Gravesham Borough Council

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| Division: | Corporate Services |
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| Department: | Revenues & Benefits |
|  |  |
| Post Title: | Benefit Assistant |
|  |  |
| Grade: | Scale 1-3 |
|  |  |
| Hours | 37 |
|  |  |
| Responsible to: | Team Leader Assessments |

**Job Description**

This job description is intended as a working document only, giving a guideline to the major tasks to be performed. It is anticipated that the post will develop as working practices change in order to meet the demands of the service, new legislation or policies of the council. It is expected the post holder will contribute to and assist in the development of such changes

**Job summary**

Subject to the instructions of the Team Leader Assessments, to be trained in Housing Benefit & Council Tax Reduction Scheme Administration.

**Main responsibilities**

**Housing Benefits and Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

Assessing, calculating and amending benefits in accordance with legislation, DWP guidelines and local policy.

Obtaining information to make determinations by means of effective verbal and written communications.

Updating and maintaining computer and manual records of claim details.

Processing all electronic data received from the DWP.

Ensuring that all benefit is either applied to the appropriate accounts or in the case of Private Tenants paid by BACS.

Recovering benefit overpayments by means of Sundry Debtor Accounts, deductions from on-going benefit or debiting personal accounts as considered appropriate.

Recommending rent levels in rent allowance cases where Local Housing Allowance applies.

Knowledge of complex legislation, regulations, guidelines and government circulars.

Dealing with enquiries from customers by telephone, face to face or letter.

To refer cases of irregularities and fraud, if suspected to the Fraud Team.

Liaising with Government Departments, DWP, Citizens Advice, Landlords and managing agents on all matters relating to Benefits administration.

Liaising with internal departments such as Council Tax and Housing in respect of cases dealt with by those sections.

To assist with the provision of a high-quality Benefit Service.

To provide a high-quality customer service, working to maximise benefit entitlement and prevent arrears wherever possible.

To actively support the development of current and emerging technology.

**General**

To carry out such other duties as may be required of you, commensurate with the grade and level of responsibility, as directed by management.

To participate as required in the Council’s Emergency Planning Operations which may involve duties outside the post holder’s normal job description and contracted hours.  In the event that an incident has occurred which disrupts the council’s ability to deliver it’s critical functions, the post holder will be expected to participate in the recovery stage which may include undertaking duties within the post holder’s competencies in other departments and/or at other locations.

A commitment and contribution to the Council’s Equal Opportunities Policy is an essential requirement of the post.

The post holder will carry out all duties and activities having regard to the provisions of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, and in accordance with any instructions from senior members of staff under that Act or any Council or Departmental Codes of Practice or Procedures.

The post holder must ensure that data quality and integrity is maintained, and that data is processed in accordance with council policy, the Data Protection Act, the Freedom of Information Act and other legislation

The post holder will comply with Statute and Council Policy in all respects.

An awareness and commitment to section 17 which places a statutory duty on police and local authorities to work in partnership to reduce crime and promote community safety. It is also required that community safety is to be a thread running through all functions of the LA

A commitment to excellent customer service and the values of the Council

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

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| --- | --- |
| Characteristic | Specification |
|  | ESSENTIAL | DESIRABLE |
| **SKILLS/ABILITIES**(Specific skills and abilities required to undertake the duties) | Good customer care skills dealing with and advising members of the public in a professional manner under all circumstances Good communication skills both written and verbalExcellent IT skills e.g., Word and ExcelAble to liaise confidently and professionally with people at all level.Able to demonstrate a good level of numeracy |  |
| **KNOWLEDGE**(Particular knowledge which will be necessary to perform the work effectively, e.g., of specific legislation or regulations) | Knowledge of Gravesham Borough Council and the services it provides. Knowledge of and the understanding of the importance of confidentiality and data protection | Knowledge of Gravesham Borough Council and the services particularly administered by Revenues & Benefits |
| **QUALIFICATION****TRAINING**(Educational/vocational qualifications and other training)Verification will be required | A minimum of 5 passes at GCSE (grades 9 to 4 or previously Grade A\*, A. B or C) including English and MathematicsAble to demonstrate a good level of numeracy  |  |
| **EXPERIENCE**(Level and type of previous experience) | Experience in customer serviceExperience of using Microsoft Office  | Experience of working in an office environment or dealing with Customers in a front-line service. |
| **QUALITIES**(Particular qualities necessary to carry out the works, e.g., ability to work under pressure or work co-operatively in a team) | Shows a personal commitment to the work of the service, taking ownership of tasks and seeking to meet set deadlines and targets.Trustworthy, honest and assertive and able to work on own initiative.Good telephone manner Good team player Highly Organised |  |
| **SPECIAL CONDITIONS**(e.g., willingness to work unsocial hours or wear a uniform) | Commitment to equal opportunities |  |