maintaining confidentiality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent team working skills • The ability to work on own initiative. The ability to make decisions and take responsibility for resolving issues 	✓	✓	
	<p>Desirable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to manage change effectively and to lead and manage service improvements. 			

JOB DESCRIPTION / PERSON SPECIFICATION SIGN-OFF		
Completed by	Andrew Hatcher	Date: 24 April 2017
Reviewed/Agreed by	Middle manager / Head of Service (name and job title)	Date :