

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

JOB DESCRIPTION

Designation: Benefit Service Manager Grade: PO6

Reports to Revenue and Benefits SGM Grade: SMG
(Designation):

Directorate: Resident and Business Services Section: Revenue and Benefits

Main Purpose of the job:

To manage the day-to-day operation and performance of a team responsible for the administration of Housing benefit, Council Tax Reduction, the Single Support Grant scheme, discretionary housing payments and any other associated discretionary awards.

To deliver services and outcomes in line with relevant legislation, corporate objectives, agreed performance standards and in-line with budgets;

To maintain and develop standards and processes and to ensure the Service Group Manager – Revenues and Benefits (SMG) is informed of all activities and plans.

To review current procedures and exploit emerging technology to improve service delivery and performance;

To ensure services to customers are delivered to the highest possible standards;

To support the processing teams in achieving and maintaining top quartile performance in all categories of benefits administration including Housing benefit, Council Tax Reduction, the Single Support Grant scheme, discretionary housing payments and any other associated discretionary awards.

To develop a comprehensive regime for managing individual performance in terms of accuracy and throughput and to implement targeted interventions and staff training based on analysis of the data having been gathered;

To plan and implement changes in legislation or regulations to maintain efficiency while minimising service disruption;

To deputise for the Revenue and Benefits SGM and undertake any other duties as required.

Summary of Responsibilities and Personal Duties:

MANAGEMENT ROLES & EXPECTATIONS

1. Review and amend services to ensure they meet changing community and customer needs.
2. Monitor and review service outcomes ensuring effective delivery of personal, service, team and individual objectives.
3. Ensure the continuous improvement in services using creative and informative inventions as well as effective performance and quality management.
4. Plan, deploy and co-ordinate people resources to meet changing operational needs.
5. Ensure services meet statutory and identified organisational standards and regulations.

6. To manage work in accordance with legislation and agreed service standards.
7. To ensure qualitative and quantitative performance standards and targets are in place that meet local and national expectations, highlight staff training needs and support improvements. To ensure performance against standards and targets is monitored, and that action is taken in line with the Council's capability procedures where appropriate.
8. To resolve all cases of failures in standards and processes, putting action plans in place to prevent recurrence.
9. To create reports providing assurance that performance is maintained and improved and to be proactive in identifying issues that may necessitate a review of policy and process and work with other managers internally and externally to develop solutions.
10. To ensure learning from appeals, reviews and complaints is utilised to improve accuracy and communication to customers in order to reduce failure demand.
11. To ensure that team and individual performance plans support the departmental aim of achieving and maintaining top quartile performance on cost, quality, timeliness, and best practice.
12. To ensure that services are delivered as cost-effectively as possible with financial incentives maximised and losses either eradicated or minimised.
13. To manage and monitor Discretionary Housing Payment budget.
14. To manage staff in dealing with homelessness prevention having a general overview of Housing Legislation, providing budgeting advice and working with various organisations around employability.
15. To represent the Council at Court, internal reviews and Appeal Tribunals as required.
16. To ensure effective liaison with other departments within the Council and external organisations, including but not limited to the JC+, Housing Associations, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), HMRC, London Councils, HBINFO, Lewisham Homes and Advice Lewisham (CAB) and other 3rd sector organisations, CAB, and our Education department.
17. To attend internal and external meetings, training sessions and conferences as required.
18. To deliver presentations and briefings relating to Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction and other associated issues to external partners and stakeholders as required.
19. To ensure that robust systems and plans are in place to maintain services in the event of system failure, disaster, or emergency.
20. To work alongside auditors conducting internal and external reviews, maintaining a good working relationship and ensuring that all necessary checking is completed and validated. To ensure that agreed recommendations are implemented to mitigate any risks identified in the audits.
21. To ensure that the benefit subsidy claim is both accurate and maximised through regular monitoring of system reports and the associated claims transactions, arranging for amendments or corrections to be made where appropriate.
22. To assist with the preparation, maintenance and monitoring of the service's budgets.
23. To manage and monitor the quality of outputs and customer outcomes for each team and individual utilising data supplied by the relevant systems.

24. To set stretching targets for team and individuals. To address capability issues immediately and in line with Council procedures.
25. To improve performance by understanding the team dynamics, utilising the strengths of individuals, addressing weaknesses and changing working practices to achieve individual, team and departmental aims and objectives.
26. To maintain continuous self-development by taking advantage of all relevant learning opportunities, both internally and externally.
27. To ensure all team members actively contribute towards providing a service that values equality and diversity, and is inclusive and accessible to all members of the community.
28. To maintain a personal awareness of developments in benefits and social care of Government policies and guidelines. To keep abreast of relevant court judgements and to apply these where relevant.
29. To actively participate as a member of the service management team and to ensure that the work of the service complements the work of the other Council services.
30. Plan and manage Projects as required by SMG Revenues and benefits.
31. To work outside normal hours on occasion, as required by the service (e.g. supervising overtime, attending evening meetings etc).
32. To conduct and assist in grievance handling, disciplinary processes and absence management procedures.
33. To create an environment for ideas and innovations to be explored and working practices to be challenged, in addition to, promoting a teamwork ethic and supporting staff to meet their full potential.
34. To take part in recruitment processes as required.
35. Be aware of and responsible for the Health and Safety of staff.
36. To assist with the configuration and maintenance of ICT within the section, in order to maximise departmental and individual efficiency.
37. To maintain an in depth knowledge of the benefit processing, document management and associated systems.
38. To lead on systems development and issues. Where there are issues, to either resolve in-house or liaise with internal and external providers to ensure that a resolution is found and implemented to overcome the issues.
39. To manage the extraction and analysis, of all system output and to implement corrective action where required. To make recommendations, where appropriate, for prevention through training and other activity, in order to improve quality and reduce error.
40. To provide accurate, relevant, and timely management information and produce, collate and maintain statistical information, as required.
41. To ensure the service is developed further through the effective application of emerging technology.
42. To maintain an excellent understanding of customer focus principles and concepts, along with an awareness of the latest technical developments.

- 43. To ensure the team provides a high standard of service and inclusion with a commitment to customer care and equal opportunities policies.
- 44. To utilise relevant customer data to support process improvements and outcomes for customers and drive down unit costs.
- 45. To take responsibility for the end-to-end customer journey, resolving escalated queries effectively by working with staff and managers.
- 46. To ensure that services are delivered in accordance with the principles of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Internal Contacts: These include Revenues, Customer Services Centre, Lewisham Homes, Housing Needs, Adult Social Care, Children and Young People and the Education department

External Contacts: This will include JobCentre+, Housing Associations, The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), HMRC, London Councils, HBINFO and CiPFA

Undertake other duties, commensurate with the grade, as may reasonably be required.

Number of fully managed staff:

Title: Benefit Delivery Managers	Grade PO4	No of posts 2
----------------------------------	-----------	---------------

Title: Revenue and Benefit Quality Manager	Grade PO2	No of posts 1
--	-----------	---------------

Number of partially managed staff:

Title: Benefit Assessment Officers	Grade SO1	No of posts up to 31.5
------------------------------------	-----------	------------------------

PERSON SPECIFICATION

JOB TITLE: Benefit Service Manager

POST NO:

DEPARTMENT: Benefits

GRADE: PO5

Note to Candidates

The Person Specification is a picture of the skills, knowledge and experience needed to carry out the job. It has been used to draw up the advert and will also be used in the shortlisting and interview process for this post.

Those categories marked 'S' will be used especially for the purpose of shortlisting.

Please ensure that Equality and Diversity issues are addressed specifically in relation to the role for which you are applying when addressing the requirements of this person specification where appropriate.

If you are a disabled person, but are unable to meet some of the job requirements specifically because of your disability, please address this in your application. If you meet all the other criteria you will be shortlisted and we will explore jointly with you if there are ways in which the job can be changed to enable you to meet the requirements.

Equality & Diversity

Awareness of and a commitment to Equality of Access and Opportunity in a diverse community	S
Understanding of how equality and diversity relates to this post	S
An understanding of and commitment to implement the council's Equal Opportunities Policies.	S
A commitment to managing the delivery of responsive services that meet customer's needs.	S
An understanding of and commitment to customer care.	S

Knowledge

Excellent knowledge of all legislation and issues relating to the administration of benefits and benefit subsidy	S
Excellent knowledge of computerised benefit and workflow systems	S
Knowledge of Appeal procedures	S

Aptitude

To interpret and efficiently implement new legislation, policies and procedures
To work accurately under pressure and to tight deadlines
To plan and program work to ensure that Service Plan objectives are met
To plan and implement change
To support and have input into operational decisions in line with current and new policies and legislation
To ensure services exploit emerging technology to improve quality and performance

Skills

Excellent written communication skills enabling the production of Committee reports and other reports for senior management.	S
Excellent verbal communication skills including the ability to make presentations, chair meetings and liaise with external bodies.	S
Excellent time management skills.	S
Excellent administrative and organisational skills	S

Experience

Experience of managing and motivating a large team of staff in a benefits or similar environment at a senior level.	S
Experience of monitoring budgets and maintaining services within budget	
Experience of interpreting complex new legislation and implementing changes	S
Experience of setting and monitoring targets and analysing data for the purpose of providing management reports and monitoring staff performance	S
Experience of managing conflicting priorities	
Experience of dealing with challenging customers	S
Experience of leading, motivating and developing staff	S

General Education

Sufficient to enable the preparation of statistical information, interpret complex legislation, write reports and present information.

Personal Qualities

Flexible
Assertive
Strong leadership
Self-motivated

Decisive
Customer focussed
Positive attitude towards change
Able to work under pressure and own initiative
A commitment to providing a high quality service

Circumstances

Able to work evenings and weekends when required by the duties of the post.
Able to work to a range of shift patterns and to manage the benefit service on a rotational basis as required
Must comply with the Customer Service's dress-code

DBS Disclosure Required? **No** **Basic** **Enhanced**

(Tick as appropriate – guidance available from your HR Advisor)

Physical

Generally candidates must meet the standard Lewisham requirements for the post