

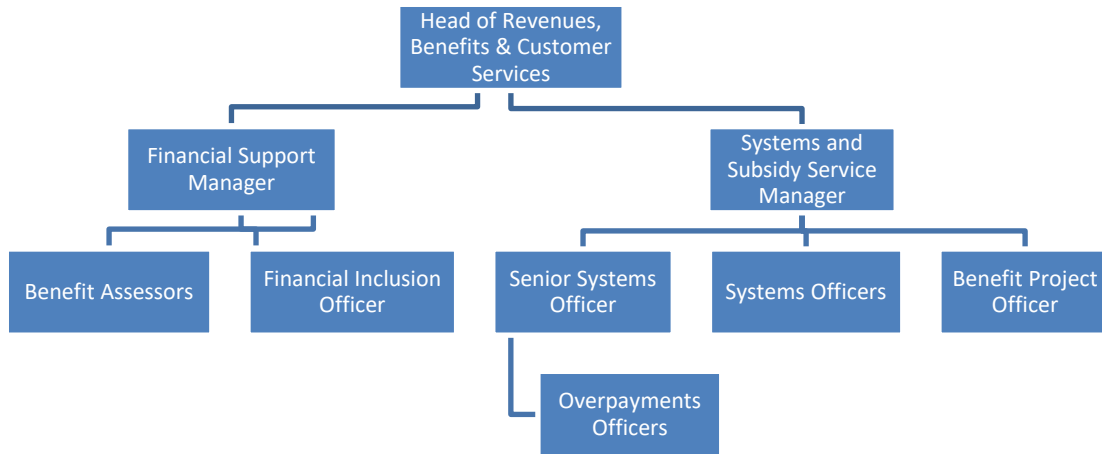
**JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION**

**Job Title:** Benefits Assessor  
**Salary Band:** 3  
**Service Area:** Revenues, Benefits & Customer Services  
**Hours:** 37 hours per week

**PURPOSE OF JOB**

**Help me with my financial situation** – To provide a customer focussed benefits service and to ensure the effective and accurate determination and payment of claims in respect of housing benefit and council tax reduction scheme in accordance with current legislation.

**REPORTING RELATIONSHIPS TO OTHER POSTS**



**Main Duties and Responsibilities**

*This is the non-contractual element of the post and is a more detailed description of day to day activities which will be reviewed in line with the appraisal process and can change when priorities change*

- Accurately calculate entitlement of housing benefit and local council tax reduction for new claims and changes of circumstances in accordance with current legislation and notify customers promptly of the decision.
- Maintain a detailed knowledge of the housing benefit and council tax reduction scheme legislation, including subsidy issues together with an up to date knowledge of other welfare benefits.
- Provide a customer facing service to customers by administering advice and assessing claims in respect of housing benefit and council tax reduction scheme changes of circumstances as required.
- Monitor claim progress and take appropriate action in order to ensure the efficient and effective delivery of the service.
- Amend, cancel and suspend benefit claims effectively to avoid overpayments of benefit.
- Calculate overpayments or underpayments of benefit and allocate the relevant recovery method.

- Identify potentially fraudulent claims and promptly refer any such claims to the relevant DWP department or council officer as required.
- Liaise with partners, landlords, colleagues, Councillors and organisations to ensure the customer receives a comprehensive service and is supported to make informed choices.
- Be responsible for the verification of claim details as specified in the legislation and to request further information as appropriate.
- Maintain high standards of customer service and deal with customer enquiries either in person, by phone or email including home visits if needed.
- Contribute to ensuring the service meets the national standards as defined by external auditors.
- Work with colleagues to achieve purpose and work together to share ideas to continue to improve the service delivered to the customer.
- Work closely with other teams including revenues, customer services and overpayments to develop positive working relationships so that customers receive a joined up approach where issues cover more than one service.
- Test new releases of software in conjunction with the systems team.

### **Corporate Accountabilities**

- As an employee you must comply with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and affiliated regulations. You are also required to comply with the Council's Health and Safety Policies and take reasonable care for the health and safety of yourself and of others.
- Manage information in line with the Council's policies, procedures and guidance on Data Protection, GDPR, Freedom of Information, confidentiality, information security and sharing to ensure compliance and efficient and effective information governance.
- Maintain awareness of Council policies and practices regarding the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults who may be at risk. Report concerns in accordance with corporate guidance and procedures.
- To ensure all standards are adhered to in accordance with the Council's Customer Standards.
- Work to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization and report incidents as they occur. Treat everyone with dignity and respect and ensure individual's needs are met. Challenge inappropriate behaviour and language constructively.
- To have a flexible approach to the work required to be undertaken, to assist other employees and ensure that the administrative needs of the service are met.
- To work outside normal office hours from time to time as the demands of the post and emergencies dictate.
- The post holder may be required to carry out any other duties and responsibilities within the scope of the post which may be allocated from time to time by the Head of Service or an authorised representative.

## Values and Behaviours

Work to the Council's Values and associated Behaviours – **WFDC**

We are <b>Working Together</b>	We are <b>Fair</b>	We are <b>Dependable</b>	We put <b>Communities first</b>
We are one team, all working towards the Council's vision for the district	We treat people fairly, we are inclusive and embrace our differences	We do what we say we are going to do, you can trust us to deliver on our promises	We listen, we set targets for ourselves and the services we deliver

## Skills, Knowledge, Experience, Qualifications

### Essential

- Educated to GCSE or equivalent standard (4 – 9) including in Maths and English or equivalent or demonstrable work-related experience in the field of Benefits (Housing Benefit & Council Tax Reduction Scheme).
- Detailed knowledge of Housing Benefit legislation.
- Be able to review the accuracy and quality of decisions made in respect of claims, in line with legislation.
- This job includes duties that may require an element of physical effort and mobility on an occasional basis. To meet the needs of the service, the ability to undertake the full range of duties for the contracted hours will be required.
- The ability to converse at ease with members of the public and provide advice in accurate spoken English.
- Experience of dealing with the public in difficult circumstances, have excellent customer care skills with the ability to show empathy with the public including minority groups and vulnerable people.
- Ability to learn and competently apply complex legislation.
- Highly motivated with excellent communication and interpersonal skills and can communicate effectively at all levels.
- Ability to draw conclusions from data and information and make decisions and recommendations in complex cases.
- Proactively seeks out opportunities and implements creative solutions.
- Ability to handle confidential and sensitive information with discretion.
- Proven experience of dealing with complex and contentious customer enquiries.
- Ability to work under pressure with frequent interruptions to respond to customer demands and be able to remain calm in stressful situations.
- Able to complete work to a high standard of accuracy and presentation.
- Ability to interrogate a variety of computer systems and accurately record data.
- Can work under pressure to tight deadlines and prioritise own workload.
- Able to work on own initiative with the minimum of reference and supervision.
- Act in a professional manner at all times.
- Holistic in approach to resolving customers enquiries.
- Willing to take instructions and to carry them out as requested.
- Motivated with the ability to listen to, work well with and be respectful to others and committed to being a team player.
- Flexible approach to working hours, able to work outside normal office hours if necessary.

**Desirable**

- IRRV qualification or equivalent
- Civica Open Revenues software experience

**Special Conditions of the Role**

The Council's scheme of flexible working hours applies to this post. This allows an officer some time discretion in arranging working times.

Appointment to this post is subject to satisfactory clearance of a basic disclosure check (Disclosure & Barring Services (DBS)) under the Police Act 1997. Such checks are required for any post holder who will require access to systems containing sensitive data. You are required to notify the HR Team if you are subsequently arrested, or are being investigated, which would have an impact on your ability to continue to be employed within the role

Date Prepared – June 2024