Role Profile and Specification – Benefits Officer

Service Area	Revenues & Benefits
Role Title	Benefits Officer
Location	Oxted/Agile
Reports to	Assistant Benefit Manager
Salary/Grade	TA2
Duration/Hours	17

Service Area Purpose

To provide an efficient Revenues and Benefits service, providing value for money and a good level of customer service to residents and businesses, maximising income generation for the Council and prioritising continuous improvement.

Working in partnership where appropriate and taking advantage of automation opportunities to minimise the cost of the service to the Council whilst maintaining strong and efficient service delivery.

To deliver Government policy and initiatives where relevant to Revenues and Benefits, maximising the delivery of benefits to residents or businesses whilst limiting any financial or administrative burden to the council in operating schemes.

To uphold high standards of accountability and transparency in reporting to Government, Members or other bodies as required.

Job Purpose

To work within the Benefits Team dealing with day-to-day Housing Benefits and Council Tax Support administration, ensuring that benefit assessments and payments made are correct and up to date, adhering to national legislation, meeting statutory time limits and section targets. To work as part of a team ensuring all areas of administration and data input are achieved and providing a high level of customer service to the residents.

Key Objectives

- To assess and re-assess Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support entitlement and to ensure correct documentary evidence and information has been provided in compliance with legislation and best practice, and ensuring correct payment is made to the claimant, landlord, Council Tax account or rent account as appropriate

- To calculate, allocate and set recovery action for any overpayment of benefit. Notify

the claimant (and landlord if appropriate) of the details and recovery action. Refer overpayments not to be recovered to the Senior Benefits Officer for authorisation.

- To maintain a good knowledge of benefits legislation in order to answer queries and explain the benefits schemes to a wide variety of customers.

- To seek guidance in any case where discretionary payments may be appropriate, or where an individual decision on rent level is required.

- To provide, without delay, a case summary where the claimant requires a reconsideration of their award to enable the Senior Benefits Officer to follow the process of the calculation or the decision in question.

- Ensure all correspondence including emails are dealt with promptly.

- Ensure that all information relating to benefit claimants remains confidential and is not disclosed to any unauthorised persons, paying particular attention to the provisions of the Data Protection Act.

- Interrogate and extract information from the Customer Information System, VEP/WURTI and Atlas via the link provided by the Department for Work and Pensions in order to facilitate the prompt and accurate assessment of Housing Benefit

- To deal with enquiries on the phone and at the public enquiry counter.

- To deal with correspondence ensuring responses are sent fully within the Councils set time limits and maintaining high levels of Plain English and courtesy

- To seek to prevent and detect benefits and Council Tax Support fraud, referring cases to the fraud officer as necessary.

- To maintain good working relationships between Revenues and Benefits and with other Sections such as Housing, and Customer Services. To also work where appropriate with partner Councils, liaising and sharing information as appropriate and in accordance with legislation and policy.

- To engage with service and corporate improvement projects, to contribute to the transformation of the service and the Council.

Person specification

Qualifications / Education

Essential	Desirable
• GCSE English & Maths (A-C) or equivalent	• IRRV Technical Qualification or equivalent

Benefits Officer
January 2023

Experience

Essential
• Experience of working with members of the public • Recent experience in Benefits officer role

Key Skills and Knowledge

Essential	Desirable
• Able to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing using plain English • Use of Microsoft Office including Word, or equivalent • Must enjoy working as part of a team and have flexible approach to team working • Able to work well under pressure • Able to work to set priorities and maximise own output as well as meeting set targets and deadlines • Understanding of the broad requirements of the data protection principles. • A commitment to equality and diversity.	• Use of Document Image Processing Systems • Experience of NEC software (or similar) systems

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