

Job Description

Revenues and Benefits Visiting Officer

Final

Date: November 2016



JOB DESCRIPTION

June 2013

POST: Visiting Officer

SERVICE: Revenues & Benefits

SECTION: Revenues – Corporate Recovery

BAND: 5

REPORTS TO: Revenues Senior Officer

RESPONSIBLE FOR: n/a

TYPE: Hot Desking in Basildon Centre

All posts currently covered by National Joint Council (NJC) conditions of service.

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. This post will require the signing of documents under the (DWP) Memorandum of Understanding and a basic Disclosure Clearance check to ascertain unspent criminal convictions.

The Council is committed to ensuring that its policies and procedures are consistent with Essex Safeguarding Children Board and the Essex Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Board guidance. This will help to minimise the risks to vulnerable groups,, and to ensure that the Council safeguards the health and well-being of its Service Users. Please note that the Council applies a robust recruitment vetting process.

These post holders make initial decisions on liability and reliefs and check the validity of claims and supporting information, whilst in customers' homes, in accordance with legislation and policy guidelines. These posts identify and inspect new properties to establish completion dates and then make recommendations to senior staff. A further aspect of these posts is to visit council tenants to discuss rent arrears prior to and during any legal action.

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.

MAIN PURPOSE: These posts undertake property inspections and other enquiries to establish liabilities and new properties for council tax and business rates. These posts also provide essential contact with customers who require a welfare benefits visit, a visit to discuss rent arrears or an ad-hoc visit as and when required. They also provide a facility for evidence and enquiries to be obtained directly from the customers' home.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The Collection and Recovery section is responsible for collection and recovery of Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing Benefit overpayments, Rents and Sundry Debts. The section consists of four senior posts who provide legal and technical expertise, direct and monitor workloads and manage a group of twenty two FTE Collection and Recovery officers and three Income and Recovery officers, undertaking all administrative tasks.

MAIN DUTIES

1. To receive information from Planning and other sources regarding new properties and to liaise with the Valuation Office Agency enabling visiting officers to inspect properties to establish liabilities, completion dates and reliefs.
2. To liaise with owners, managing agents, residents and occupiers to establish information relevant to local taxation liabilities and reliefs, including NNDR mandatory and discretionary relief and Council tax disabled discount.
3. Provide advice on eligibility for Local Council Tax Support in appropriate cases and visit vulnerable cases where special attention is required, liaising with benefits section as necessary.
4. To maintain an awareness of the taxable property base and of potential development sites and where possible to give early warning to senior officers of significant changes.
5. Maintain knowledge of relevant Council Tax, Business Rates, Benefits and Housing legislation, ensuring that processes and decisions apply in accordance with law and policy guidelines.
6. To receive information from senior staff and other officers in respect of cases where a personal visit is required or evidence requires validation at external locations.
7. Visit benefits applicants and potential claimants in their homes and elsewhere in relation to all aspects of benefits claims, providing technical advice on eligibility and entitlement and to resolve queries and receive claims and supporting evidence, taking appropriate steps to verify information and make appropriate records and providing reports.
8. Communicate with customers and other interested persons, by telephone, letter and other means to identify occupiers, owners, small businesses and other liabilities and reliefs from rates and to validate claims.

9. Ensure that use of Local Authority and Government systems and communications with DWP through the Customer Information System (CIS) or its equivalent are properly implemented and undertaken by the relevant staff in accordance with agreed procedures.
10. To identify cases of hardship or other circumstances where a debt may be irrecoverable and to make senior officers aware.
11. Organise workload and plan visits, in conjunction with other Visiting Officers to ensure the most cost-effective and efficient use of time, whilst having due regard to personal safety.
12. To liaise with all internal and external partners as required.
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

Position Title:	Revenues and Benefits Visiting Officer	Date Prepared:	June 2013
Department:	Revenues and Benefits	Band:	5

AF= Application Form	I = Interview	T= Test
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	REQUIREMENTS	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
1.	EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE			
1.1	Experience of working in a busy Revenues and Benefits section or in an equivalent environment	✓		AF/I
1.2	A good working knowledge of Housing Benefits, Housing, Council Tax and Business Rates legislation		✓	AF/I
1.3	Experience of customer service, demonstrating good communication and interpersonal skills	✓		AF/I
1.4	Experience of using office information systems	✓		AF/I
1.5	Experience of presenting evidence at Magistrates Courts and Tribunals	✓		AF/I
2.	COMPETENCIES			
	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 	✓		AF/I/T

	REQUIREMENTS	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
4.1	<p>WRITING AND REPORTING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Writes clearly, succinctly and correctly 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 	✓		AF/I/T
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 	✓		AF/I/T
6.3	<p>FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS AND PROCEDURES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Appropriately follows instructions from others without unnecessarily challenging authority b) Follows procedures and policies c) Keeps to schedules d) Arrives punctually for work and meetings e) Demonstrates commitment to the organisation f) Complies with legal obligations and safety requirements of the role 	✓		AF/I/T
8.1	<p>ACHIEVING PERSONAL WORK GOALS AND OBJECTIVES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Accepts and tackles demanding goals with enthusiasm b) Works hard and puts in longer hours when it is necessary c) Identifies development strategies needed to achieve career goals and makes use of developmental or training opportunities d) Seeks progression to roles of increased responsibility and influence 	✓		AF/I/T
8.2	<p>ENTREPRENEURIAL AND COMMERCIAL THINKING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Keeps up to date with competitor information and market trends b) Identifies business opportunities for the organisation c) Demonstrates financial awareness d) Controls costs and thinks in terms of profit, loss and added value 	✓		AF/I/T
3.1	<p>EDUCATION AND TRAINING</p> <p>Educated to GCSE level or equivalent, indicating an aptitude for mathematics and English language</p>	✓		AF/I/T

	REQUIREMENTS	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
3.2	IRRV technician or other relevant qualification		✓	AF/I/T
	If DBS is needed – A satisfactory DBS certificate will be required	✓		AF/I/T