

Job Description and Person Specification

Role: Benefit Officer



Job Description

Job Title	Benefit Officer
Grade	4
Service	Revenues and Benefits
Reports to	Team manager
Location	One Friargate
Job Evaluation Code	



About Coventry City Council

Who we are: At Coventry City Council we are dedicated to making a positive difference to the services we deliver to the diverse citizens of Coventry. The work we do improves people's lives – from helping them into work to providing clean and green places to live, to keeping people safe and protected.

As a Coventry City Council employee, you have our ongoing commitment to your growth and development with opportunities to work across multiple service areas including customer contact, public health prevention and education and skills, adults and children's services and provide support for the most vulnerable.

Our aim is simple – to be globally connected, locally committed, deliver our priorities with fewer resources whilst effectively managing our performance and measuring our progress.

Our Values: We expect everyone who works for us to be committed to our One Coventry values and to share our commitment to becoming a more diverse and inclusive organisation:



About the Service your team will provide

Purpose of the role

1. To administer all claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support.
2. To provide a front-line service to all claimants or their representatives by responding to their needs by providing a face to face service, and also by telephone or in writing.

Main Duties & Key Accountabilities

Core Knowledge

1. Process all benefit claims, including students, war pensioners/widows, joint tenants, second adult rebate and the self-employed, by:
 - (a) Ensuring that claim forms are completed fully and accurately, and all information has been received in accordance with the appropriate benefit legislation.
 - (b) Calculating entitlement, including taking into account any application for benefit to be backdated, ensure that payments are made in line with the appropriate benefits legislation and that the appropriate decision letter is sent. The calculation will be undertaken either by using the on-line computer system or manually.
 - (c) Calculating overpayments for both benefits, ensuring that the appropriate decision letter is sent and that the first stage of recovery action is taken. This will include the following:
 - Deduction from on-going benefit.
 - Recovery from the Council Tax account.
 - Passing debt to the Overpayment Recovery Team for action.
 - (d) Dealing with all changes of circumstances and ensure that the Benefit Record is amended as appropriate, the correct decision letter is sent and that any actions to pay or recover benefit are undertaken.
 - (e) Updating the benefit claim via the on-line computer system and other computerised records relating to the benefit claim.

2. Provide an effective and efficient customer service in line with the Council's Customer Care Policies by:
 - (a) Dealing with enquiries from claimants or their representatives, either by personal interview, by telephone or in writing.
 - (b) Corresponding with benefit claimants, Job Centre Plus, the Department of Work and Pensions, employers, registered social landlords, hostels, private landlords, the Council Tax Section and any other organisations to obtain information required to assess benefit.
 - (c) Providing general advice and guidance on other welfare benefits and referring more complex cases to the Benefits Advice Line.
3. Respond to all enquiries from registered social landlords and hostel providers either in person or in writing in order to assist them in their dealings with their tenants.
4. Liaise with the Fraud Team and refer any cases where there is a possibility of benefit being claimed fraudulently.
6. Promote efficient and effective team working by mentoring other members of staff when requested, assisting with on the job training and giving advice and guidance.
7. Provide any required statistics or management information to enable the efficient running of the service.
8. Any other duties and responsibilities within the range of the salary grade.

Key relationships

External	Internal

Standard information

Post holders will be accountable for carrying out all duties and responsibilities with due regard to Code of Conduct, Safeguarding, Health & Safety and the City Council's Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Policies.

Duties which include processing of any personal data must be undertaken within the corporate data protection guidelines.

Smoke Free

The City Council is Smoke - Free. Smoking is not permitted on any of our premises or the surrounding land including car parking facilities.

Training

The postholder must attend any training that is identified as mandatory to their role.

Responsible for:

Staff managed by postholder:

none

Person specification

Job Evaluation Code	
Knowledge	
Knowledge of Housing and Council Tax Benefits.	
Awareness of other Welfare Benefits	
Awareness of the need for confidentiality.	
Skills and Abilities	
Excellent Customer Service Skills to deal with customers on a face-to-face basis and over the telephone in accordance the corporate standard.	
Verbal skills to respond in an appropriate manner, face to face, and over the telephone or in the customers home to enquiries from the general public.	
Written skills to respond to complex enquires from the customer and outside agencies.	
Numeracy skills to assess Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Working Tax Credit using an on line system.	
Ability to respond effectively to difficult interviews e.g. tactfully dealing with customers emotionally upset, defining situation when dealing with violent/abusive customers.	
Key board skills for data input and retrieval and for sending and receiving e mails.	
Organisational skills to prioritise own workloads.	
Experience	
Previous experience of dealing with the public in a service delivery environment.	
Previous experience of working as part of a team.	

Qualifications
Numeracy and literacy skills
Special Requirements
<p>This post is exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. A Criminal Record Disclosure will be required prior to appointment.</p> <p>Registration to the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) Employee Authentication System (if required). This will involve the completion of a character declaration and confidentiality agreement.</p> <p>A declaration of interest form will be required to be completed annually</p>

Date Created	January 2018	Date Reviewed	March 2021
---------------------	--------------	----------------------	------------