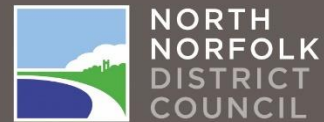


JOB DESCRIPTION



Benefits Officer (Post 1678) – Level 2

Service Area

Revenues and Benefits

Manager/Team Leader

Benefits Team Leader

Direct reports

N/A

Total Managed

N/A

Purpose of the Role

A member of a team that accurately and efficiently administers the assessment of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support, whilst providing high quality customer service and complying with statutory legislation, policies and procedures.

Key Result Areas

1. To administer Housing Benefit and Council Tax support; to include new claims, changes in circumstances and data matches. Ensuring prompt and accurate assessment, notification and payment/award.
2. Calculating entitlement to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support, including underlying entitlement and Alternative Maximum Benefit.
3. To advise customers of their entitlement to other Welfare assistance and signposting to either maximise the customers income or to seek debt advice.
4. Preventing overpayments /excess payments. Calculating the correct amount of an overpayment/excess payment and categorising correctly for subsidy purposes. To ensure that appropriate recovery action is taken.
5. Obtaining and analytically crosschecking a range of data to support a claim.
6. To use secure Government databases to validate and support claims and to identify and administer changes as a result of discrepancies.
7. To maintain a technical, working knowledge of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support including frequent changes in legislation and procedures.
8. To actively prevent and detect false claims and discounts using investigative skills.

9. To provide assistance, advice, guidance and explanation to vulnerable customers on matters that are complex. Face to face, over the telephone and in writing.
10. To assist the Customer Services team when dealing with difficult or complicated enquiries.
11. To provide excellent customer service, promoting equality and diversity, treating customers professionally and with empathy. Customers may be vulnerable, financially distressed, suffer mental health problems or abusive.
12. To communicate externally with a range of organisations to include; the Department of Work and Pensions, Housing Associations, Private Landlords/letting agents, Care and Support services. Internal communications include, Housing Options, Revenues, Customer Services, Planning and Living Well, Health and Wellbeing.
13. To accurately maintain and update computer records using a workflow system.
14. To ensure that the rules of GDPR are adhered to, including that confidential information is not shared with appropriate consent.
15. To use sound judgement and discretion in decision making taking account of the legislation which may refer to “reasonableness”, “good cause” and “special circumstances.”
16. To understand the importance of service targets and meeting set performance targets.
17. To adopt corporate values and awareness of corporate plan and vision.
18. To take own responsibility for resolving enquiries, decision making and ensuring a comprehensive audit trail and decision records are maintained.
19. To propose ways of improving the service using business transformation to ensure processes and best practice are efficient and cost effective.
20. Assisting Team Leaders or Revenues and Benefit Manager as required
21. To take reasonable care of the Health and safety of yourself and other persons

PERSON SPECIFICATION

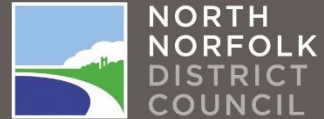


**NORTH
NORFOLK
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Job Title - Benefits Officer Level 2 (1678)				
		Essential	Desirable	How Identified
Experience/ Knowledge	Up to date knowledge and experience of Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support.		✓	Application form/Interview
	Experience of using Housing Benefit/Council Tax system and electronic workflow.		✓	Application form/interview
	Experience of working in an administrative role.	✓		Application form/Interview
	Understanding of Welfare Benefits/Allowances/Pensions/ Universal Credit.		✓	Application form/Interview
	Experience of maintaining and updating customer records, providing sound audit trails and supporting evidence.	✓		Application form/Interview
	Knowledge, application and awareness of GDPR legislation.	✓		Application for*/Interview
	Experience of dealing with vulnerable and difficult customers, explaining complicated information face to face, on the telephone, in writing and electronically.	✓		Application form/Interview
	Understanding of Diversity and Equality.	✓		Application form/Interview
Qualifications	At least 5 GCSE or equivalent at grade c or level 4, including English and Maths.	✓		Application form
	ICT skills including Microsoft Word & Excel and accurate data input.	✓		Application form

		Essential	Desirable	How Identified
Skills	Negotiating and influencing skills whilst giving consideration to the best interest of the customer and the council.		✓	Application form/Interview
	Good planning, organisational and time management skills. Including prioritisation and self-monitoring of workload.	✓		Application form/Interview
	Empathic approach to customers in adverse situations such as bereavement, domestic violence and financial difficulties.	✓		Application form/Interview
	Able to clearly communicate complex matters to a customer or third party face-to-face, over the phone and in writing.	✓		Application form/Interview
	Able to assimilate and process a range of information quickly and accurately.	✓		Application form/Interview
	Good judgement and decision making skills.		✓	Application form/Interview
	Accurate and non-routine data input.	✓		Application form/Interview
Aptitude and Disposition	Attention to detail and a methodical approach whilst maintaining productivity and accuracy.	✓		Application form
	Ability to work with minimum level of supervision.		✓	Interview
	Flexible team member, able to work on own and contribute positively to team working.	✓		Interview
	Ability to work under pressure.	✓		Interview
	Ability to adapt and embrace change.	✓		Application form/Interview
	To be responsible for own actions and decisions.	✓		Application form/Interview
	Self- motivated.	✓		Interview

JOB DESCRIPTION



Benefits Officer (Post 1678) – Level 3

Service Area

Revenues and Benefits

Manager/Team Leader

Benefits Team Leader

Direct reports

N/A

Total Managed

N/A

Purpose of the Role

A member of a team that accurately and efficiently administers the assessment of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support, whilst providing high quality customer service and complying with statutory legislation, policies and procedures.

Key Result Areas

1. To administer Housing Benefit and Council Tax support; to include new claims, changes in circumstances and data matches. Ensuring prompt and accurate assessment, notification and payment/award.
2. Calculating entitlement to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support, including underlying entitlement and Alternative Maximum Benefit.
3. To advise customers of their entitlement to other Welfare assistance and signposting to either maximise the customers income or to seek debt advice.
4. Preventing overpayments /excess payments. Calculating the correct amount of an overpayment/excess payment and categorising correctly for subsidy purposes. To ensure that appropriate recovery action is taken.
5. Obtaining and analytically crosschecking a range of data to support a claim.
6. To use secure Government databases to validate and support claims and to identify and administer changes as a result of discrepancies.
7. To maintain a technical, working knowledge of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support including frequent changes in legislation and procedures.
8. To actively prevent and detect false claims and discounts using investigative skills.

9. To provide assistance, advice, guidance and explanation to vulnerable customers on matters that are complex. Face to face, over the telephone and in writing.
10. To assist the Customer Services team when dealing with difficult or complicated enquiries.
11. To provide excellent customer service, promoting equality and diversity, treating customers professionally and with empathy. Customers may be vulnerable, financially distressed, suffer mental health problems or abusive.
12. To communicate externally with a range of organisations to include; the Department for Work and Pensions, Housing Associations, Private Landlords/letting agents, Care and Support services. Internal communications include, Housing Options, Revenues, Customer Services, Planning and Living Well, Health and Wellbeing.
13. To accurately maintain and update computer records using a workflow system.
14. To ensure that the rules of GDPR are adhered to, including that confidential information is not shared with appropriate consent.
15. To use sound judgement and discretion in decision making taking account of the legislation which may refer to “reasonableness”, “good cause” and “special circumstances”.
16. To understand the importance of service targets and meeting set performance targets.
17. To adopt corporate values and awareness of corporate plan and vision.
18. To take own responsibility for resolving enquiries, decision making and ensuring a comprehensive audit trail and decision records are maintained.
19. To propose ways of improving the service using business transformation to ensure processes and best practice are efficient and cost effective.
20. To work with a minimum level of supervision.
21. Mentoring and supporting less experienced staff.
22. Assisting Team Leaders or Revenues and Benefit Manager as required.
23. To take reasonable care of the Health and safety of yourself and other persons.

PERSON SPECIFICATION



**NORTH
NORFOLK
DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

Job Title - Benefits Officer Level 3 (1678)				
		Essential	Desirable	How Identified
Experience/ Knowledge	Up to date and in depth knowledge and experience of Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support.	✓		Application form*/ Interview
	Experience of using Housing Benefit/Council Tax system and electronic workflow.	✓		Application form*/ Interview
	Experience of working in an administrative role.	✓		Application form*/ Interview
	Understanding of Welfare Benefits/Allowances/Pensions/ Universal Credit.	✓		Application form*/ Interview
	Experience of maintaining and updating customer records, providing sound audit trails and supporting evidence.	✓		Application form*/ Interview
	Knowledge, application and awareness of GDPR legislation.	✓		Application form*/ Interview
	Experience of dealing with vulnerable and difficult customers, explaining complicated information face to face, on the telephone, in writing and electronically.	✓		Application form*/ Interview
	Understanding of Diversity and Equality.	✓		Application form*/ Interview
Qualifications	At least 5 GCSE or equivalent at grade c or level 4, including English and Maths.	✓		Application form
	ICT skills including Microsoft Word & Excel and accurate data input.	✓		Application form

		Essential	Desirable	How Identified
Skills	Negotiating and influencing skills whilst giving consideration to the best interest of the customer and the council.	✓		Application form*/ Interview
	Good planning, organisational and time management skills. Including prioritisation and self-monitoring of workload.	✓		Application form*/ Interview
	Empathic approach to customers in adverse situations such as bereavement, domestic violence and financial difficulties.	✓		Application form*/ Interview
	Able to clearly communicate complex matters to a customer or third party face-to-face, over the phone and in writing.	✓		Application form*/ Interview
	Able to assimilate and process a range of information quickly and accurately.	✓		Application form*/ Interview
	Good judgement and decision making skills.	✓		Application form*/ Interview
	Accurate and non-routine data input.	✓		Application form*/ Interview
Aptitude and disposition	Attention to detail and a methodical approach whilst maintaining productivity and accuracy.	✓		Application form*
	Ability to work with minimum level of supervision.	✓		Interview
	Flexible team member, able to work on own and contribute positively to team working.	✓		Interview
	Ability to work under pressure.	✓		Interview
	Ability to adapt and embrace change.	✓		Application form*/ Interview
	To be responsible for own actions and decisions.	✓		Application form*/ Interview
	Self- motivated.	✓		Interview

Additional Information Benefits Officer Level 2 and Level 3

The Local Council Tax Scheme for working age may differ from Housing Benefit and the Council Tax Support prescribed Pensioner Scheme. The Local Council Tax Support Scheme is reviewed annually. Manual calculation skills are required to ensure the outcome calculations are correct, to identify system calculation errors and discrepancies if they occur.

Verification of national insurance number, identity and other supporting evidence. Obtaining and analytically crosschecking a range of data to support a claim. (Includes: - Income, capital, household, rent etc.)

The use of secure Department for Work and Pensions/Her Majesty's Customer and Revenues data to validate/support claims and to identify and administer changes as a result of discrepancies.

Housing Benefit includes the use of 9 different rent schemes. Council Tax Support is a local scheme and is reviewed annually for changes. Changes are often required within short deadlines and result in revised procedures, new decision making and new system functionality.

Knowledge of other Welfare Benefits/Pensions/Allowances to maximise the customer's income. The impact of the receipt of other Welfare Benefits on Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support and Alternative Maximum Benefit. This includes disregarded incomes, awarding Premiums and Allowances and the application of non-dependant deductions. Other Welfare Benefits include:-

Income Support, Employment and Support Allowance Income Related, Employment and Support Allowance Contribution Based together with the different components, Disability Living Allowance Mobility and Care, Attendance Allowance, State Retirement Pension, New State Pension, Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Child Benefit, Carer's Allowance and Underlying Entitlement to Carer's Allowance, Personal Independence Payments Mobility and Living, Bereavement Support Payment, Bereavement Benefit, Widowed Parent's Allowance, Widowed Mother's Allowance, Widow's Benefit, Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance, Jobseeker's Allowance Contribution Based and Income Based, Statutory Sick/Maternity/Paternity/Adoption Pay.

To protect the public purse by reducing fraud and error. To refer cases to the Department for Work and Pensions Fraud investigation team, to provide supporting evidence and information as required.

To assist the customer service team when dealing with difficult or complicated enquiries. To explain changes to legislation and the impacts of this. Changes that result in reductions of entitlement have financial impact to customers, who experience increased shortfalls in the amount of Housing Benefit to help with their rent and less Council Tax Support to assist with their Council Tax. Reduction in Housing Benefit impacts upon homelessness and reduced Council Tax Support increases the amount of Council Tax to be collected and revenue for the Authority.

Prioritising work to avoid delay and financial hardship, whilst maintaining a high level of accuracy. Maximising subsidy received by the Council.

To ensure that the Authority legitimately claims correct subsidy and provides accurate statistical information to the Department for Work and Pensions and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs office. Ensuring evidence and supporting information is provided to meet auditor requirements.

Once evidence, from various sources, has been verified and cross checked, the data to be input is not routine. Fields, dates, codes, amounts etc must all be entered correctly to ensure that the claim type, rent classification, income type, household details, capital details, Council Tax liability, subsidy classification and the HB/CTS arears/award/adjustment/underlying entitlement/overpayment/offset calculations for each period being administered met the required legislation criteria and are accurate. The notification letters must also be checked and amended to ensure they are correct.

Applying all the principles of proper decision making. This includes, identifying the relevant facts and considering the evidence, interpreting legislation and case law. To ensure decisions are documented and supported.

Complex decisions are made routinely every day. These have significant impact on the lives of North Norfolk people and landlords. Decisions are not routine.

An understanding of the importance of service targets and meeting set performance targets. Adopting corporate values and awareness of the corporate plan and vision.

Assisting customer's services with complex cases/customers and providing feedback for development and quality assurance.

Duties may include

Awarding or refusing backdate requests

Administration of Real Time Information (RTI) Automated Transfers to Local Authority Systems (ATLAS), Verify Earnings and Pensions (VEP).

Specialist duties:-

- Discretionary Housing Payments
- Homeless cases/ Homeless liaison officers (Level 3)
- Supported accommodation cases / Supported accommodation liaison officers
- Staying put cases / Staying put liaison officer
- Fraud Single point of contact officers (Single point of contact)
- National Fraud Initiative (NFI)
- Housing Benefit Matching Service (HBMS)

Software testing / changes to procedures

Deprivation of capital cases (Level 3)

Tenancy fraud, contrived, non-commercial and living together cases (Level 3)

Reconsiderations of decisions (Level 3)

Claims from Persons from Abroad (Level 3)

Claims from Students (Level 3)

Claims from Self-employed (Level 3)

Mentoring / training and support (Level 3)

Level 2 to Level 3

The following criteria must be achieved for movement from level 2 to level 3

Have a good understanding of all necessary systems/processes/ legislation in order to process new claims, change of circumstances, and level 3 cases as shown above.

Meet agreed targets – productivity and accuracy. Including a consistent target of 98% average accuracy for change of circumstances and new claims administration.

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of other Welfare Benefits/ Allowances/ Universal Credit and Council Tax. The impact on HB/CTS.

To be able to signpost customers to maximise their income and obtain debt advice.

To be competent in dealing with difficult and vulnerable customers with empathy, internally and external on the phones/face to face/ electronically and in writing.

To resolve the majority of queries with the minimum of supervision.

Take responsibility and ownership of cases and decisions– researching information, legislation and case law.

Demonstrate a good understanding of Corporate plan, service targets, performance standards and own role in achieving these.

Have a positive approach to individuals and contribute to team working. Take responsibility for action and results.

To advise, mentor and support others as necessary.

To understand the importance of subsidy and the financial impacts of this.