

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council

Role Profile

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| Role Title: | Benefit Officer |
| Job Family: | Technical |
| Service: | Revenues and Benefits |
| Location: | Town Hall |
| Reporting To: | Benefits Team Leader |

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| Role Purpose: <i>Why the role exists and its contribution</i> | <p>To provide effective service delivery of all of the functions of the council's Benefit service.</p> <p>As a member of the council's team, contribute to the achievement of the Council's corporate vision, behaviours and priorities and the development of the Council's positive high performing culture.</p> |
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Main Duties and accountabilities

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| Service Specific | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constantly reviews procedures and keeps up to date with changes to relevant benefit legislation. • Assesses entitlement to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support in line with regulations and local practices. • Provides statements of reasons, reconsiderations and drafts appeal submissions. • Communicates with customers in a concise and clear manner both verbally and in writing. • Classifies overpayments and instigates housing benefit recovery action where appropriate. • Makes appropriate referral of cases to others within the section such as complex issues to the Benefit Team Leader. • Identifies suitable cases for take-up of Discretionary Housing Payments and the Discretionary Hardship fund and processes the applications in a timely manner. • Identifies potentially fraudulent claims and makes referrals to SFIS. • Signposts customers to the correct department or agency that can assist with their needs, for example the Citizens' Advice Bureau, the local Foodbank. |
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| Generic Duties | <p>Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieves individual targets and objectives to support the delivery of service plans. • Provides work statistics to section timescales. • Maintains a good knowledge of service in order to give correct advice to customers. • Deals with enquiries regarding service related matters. • Ensures an efficient service is given whilst being polite, courteous and understanding. • Complies with the Council's complaints procedure. <p>Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adheres to service related processes and manages workload to deliver services. • Constantly review procedures to ensure efficient working. • Keeps abreast of changes to service related legislation. • Assists in the achievement of any annual Performance Indicators targets / service delivery plan and contributes effectively to My Performance Conversations. <p>One Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates in a clear and concise manner. • Liaises with other services across the Council. • Liaises with outside bodies where necessary. • Contributes to effective teamwork. |
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| The key decision making areas in the role |
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| <p>Determines benefit and support entitlement, ensuring accurate and timely awards are made in order to assist residents in financial need and avoiding subsidy losses.</p> <p>Correctly classifies overpayments of benefit/support.</p> <p>Makes appropriate referrals of cases to Benefit Team Leader, and / or specialist section officer(s).</p> |

Is available for phone calls and enquiries in person throughout the working day whilst still assessing benefit and support entitlement.

Organises own workload and priorities to meet targets.

Manages high volumes of personal and sensitive data.

Customers and contacts

Contact with Benefit and Support claimants including difficult customers, being appreciative of their needs and paying particular heed to vulnerabilities, disadvantages and the wide-ranging detrimental effects of financial need.

Contact with external bodies such as Housing Associations and Citizens' Advice Bureau.

Knowledge of other service areas within the Council/Authority such as customer services and Housing.

| Dimensions of the role | |
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| Financial | Non-financial |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awards of Housing Benefit entitlements of approximately £15m per annum.• Awards of Council Tax Supports of over £1.5m per annum.• Accuracy of awards of benefit and support to ensure correct subsidy is claimed and to satisfy audit requirements.• Awards of Discretionary Housing Payments of between £100K to £150K per annum. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Part of a team responsible for assessing 2000 Housing Benefit claims and 1000 Council Tax Support claims per annum.• Part of a team that issues approx. 10,000 decision notices each year.• Ensuring that all vulnerable and financially disadvantaged customers receive everything they are entitled to and signposting them to further sources of assistance.• Checking work of other team members. |

Person Specification

| Qualifications and Training | Essential (E) or Desirable (D) | Application | Interview/ Assessment |
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| Knowledge and Experience | | | |
| Recent experience of working in a Housing Benefit section | E | X | X |
| Experience of assessing Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claims and change of circumstances within the last 12 months | E | X | X |
| Experience of dealing with members of the public face to face and on the telephone | E | X | X |
| Sound working knowledge of Housing Benefit Regulations | E | | X |
| Sound working knowledge of a Council Tax Support scheme | E | | X |
| Working knowledge of a benefits/support software system, preferably Academy | E | X | X |
| Working knowledge of a document management system | E | X | |
| Skills | | | |
| Effective communication skills - both written and oral | E | X | X |
| Good inter-personal skills | E | | X |
| Good team player | E | X | X |
| Ability to organise own workload | E | X | X |
| Flexible approach to work and able vary approach to accommodate changing demands and priorities | E | X | X |
| Additional Requirements | | | |
| Satisfactory Baseline Personnel Security Standard check | E | | X |