

Job Description

Benefits & Welfare Officer

Draft

Date: 24/08/2023

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| Job Evaluation Reference Number – A xxx |
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| HR USE ONLY |
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SERVICE: Revenues & Benefits
SECTION: Benefits & Welfare
BAND: Band 5
REPORTS TO: Senior Benefits & Welfare Officer
DIRECT REPORTS : N/A
FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY £0

TYPE: 1) Hot desking or Agile/Mobile Working

All Council posts are subject to National Joint Council (NJC) conditions of service.

Basildon Borough Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults, and expects all employees, contractors and volunteers to share its commitment to prevent abuse, harm or exploitation.

Please note that the Council applies a robust recruitment vetting process.

Please note that this post is subject to Department of Works and Pensions (DWP), Protection of National Infrastructure conditions, which means that the post holder will be required to undergo further vetting processes to ensure compliance.

Please note that this post will require a standard Disclosure and Barring Certificate.

MAIN PURPOSE

The purpose of this post is to play an active role in the Benefits & Welfare team, ensuring the provision of a high quality, customer focussed Revenues & Benefits service. With the emphasis on delivering service improvements and a commitment to achieving and exceeding targets, whilst undertaking all aspects of Benefits processing and Welfare support. Staff will ensure that all work undertaken is in accordance with law, regulations and guidelines and handled as promptly and efficiently as possible.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Revenues and Benefits Service administers the billing and collection of Council Tax, Business Rates liabilities and corporate debt, the assessment of Housing Benefit and the Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) scheme. The Service is responsible for ensuring that benefits are paid timely and accurately and that the tax base is protected.

The post holder ensures that decisions on Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support and Discretionary payments are made in accordance with law and policy guidelines, and that notificationas are issued in a timely manner.

All staff must be mindful of potential fraud and that suspected irregularities are referred for investigation in all cases.

A common factor in Revenues and Benefits services is that any member of staff may be called upon to act as a witness in proceedings in courts or tribunals to give factual evidence

DUTIES

1. Day-to-day administration of all Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support for pensioners and Discretionary Payment activities whilst seeking to promote efficiency and continuous improvement.
2. Interpretation of Benefits legislation, ensuring that processes and decisions apply in accordance with law and policy guidelines.
3. Understand the impact that all assessments, accuracy and overpayments have on Benefits subsidy.
4. Make decisions in respect of Housing Benefits entitlement and that notices are issued in a timely manner, referring any matters of doubt to a Senior Benefits & Welfare officer.
5. Undertake enquiries to identify and evaluate Household details relating to Housing Benefit and Welfare Support, carrying out detailed assessments of income, capital and other resources relating to entitlement.
6. Verify and validate information, making all necessary determinations, notifying customers accordingly.
7. Liaise with Visiting and Outreach & Engagement officers in relation to establishment of liabilities, Benefits and Welfare needs.
8. To maintain an awareness of current legislation, policy and guidance relating to Housing Benefits and Welfare support.
9. Communicate with customers regarding all aspects of their entitlement
10. Identify potential cases where an application for discretionary payments may be appropriate.
11. To liaise with all internal and external partners as required.
12. You must ensure that you comply at all times with the General Data Protection Act, relating to personal information held by the Council. Any employee who mis-uses, accesses or discloses personal data relating to a living individual without checking that it is to be used for an authorised purpose relevant to the Authority, may be prosecuted in a Criminal Court, as well as facing disciplinary action
13. Any other duties appropriate to the post: These other duties must be equivalent to or below the salary and status of the role and, where appropriate, under the Equality Act 2010, due consideration must be given to any employees with a “protected characteristic”

14. Undertake all the duties within the framework of Equal Opportunities.
15. You must cooperate in all matters relating to Health and Safety and implement all procedures for your job role. The identification of Health and Safety related risks within the working environment must be highlighted to your management.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

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|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| Position Title: | Benefits & Welfare Officer | Date Prepared: | 24 August 2023 |
| Department: | Revenues & Benefits | Band: | 5 |

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| AF= Application Form | I = Interview | T= Test |
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| | REQUIREMENTS | Essential | Desirable | Assessed |
|-----------|---|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE (ü either essential or desirable) | | | |
| 1.1 | Demonstrable experience of working in a Benefits section or in a similar environment liaising with internal and external partners | ü | | AF/I |
| 1.2 | Experience of successfully interpreting and making decisions on legislative matters | ü | | AF/I |
| 1.3 | Up to date knowledge of Housing Benefit law and procedures | | ü | AF/I |
| 1.4 | Experience of accurately maintaining and interpreting personal and financial data | ü | | AF/I |
| 1.5 | Experience of using office information systems including Benefits software | | ü | AF/I |
| 1.6 | The ability to communicate at ease with customers | ü | | AF/I |
| 2. | COMPETENCIES | | | |
| | DECIDING AND INITIATING ACTION | | | |
| 1.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Makes prompt, clear decisions which may involve tough choices or considered risks b) Takes responsibility for actions, projects and people c) Takes initiative, acts with confidence and works under own direction d) Initiates and generates activity | ü | | AF/I |
| | WORKING WITH PEOPLE | | | |
| 2.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Demonstrates an interest in and understanding of others b) Adapts to the team and builds team spirit c) Recognises and rewards the contribution of others d) Listens, consults others and communicates proactively e) Supports and cares for others f) Develops and openly communicates self-insight such as an awareness of own strengths and weaknesses | ü | | AF/I |
| | WRITING AND REPORTING | | | |
| 4.1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Writes clearly, succinctly and correctly | ü | | AF/I |

| | REQUIREMENTS | Essential | Desirable | Assessed |
|-----------|--|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) Writes convincingly in an engaging and expressive manner c) Avoids the unnecessary use of jargon or complicated language d) Writes in a well structured and logical way e) Structures information to meet the needs and understanding of the intended audience | | | |
| 6.1 | <p>PLANNING AND ORGANISING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Sets clearly defined objectives b) Plans activities and projects well in advance and takes account of possible changing circumstances c) Manages time effectively d) Identifies and organises resources needed to accomplish tasks e) Monitors performance against deadlines and milestones | ü | | AF/I |
| 7.1 | <p>ADAPTING AND RESPONDING TO CHANGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Adapts to changing circumstances b) Accepts new ideas and change initiatives c) Adapts interpersonal style to suit different people or situations d) Shows respect and sensitivity towards cultural and religious differences e) Deals with ambiguity, making positive use of the opportunities it presents | ü | | AF/I |
| 3. | EDUCATION AND TRAINING | | | |
| 3.1 | Educated to GCSE level or equivalent, indicating an aptitude for mathematics and English language | ü | | AF/I |
| 3.2 | Professionally qualified to IRRV level or willing to study for the IRRV | | ü | AF/I |
| 3.3 | <p>If DBS / BD or MOU is needed –</p> <p>A satisfactory DBS / BD and MOU certificate will be required</p> <p>Please use link to check if DBS is required https://www.gov.uk/find-out-dbs-check</p> | ü | | AF/I |