

Role Title	Benefits Team Manager
Job Family	Finance and Governance
Competency Level	Principal Officer/Manager
Pay Range / Scale	PO4
Purpose To develop and operationally manage teams within Benefits, Corporate Debt Recovery and Adult Social Care Financial Assessments, ensuring service delivery meets all Council and legislative requirements, policies, procedures and relevant case law. To ensure quality, timeliness, and value for money at all times. The role will be working in the following area: • Benefits Processing • Housing Benefit Overpayments • Discretionary Schemes • Corporate Debt Recovery • Adult Social Care Financial Assessments	
Generic Accountabilities	End Result/Outcomes
Plan and organise work to ensure the delivery of those aspects of the service for which responsible.	Lead, manage and motivate the team Work is effectively delegated, prioritised and resources allocated appropriately to maintain targets. All relevant legislation, policies and procedures are implemented and complied with. Corporate strategies are effectively implemented within area of responsibility. Service delivers excellent customer service and is responsive to and focused on changing customer needs and demand. Changes to priorities are accommodated. Service is delivered to organisational requirements and reflects customer and stakeholder requirements, within organisational constraints. Professional and legal compliance is assured.
Undertake / support consultation procedures. Identify issues, resolving as appropriate and escalating complex problems if necessary.	Activities are undertaken according to relevant guidelines / regulations / procedures. Customer / stakeholder views are available to inform recommendations. Data and measurements are accurately recorded.

Collate process and analyse complex information. Ensure all required records and information are maintained correctly.	Information / applications are processed according to procedure, policy, and legislation. Information is managed efficiently and accurately. Data is recorded and stored in compliance with relevant legislation and national standards and can be shared, as appropriate, with other agencies.
Prepare and present results / responses / reports / recommendations.	Reports are prepared, distributed / presented as appropriate / to the required standards and timescales. Evidence based recommendations are made. Accurate, complete, and relevant information / reports are provided for internal and/or external use. Issues are clearly summarised; progress and implications are reported. The council's position is clearly stated.
Provide authoritative advice, guidance and support to colleagues, customers, and stakeholders. Respond to and investigate enquiries / escalated complaints.	Expert advice, information, interpretation, and support are provided on the full range of technical / professional issues within the area of responsibility. Problems are identified and improvement opportunities are identified and recommended; any agreed improvements are developed, delivered, and evaluated. Issues are managed through to a satisfactory conclusion or escalated if appropriate. Risk to the Council / customers is minimised.
Contribute to identifying and delivering information / activities to support service delivery / promote the service area .	Requirements are effectively identified. All materials / activities are delivered to the required standards and timescales. Information / activities achieve desired results.
Challenge customers' practice and minimise risk, referring concerns to line manager.	Customer risks are assessed, and mitigation identified and controlled Relevant health, safety and welfare requirements are met.

Work closely with others to clarify changing requirements. Identify, recommend and support the development and delivery of improvements. Contribute to the development and implementation of policies, procedures, and systems.	Identifies gaps in service provision/highlight policy issues and makes recommendations to senior managers on how to resolve the issues. Agreed improvements are developed, delivered, and evaluated. Service benchmarked against other authorities and organisations to identify and learn from best practice. Changes are effectively communicated to others.
Lead projects or improvement programmes or contribute to the delivery of larger projects	Practical, effective solutions are developed and delivered in accordance with legislative requirements and good practice guidelines and address any relevant environmental / conservation / technical / design issues. Projects are delivered to agreed specification, timescales, and budgets. Change initiatives are successfully integrated and implemented across all impacted service areas. All project documentation and reports are completed correctly.
Support others in their development, including external organisations / customers where appropriate.	Responsible for team development and self-development to ensure service requirements are met. Training/communication and support plans in place Identify any changes that may impact the service / profession. Contribute to the development of others (e.g. through sharing knowledge and skills, acting as a coach or mentor, or providing feedback).
Develop good working relationships and communicate effectively with internal / external organisations / partners and stakeholders. Represent specialist area internally and / or externally. Model, demonstrate and promote good practice relevant to the role.	Relevant work area reputation is maintained or enhanced. Stakeholders are engaged with activity relevant to them. Positive feedback is received from stakeholders. Communications are clear, well planned, and effective. Best practice is shared and promoted.

Support partnership agreements and partnership working within area of responsibility.	Activities which support partnership working are effectively delivered. Partnership working groups produce valid and timely outputs.
Contribute to service / business plans for area of responsibility and to wider service planning and development activities. Contribute to budget planning as required.	Service / Strategic and operational input is provided to wider business planning and development. Business plans reflect input.
Quality check documents, decisions and / or presentations before delivery	Regular checks completed on output to ensure ongoing accuracy of decisions and that all work meets the required standards. Customers receive prompt, accurate policy / procedural updates. Service standards are improved.
Act in accordance with all policies and procedures which apply to the job and understand the reasons for this.	All policies and procedures are implemented and complied with.
Job Specific Accountabilities	
Manage, develop, and appropriately deploy different and emerging digital and technological solutions to build resilience and achieve results	Appropriate use of text and email messaging for customer contact Development of digital, automated, robotic, chatbots and other solutions to complement service delivery and maximise available resource Flexible and effective deployment of the digital workforce across the service Changes to systems, policies and / or procedures are identified, implemented and where appropriate recommended.
Procure and monitor Contracts and Service Level Agreements as required ensuring remedial action is taken in the case of noncompliance.	External contracts monitored and managed to ensure accuracy, effectiveness, and value for money. Service level agreements are reviewed and monitored, and any performance errors/issues

	reported and managed
Lead and, where required, test, implement and monitor service specific systems, policies, and procedures within area of responsibility.	Changes to systems, policies and / or procedures are identified and recommended. System upgrades, amendments and developments are managed, appropriately user tested and approved prior to delivery. System bugs/integrities are identified and reported and workarounds implemented New operational policies and procedures are written, and existing ones reviewed and updated annually. Policies and procedures are risk assessed and regularly reviewed particularly those related to staff safety Procedures in place to detect and prevent internal and external fraud
Manage internal and external audit and reviews of the service	Resource, systems access, and accommodation requirements planned and organised to facilitate audits and service reviews. Workbooks and audit checks undertaken as required Reporting and learning from audits used to improve accuracy and service delivery Remedial action is taken where weakness in service delivery is identified.
Fully utilise the Document Management and other workflow systems such as PMQA to maximise work output and achieve service targets	Process maps and document types developed Standard letter and email templates created, reviewed and updated Individual and team output from PMQA and accuracy checking, including qualitative and quantitative data monitored and used to improve performance Concurrency and process rules established for all

	processes Comino workflow monitored and analysed with new document types and processes introduced Indexing errors and training needs identified and action taken to redress indexing automated where possible.
Prompt and accurate assessment and awards of: Housing Benefit Council Tax Support Discretionary Housing Payments Discretionary Council Tax awards Any other discretionary schemes including those introduced under LWA provisions.	New claims and reported changes processing times monitored closely and corrective action taken if necessary, to achieve or exceed target. Resources managed appropriately to achieve results Risk approach taken to payment of benefit Fraud at the gateway identified and appropriate action taken Regular claim reviews undertaken to identify unreported changes Output from annual billing checked for accuracy Systems and reconciliation issues identified and addressed. Revision requests identified and responded to in a timely manner.
Minimise losses to the Council's benefits subsidy	Accuracy checking undertaken on assessments to ensure correct awards are made to those entitled. Local authority error overpayments managed and minimised Regular accuracy checks undertaken on areas most at risk of overpayments or incorrect assessments.
Government changes to Welfare Benefits, Council Tax Support and Universal Credit managed and implemented	Decision makers understand the impact of change both in relation to the performance of their duties and the rights and responsibilities of customers. Service delivery meets legislative and policy requirements Discretionary Housing Payment and Discretionary Council Tax Hardship awards made where merited.
Rigorous recovery of outstanding Housing Benefit overpayments to increase income collection and reduce bad debt provision	Overpayments invoiced at the earliest possibility and including correct notification to the right recovery target(s).

	Underlying Entitlement calculated and 'blameless tenants' recovery from landlord used where applicable Payment arrangements regularly reviewed Full range of enforcement activities undertaken to recover outstanding debts, including court action, enforcement agents, tracing services, bankruptcy, charging orders, orders of sale, attachment from earnings or benefits etc. Debts are only written off where appropriate.
Manage and oversee Corporate Debt Recovery and Adult Social Care Financial Assessment services	Recovery activity is undertaken in accordance with Council policies, legislation and best practice. Debt recovery performance is actively monitored, with appropriate interventions implemented to maximise income collection and minimise bad debt. Adult Social Care financial assessments and reviews are completed accurately and within agreed timescales. Client contributions are calculated in accordance with the Care Act 2014, Charging Regulations and associated statutory guidance. Income due to the Council is billed and collected promptly. Service risks, backlogs and performance issues are identified and addressed through effective management oversight. Positive working relationships are maintained with Adult Social Care, Legal Services, Finance and external recovery partners.

Nature of Contacts

Typically involves Heads of Service and Senior Managers across the authority, and external agencies and organisations providing advice.

Work directly with colleagues internal and external, other providers and external agencies to gather and exchange information and co-ordinate actions.

Develop sensitivity, persuasiveness, and negotiation and assertiveness skills to communicate with diverse audiences in emotive circumstances. Deal with people at all levels confidently, sensitively, and diplomatically.

Provide specialist advice, guidance, and support on issues within area of responsibility;

develop and maintain joint working and promote the Council position.

Consult with stakeholders to identify requirements. Communicate changes in policy and working practice to contacts.

Procedural Context

Work within a policy framework and regulatory guidelines, applying knowledge of systems, procedures, and best practice. Work to broad managerial direction, within a policy framework and regulatory guidelines, to ensure performance standards are met within a framework of policy and legislation and Caselaw.

Plans own time and co-ordinates the work of others. Plan, organise and deliver interventions and actions. Responsible for professional advice, assessments, or referrals.

Exercise professional judgement in assessing stakeholder requirements, potential risk, and quality assurance of service. Monitor and evaluate performance / service delivery, ensuring all parties are informed of progress / issues as required. Thinking creatively to ensure high performance in the service.

Provide support to the team, customers, colleagues, and other stakeholders through applying knowledge of systems, procedures, and best practice.

Responsible for meeting performance standards within a policy framework and regulatory guidelines. Accountable for proper use and security of information, resources, equipment and/or facilities within area of responsibility.

Use initiative to deal with complex issues and respond appropriately in an unpredictable work environment. May involve isolated working outside core hours.

Act in accordance with statutory requirements, case law and local policies and procedures.

Act within guidelines and standard procedures and allocate work to meet service delivery requirements.

Deal with day to day problems without always referring to others.

Create and improve internal work procedures.

Reports to: the relevant Head of Service for Benefits

Occasionally the post will be expected to work from other locations

Key Facts and Figures

Resourcing

Budget Responsibilities: **none**

Supervisory Responsibilities: up to 15 officers

Knowledge, Skills and Experience

Knowledge of Benefits, Corporate Debt Recovery and Adult Social Care Financial Assessments

- Housing and Council Tax Benefits/Support legislation, understanding of Housing Benefit overpayment legislation including recovery options and processes as well as having a working knowledge of other welfare benefits
- Free School Meals and Discretionary Housing Payment and an understanding of Discretionary Council Tax Hardship or Section 13A legislation
- A document management system and a core processing system used for Benefits
- Housing Benefit and sundry debt recovery processes.
- Debt recovery legislation and enforcement remedies.
- Care Act 2014 charging provisions and Adult Social Care financial assessment processes.
- Income collection, debt management and financial control principles.

Specific Experience:

- Significant experience managing Benefits, Debt Recovery or Financial Assessment services, including responsibility for performance management, income collection, decision making and customer service delivery.
- Interpreting Housing and Council Tax Support legislation and conveying this to others in a clear and concise manner
- Using a computerised Benefits calculation system and analysing complex information and resolving problems
- Experience of managing operational teams responsible for debt recovery, financial assessments, income collection or welfare benefit administration.

Experience other:

- Proven experience of leading and managing a team and exceptional people management skills.
- Presenting written and verbal communication in a clear, concise, and accurate manner
- Use of IT in an office environment (i.e. PC's, MS Office, Word, Excel etc.)

- prioritising workloads
- Dealing with difficult or irate customers face-to-face and /or on the phone

Ability to:

- Be a team player and to work collaboratively with others.
- Ability to work flexibly, balancing competing priorities and meeting deadlines whilst understanding the needs, timescales, and deadlines of others
- Work using own initiative and problem-solving skills to provide a customer focused service.
- Initiate and change working practices to increase performance
- Quickly assimilate and interpret complex legislation
- Identify training needs and create training plans as part of the performance management scheme.
- Carry out performance and absence monitoring and to deal with any issues arising in accordance with Council policy
- Produce, collate, and analyse statistical information as required
- Motivate, empower, and encourage a team to meet strategic and service objectives

Degree or equivalent or vocational qualification in relevant subject or area

Evidence of Continuous Professional Development

The above profile is intended to describe the general nature and level of work performed by employees in this role. It is not intended to be a detailed list of all duties and responsibilities which may be required. This role profile will be supplemented and further defined by annual objectives, which will be developed in conjunction with the post holder. It will be subject to regular review and the Council reserves the right to amend or add to the accountabilities listed