



Sundry Debt Officer

LEVEL: 7

ACCOUNTABLE TO: Benefits Team Leader

SALARY: £29,542 to £33,119 per annum (pro rata for part-time hours)

LOCATION: Totnes/Tavistock/Agile

CONTRACT: Fixed term contract – 24 months

Job Purpose

To support the Councils' debt recovery function by delivering an efficient, effective and customer-focused service for the collection of sundry debts, Housing Benefit overpayments and Business Improvement District levies. The role is responsible for ensuring that recovery action is taken promptly, fairly and in line with relevant legislation, Council policies and agreed procedures.

Working with customers, internal departments, the Finance team and external partners, the postholder will use appropriate systems and communication channels to resolve queries, agree payment arrangements, monitor outstanding debt and support effective recovery action.

The role contributes to the financial management of the Councils by helping to maximise income, maintain accurate records, identify cases requiring further action and ensure that debt recovery is handled professionally, sensitively and consistently.

Role Profile

Sundry Debt

- To undertake debt recovery work in respect of sundry debt customers (e.g. trade waste, commercial tenancy debts, and licences) ensuring that debts are chased promptly (phone calls, emails, letters) and income due to the Councils is maximised.
- Create and share meaningful debt information with all service areas. Communicate and liaise with the appropriate departmental officers to agree the best course of action to take on individual debts.
- Take payments and deal with account queries, for both credit and debit balances, as appropriate.



- Monitor outstanding debt, identify arrears and take appropriate recovery action within agreed timescales.
- Provide summary debt information to management as required.
- Maintain accurate records and ensure all debtor information is updated on the relevant financial or case management system.
- Refer relevant cases to collection and enforcement agents, monitor collection progress and deal with returned cases.

Housing Benefit Overpayments

- Respond to Housing Benefit overpayment queries from claimants and landlords, whether in writing or over the telephone, providing clear explanations of actions taken and decisions made.
- Deal confidently with customers verbally (telephone or in-person) and in writing obtaining full payment or making payment arrangements where appropriate.
- Assist debtors subject to recovery action by referring or signposting them to internal and external support services to help them manage their debt.
- Create, maintain and monitor deductions from earnings arrangements.
- Refer cases to collection agents and assist in monitoring progress and outcomes.
- Process information received and take personal ownership of any necessary follow up action resulting from telephone customer contact.
- Ensure all information required for management and government returns is adequately and accurately recorded.

Business Improvement District Levies

- Proactively pursue outstanding debt levies in respect of Business Improvement Districts.
- Deal with enquiries from levy payers by telephone and in writing.
- Liaise with the BID Operating Board to agree and take the appropriate course of action in cases of non-payment, updating records as necessary.
- Prepare necessary documents to allow debts to be pursued through different channels as appropriate e.g. enforcement agents and the Magistrates' court.

General duties

- Work as an effective team member by providing support and assistance to other members of the wider team.
- Deal with correspondence which is returned as undelivered taking appropriate action and using all available systems to trace the debtor.



- Keep up to date with all aspects of Council procedure and policies as well as the relevant legislation for the type of debt.
- Contribute to the updating of processes and procedures where appropriate to ensure operational efficiency and effectiveness is maximised.
- Contribute to individual and team service targets and performance indicators.
- Assist in the preparation of cases for further recovery action, including proceedings in the magistrates and county court where necessary.
- Recognise when debt becomes uncollectable and make recommendations for write off and collate all supporting evidence before adding to a write off schedule for authorisation.
- Provide ad-hoc support to projects to improve service delivery.
- To perform any other duties which fall within the broad spirit, scope and purpose of this role profile.

Person Specification

Qualifications

Essential	Desirable
Minimum of 5 GCSEs or equivalent, including Maths and English.	

Knowledge / Experience

Essential	Desirable
Experience of using a case management system for processing work.	A good knowledge of Council services and associated debts.
Experience of working in a debt recovery environment and as part of a multi-disciplinary team.	Practical working knowledge of best practice for the collection of Housing Benefit overpayments or a willingness to learn.



Experience of dealing with a variety of customers by telephone and in writing.	Experience of using a financials package including sundry debtors.
Experience of working to tight deadlines in a performance driven team.	
Experience of using an Electronic Document Management System.	
Experience of negotiating with customers leading to effective debt recovery outcomes.	

Skills / Abilities

Essential	Desirable
Able to communicate effectively with internal and external customers, by telephone, in-person and in writing.	Able to constructively challenge the way the service works and contribute new ideas.
Able to prioritise, meet tight deadlines and work effectively under pressure within defined processes and procedures.	
Customer focused with an understanding of customer need and their expectations.	
Able to be both proactive and reactive in response to a changing work environment, often with conflicting priorities.	



Proficient in the use of ICT including Microsoft Applications and specialist systems.	
Able to communicate clearly and concisely with colleagues.	
Able to deal with confidential and sensitive information.	
Accurate and methodical approach to work.	
Able to work flexibly to meet the needs of the Councils and their customers as an individual or as part of a team.	

General / Other

Essential	Desirable
Able to deal with confidential and sensitive information in line with GDPR requirements.	
All staff must be prepared to have an understanding of the Equal Opportunities, Customer Care and Health and Safety policies.	
A basic DBS check will be required before appointment.	



General

The list above is not exhaustive; this role profile sets out the duties of the post at the time it was drawn up. Such details may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the duties or the level of responsibility involved.

Safeguarding Children & Adults at Risk

The Council has a Safeguarding Policy which outlines its responsibilities and the responsibilities of its employees. All employees need to be aware of this Policy and comply with the contents.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

The Council has an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy which outlines its commitment to creating a culture that respects and values each other's differences, promotes dignity, equality, diversity, and inclusion, encourages individuals to develop and maximise their true potential and combats prejudice, discrimination, and harassment.

Staff Code of Conduct

The public, our communities, customers, and colleagues are entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all people working for the Councils. The Code of Conduct sets out the general standards of conduct expected of everyone working for the Councils.

Climate Change

Contribute to the Council's corporate objectives in relation to climate change by considering the environmental impact of individual and collective actions, working to reduce resource and energy use, minimise waste, and anticipate and enhance the efficiency of services in response to a changing climate, wherever possible, to help the council reduce its own carbon footprint and that of the district.