

Job Description and Person Specification

Post Title:	Benefits Officer
Reports to:	Council Tax & Benefits Team Leader
Scale:	3
Politically Restricted:	No

Overall Purpose

To assist in the delivery of the Council Tax and Benefits Services for Blaby District Council and for collaborative work with internal and external partners. The service is regulatory by nature and is highly customer focussed with an emphasis on excellent performance and digitalisation of the service

Key Roles, Tasks and Responsibilities

1. To carry out all day to day activities necessary for the efficient and effective assessment of new claims and changes in circumstances to enable a customer to receive the correct amount of benefit they are entitled to.
2. To ensure that our records and customer database is kept up to date and is accurate.
3. To deal with enquiries and complex case work from customers either on the telephone, email or face to face.
4. To ensure that all claim applications and changes are verified and correctly processed and ensuring that customers are notified of the outcome.
5. To promote e-Billing and encourage residents to use online electronic forms of communication.
6. To maximise the Council's opportunity to offer a holistic approach to residents of the District in relation to the policies and initiatives of the Council, maximisation of income and entitlement to benefit. To liaise and create working partnerships with external organisations and other internal sections and departments.
7. To develop and maintain an extensive technical and working knowledge of Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support, Discretionary Discounts and Payments. To keep abreast of changes and rules appertaining to Universal Credit.
8. To actively maximise household incomes, by offering advice and information on available benefits, allowances, discounts and exemptions.
9. To cancel and suspend benefits where appropriate.
10. To work to achieve individual team targets and any other departmental initiatives.

11. To use Customer Insight to help execute marketing campaigns to meet the objectives of the team, to include online and print publicity and website content.
12. To support the service managers in all aspects of the service functions and operation.
13. To participate in any projects, attend meetings and training courses as required.
14. To liaise with other services and external organisations as appropriate to exchange information (as allowable by law) and resolve queries.
15. To maintain a basic working knowledge of Council Tax and undertake Council Tax work as necessary when demand requires.
16. To inform the Benefits Manager of any irregularities or matters of a serious nature, observe the requirements of the Benefits Declaration and comply with the requirements of the whistle-blowing and anti-fraud and corruption policies.
17. To undergo designated training sessions and seminars as necessary, this may be outside of normal working hours and/or at other establishments as may be required.

Post Characteristics

Allowances:	None
On call/emergency situations:	N/A
Security/safeguarding checks:	DBS Basic

Health and Safety Responsibilities

1. To be familiar and comply with the Council's health and safety policies and procedures and local department specific health and safety policies and procedures as amended or added to from time to time.
2. To report any unsafe practice, accident, incident, dangerous occurrence or hazard found during the course of your work to your line manager or the Corporate Health and Safety Adviser for action.
3. To take reasonable care for health and safety of yourself and others.
4. To co-operate with all staff and members of the authority so far as is necessary to enable all health and safety requirements are complied with.
5. To not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything that has been provided in the interests of health and safety.
6. To maintain any Personal Protective Equipment that you are issued and required to wear, and to report any defects to your line manager.

Emergency Planning/Response Responsibilities

1. To carry out the duties specified in relation to the post in the Emergency Plan, Business Continuity and other associated documents.

Person Specification

Knowledge

Desirable:

Working knowledge of the administration of Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support (*3,4)

Working knowledge of the legislation that governs the administration of the above (*3,4)

Experience

Essential:

Excellent customer service skills with a focus on doing what matters for the customer (*3,4)

Experience of customer/public contact both face to face and by telephone (*3,4)

Experience of maintaining records (*3,4)

Desirable:

Experience of working in a Local Authority, preferably in a Benefits or similar environment (*3,4)

Experience of either customer marketing or selling techniques (*3,4)

Skills/Abilities

Essential:

Ability to understand analyse and accurately process information and data (*3,4)

Ability to make and communicate decisions confidently and effectively based on available information, rules, regulations and working procedures (*4)

Ability to deal with customers in sensitive and difficult situations (*4)

To plan and prioritise own workload (*3,4)

Ability to use systems and databases such as Microsoft Word, Outlook and Northgate (or equivalent) (*3,4)

Desirable:

Ability to successfully market online and digital access with customers (*4)

Other

Essential:

Working knowledge and understanding of data protection, GDPR, Freedom of information principles (*3,4)

Committed to the development of the service and self (*3,4)

Must be able to perform all duties and tasks with reasonable adjustment. Where appropriate, in accordance with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 (*3,4)

An understanding of and commitment to Equal Opportunities and the ability to apply this to all situations (*3,4)

Desirable:

The ability to persuade and guide residents and customers towards electronic access routes (*3,4)

Method of assessment*

1. Test prior to shortlist
2. Test after shortlist
3. Application form
4. Probing at interview
5. Documentary evidence

Job Description and Person Specification details:

Reviewed by: Council Tax & Benefits Team Leader

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