

Folkestone & Hythe District Council Job Description

JOB DETAILS	
Job Title	Council Tax & Benefits Officer
Service Area / Team	Finance / Council Tax, Benefits & Welfare Team
Reports to	Council Tax, Benefits & Welfare Team Leader
Post Number	TBC
Grade & Annual Salary	Level 1 – Grade C Level 2 – Grade D
Politically Restricted Post	No
DBS Requirement	Basic

JOB PURPOSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be responsible for the accurate processing, collection and recovery of Council Tax within the statutory requirements. • To ensure that customers entitled to Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Reduction receive prompt and accurate payment. • To provide a professional and helpful first point of contact service to all customers in relation to Council Tax billing, collection and recovery, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction applications and enquiries across all access channels – online forms, emails, telephone calls, web chat, written correspondence, back office workflows and in person. • To provide support and cover to the Customer Access Point if required.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	Frequency (daily/weekly/ monthly/annually etc)
To process all Council Tax administration quickly and accurately in line with current legislation and the operating procedures of the service.	Daily
To assess and process all Housing Benefit applications quickly and accurately in line with current legislation and the operating procedures of the service.	Daily
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To calculate changes of circumstances to HB and CTR cases promptly and accurately to maximise subsidy and reduce days to process.	Daily

To process and manage tasks such as Citizens Access in an accurate and timely manner.	Daily
To process DWP notifications, such as ATLAS, VEP and UC notifications in an accurate and timely manner. Reporting to DWP as required.	Daily
To process claim and account reviews as required.	Daily
Adhere to DWP data sharing arrangements and the appropriate use of systems such as Searchlight and VEP.	Daily
To handle with customer call enquiries and web chat and resolve queries as applicable.	Daily
To maintain a prompt response to telephone, e-mail and written queries concerning specific cases raised by Landlords/Housing Associations and other outside bodies.	Daily
To calculate apportionments, discounts, exemptions, reliefs and refunds on Council Tax accounts, including credit transfers.	Daily
To assist customers in making arrangements, applying for Benefits and giving general debt advice on recovery notices to prevent formal enforcement action.	Daily
To set up new properties, reporting to the Valuation Office, liaising with Visiting Officers, planning and Valuation Office. Processing valuation schedules and maintenance of all property listings.	Weekly
To process all matters relating to Direct Debit to comply with the BACS rules and ensure collection is prompt and effective.	Daily
To monitor recovery arrangements, attachments to earnings or attachments to DWP benefits and investigate any queries.	As required
To assist and advise customers on applications for Discretionary Housing Payments, Exceptional Hardship Payments and applications under Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and ensuring supporting evidence is supplied and adequate information is collected for a decision to be made. Refer if necessary to outside agencies for further help i.e. Kent County Council for crisis payments, Family Mosaic for funding, Step Change for debt advice etc.	As required
To offer accurate signposting and welfare support as applicable, including to the Council's own internal support schemes.	As required
To identify and refer irregularities of information to the Investigations Officer or the relevant Team Leader/Manager for further investigation.	As required
To assist with face-to-face support in the Customer Access Point as required.	As required
To manage Breathing Space applications as directed by Team Leaders.	Weekly
To actively promote e-billing and other online measures to landlords and residents.	Daily
To take personal responsibility for managing your workload and have a flexible, approach in supporting the Team Leaders/Manager to manage resources throughout the day.	Daily
To work in partnership with the Corporate Debt Team, Housing, Systems, Visiting Officers and other relevant departments to provide	Daily

an efficient, joined up Council Tax, Benefits and Welfare Service and to share information to ensure shared records are kept up to date.	
To be proactive in identifying ideas that may improve service delivery to the Team Leaders/Manager and Benefits Officers such as testing and developing of new systems i.e. digital delivery or automated systems. Sharing information, knowledge and best practise to promote an ethic of continual improvement within the team.	Daily
Assisting the Team Leaders/Manager and Compliance & Development Officers in ensuring that operational procedures are kept up to date and to train and/or mentor staff development in collaboration with the relevant officers.	Daily

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 Officer

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	Essential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good basic education to GCSE A-C (9-4) standard or equivalent (including Maths & English) or recent and relevant experience that demonstrates proficiency in English and Maths. 	✓		
	Desirable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NVQ Level 2 or 3 in Business Administration or Customer Services. Educated to A Level / NVQ Level 3 standard or equivalent with a relevant qualification such as IRRV Technician Award or NVQ 	✓ ✓		
Experience and Knowledge	Essential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of customer focused, support service roles with ideally a minimum of one years' experience of working in a similar customer service type role learning administrative skills. Ability to analyse and respond to requests with an understanding of when to seek assistance and when to escalate an enquiry. Experience of operating MS Office systems such as Microsoft Word, Excel and Outlook. Recent and relevant administrative experience 	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	✓

	<p>Desirable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrable experience (ideally at least 2 years) of working in a similar Council Tax or Benefits environment or in an equivalent customer focused type role. • Experience of dealing with more complex enquiries and providing multi-disciplinary support. • Ability to work with minimal supervision. • Knowledge of Council Tax and/or benefits legislation and experience of its application 	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	
<p>Skills and Abilities</p>	<p>Essential</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to work as part of a team • Excellent written and oral communication skills • High level of attention to detail and accuracy • Competent user of IT, particularly Microsoft Office, with an ability to learn new systems quickly • Proactive and committed to continued service and personal development. • Ability to adapt and organise work to meet deadlines whilst maintaining high standards. • Professional and customer focused approach. • Ability to build working relationships at all levels. • The ability to research, assimilate and explain complex information, including relevant legislation and its effect on specific cases • Ability to operate on own initiative with minimal supervision 	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>