Role Profile and Specification – Recovery Officer

Service Area	Revenues & Benefits
Role Title	Recovery Officer
Location	Oxted/Agile
Reports to	Corporate Debt Unit Manager
Salary/Grade	Grade 2
Duration/Hours	37

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 Recovery Team to collect monies due to the Council from a range of services using all methods and remedies available under the relevant legislation, meeting statutory time limits and section targets.

To make arrangements for the recovery of monies in accordance with policy procedures and legal constraints.

Key Objectives

- To evaluate referred cases for council tax, housing benefit overpayments, business rates, sundry debts and former tenant rent arrears, in order to determine and apply the most appropriate enforcement remedy. All evaluations to be made using the agreed policies, processes and technology as appropriate.

- To undertake the tracing of absconded debtors.

- To investigate the ability of individual debtors to pay, assessing likely entitlement to housing benefit and council tax benefit, and giving advice on other welfare benefits.

- To liaise with other Council departments concerning problem cases where ongoing arrears are in evidence, to prioritise debt recovery in accordance with Council policies.

- To offer advice on debt management and refer individual cases to CAB, PayPlan or Consumer Credit Counselling Service as appropriate.

- To liaise with employers, DWP, enforcement agents and other internal and external bodies in relation to individual cases.

- To monitor accounts which are subject to attachments of earnings, deductions from benefits or special arrangements ensuring compliance and correct allocation of funds received, reallocating to correct debts as necessary.

- To compile detailed documentation for debts to be approved for write off in accordance with policy, procedures, the Anti-Poverty Strategy and efficiency grounds.

- To refer cases to the Legal Department when such action is necessary.

- To attend court hearings as required to interview attendees.

- To keep clear and accurate records of contact and discussions with debtors/staff and enforcement agents to ensure that case notes are full and up to date.

- To take a proactive approach to contacting customers by telephone and e-mail where written correspondence has failed to resolve debt situation, in order to avoid court action and additional costs wherever possible.

- To answer all customer enquiries in a prompt, courteous and efficient manner, ensuring that all information provided is accurate, clear and relevant, with particular emphasis on explaining how overpayments and other charges have been calculated.

- To liaise with customer service officers to ensure that customers are given clear and consistent advice.

- To interview customers in person as necessary to discuss their debts, financial circumstances, and action for recovery.

- To take part in team discussions to challenge processes and procedures to ensure maximum efficiency.

- To assist with the housekeeping of the system through report running and monitoring as required.

- To operate as part of the wider Revenues team, providing support and cover as

necessary in order to ensure effective service delivery.

- 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 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 level 3 certificate in Revenues UK Qualification or equivalent. • Welfare Benefits qualification.

Experience

Essential	Desirable
• Experience of office-based work environment, ideally associated with revenues work. • Experience of working with members of the public.	• Recent experience in a council tax and business rates officer role.

Key Skills and Knowledge

Essential	Desirable
• Able to negotiate and reach a satisfactory conclusion. • Able to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing using plain English. • Sensitive and empathetic to debtors' position. • Use of Microsoft Office including Excel and Word or equivalent. • Must enjoy working as part of a team and have flexible approach to team working. • Able to work well under pressure.	• Use of Document Image Processing Systems. • Knowledge of local taxation and or debt collection legislation. • Knowledge of debt counselling, debtor profiling and customer segmentation. • Experience of NEC software (or similar) systems. • Full UK drivers' licence and use of a vehicle for occasional work use. • Negotiation skills.

• 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.	