

Job Description and Person Specification

Post Title: Overpayments Officer

Reports to: Income & Collection Team Leader

Scale: 3

Politically Restricted: Yes (Baseline)

Overall Purpose of Job

To collect Council Tax, National Non-Domestic Rates and Housing Benefit Overpayments and support services by delivering a responsive, cost effective and high-quality financial service.

To collect and recover Housing Benefit Overpayments.

Key Roles, Tasks and Responsibilities

- Assess each Housing Benefit Overpayment case and ensure the most appropriate and efficient method of recovery available is used.
- To monitor and report to the Service Manager on the progress and rate of collection against performance targets.
- To assist in the continual review (and establishing new procedures for ensuring the prompt and efficient collection) of overpayments, along with maintaining a working knowledge of current processes, procedures, rules, regulations and legislation.
- To inform the Team Leader of any irregularities or matters of a serious nature, observe the requirements of the Revenues & Benefits Declaration and comply with the requirements of the whistle-blowing and anti-fraud and corruption policies.
- To maintain liaison and effect recovery with external agencies including the DWP, Benefits Agency, Rent Officer Services, Internal Audit, External Audit external recovery agents, Debt Collection agencies and Courts.
- Assist with any local, county and national initiatives in relation to collection and income, work processes, mailshots, data matches, event dates, diary note work, together with the assistance on testing on new system releases or software enhancements.

- To work closely with the Recovery, Benefits and Internal Audit Section, to establish best practice.
- To identify the support needs of residents and signpost to other appropriate services.
- Carry out an assessment of income and expenditure to maximise collection to the authority and to ensure that an acceptable payment arrangement is reached.
- Identify anomalies and take appropriate action.
- To deal directly with customers by telephone, written correspondence and in person, to offer general advice on benefit matters and specifically on the creation and collection of overpaid benefits.
- To ensure the efficient handling of customer enquiries received via telephone, email and correspondence.
- To assist with reception and telephone cover as required.
- To assist with appeal or reconsideration cases as required.
- To assist the Team Leader in striving to achieve continuous improvement in the processes
- To undergo designated training sessions as necessary, which may be out of normal working hours and/or at other establishments as may be required.
- To undergo relevant training in the use of the ICT systems.
- To maintain a working knowledge of the changes to Housing and Council Tax Benefit Regulations and keep abreast of developments arising from changes to and interpretation of the Regulations.
- To always comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act as outlined in Blaby District Council's Health and Safety Policy.
- To comply with the requirements of the Local Authority's Whistle-blowing Policy and Anti-fraud and Corruption Policy.

- To contribute and work towards on-going policies of the Council
- To carry out such duties as may be required by the Team Leader, Manager(s), Group Manager or a Director (and/or their deputy).
- Attendance at evening Council meetings/Committees may be required

Post Characteristics

Security/safeguarding checks: DBS Basic

Health and Safety Responsibilities

1. To be familiar with 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 be responsible for the effective implementation of the Council's health and safety policies and procedures with their services. To ensure that robust and effective safe working arrangements are in place and adhered to by all staff at all times.
3. To ensure that all accidents, incidents and near misses are properly reported and investigated.
4. To report any corporate or significant H&S issues to the Corporate Health and Safety Adviser.
1. 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.
2. To take reasonable care for health and safety of yourself and others.
3. 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.
4. To not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything that has been provided in the interests of health and safety.
5. 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

Essential:

- Housing Benefit Overpayments / Benefits Knowledge 3,4
- Working knowledge of Microsoft packages including Word, Outlook and Excel 3,4

Desirable:

- Working knowledge of the administration and legislation of all or some of the following:
3,4
Council Tax
National Non-Domestic Rates

Experience

Essential:

- Excellent customer service skills with a focus on what matters to the customer 3,4
- Customer/public contact both face to face and by telephone 3,4
- Previous debt collection experience 3,4
- Experience of working in a similar environment 3,4
- Experience of working as part of a team 3,4
- Self-motivated 3,4

Desirable:

- Experience of working in a Local Authority, preferably in a Council Tax or Benefits Service or similar environment 3,4

Skills/Abilities

Essential:

- IT skills to undertake word processing and data input 3,4
- Work as part of a team but also be able to work independently 3,4

Strong organisation skills including the ability to work to deadlines, prioritise workload, and manage competing work demands 3,4

Negotiation skills 3,4

Good numeracy skills 3,4

Communication skills both verbal and written 2,3,4

Self-motivated 3,4

Ability to work methodically to a high level of accuracy and attention to detail 2,3,4

Ability to demonstrate tact and diplomacy and handle information in a confidential manner 2,4

Qualifications/Training

Essential:

GCSE or equivalent in Mathematics and English 3,4,5

Other

Essential:

Awareness of equal opportunities issues 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: Patricia Leigh & Sarabjit Khangura

Approved by: Katie Hollis

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