

Role Profile

Job Title:	Benefits Subsidy and Policy Manager	Grade:	Spinal column point range:
Department:	Benefits	Post no:	
Directorate:	Customer and Transactional Services	Location:	

Role reports to:	Head of Financial Assessments
Direct Reports:	12-18 Officers
Indirect Reports:	none

This role profile is non-contractual and provided for guidance. It will be updated and amended from time to time in accordance with the changing needs of the council and the requirements of the job.

JOB DESCRIPTION

PURPOSE OF ROLE:

1. To support the Head of Service in securing the continuous development, improvement, efficiency and success of the Service and the Council as a whole through effective planning, subsidy management, staff management and governance.
2. To undertake lead responsibility for the Council's statutory subsidy reporting requirements and to monitor and proactively manage expenditure, and safeguard and maximise subsidy on Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support and discretionary funds, identify and manage risks associated with this and proactively develop policies and procedures that support subsidy optimisation, and ensure compliance with new and existing legislation.
3. To ensure that customer, audit and financial outcomes drive the development of Benefits policy and procedure, and to take a lead responsibility for Quality Assurance of service delivery proactively utilising appropriate learning & development action to develop a resilient, highly motivated and empowered workforce able to adapt to new challenges and services, remaining focused on delivering high standards to Ealing residents.
4. To lead and manage a team of officers, driving change to deliver high performance and efficiency savings; taking innovative approaches to the identification and implementation of improved IT systems, polices, processes,

procedures and training, whilst ensuring areas of risk are controlled and managed.

5. Work flexibly and in collaboration with colleagues across the Management Team to achieve the objectives of the Council. In particular, work closely with the Service Managers to deliver a seamless and cohesive service regardless of access channel, and to provide management cover for these posts on a planned and ad hoc basis as required
6. To manage all aspects of Appeals and Revisions ensuring their outcomes are analysed and the feedback is used to strengthen quality of decisions, policies and training.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES:

1. Make a positive contribution to the delivery of the service, this will include working flexibly and positively to achieve the objectives of the council.
2. Manage and lead staff to achieve high performance and effective operational delivery, including developing and improving staff capability.
3. Manage a customer focused team and the effective use of resources in line with corporate policies.
4. Manage all aspects of Revisions and Appeals for Housing Benefits, Council Tax Support and Discretionary Housing Payments ensuring reasons and outcomes are monitored and the feedback is used to strengthen policies, procedures and training within the service.
5. As a member of the Management Team, work collaboratively and make a proactive contribution. This will include working flexibly and positively to achieve the objectives of the Council. To provide management cover for peers and to deputise for the Head of Financial Assessments when required.
6. Lead responsibility for liaising with internal and external auditors, ensuring audit activities are managed, facilitated and coordinated effectively. Take a lead role in monitoring and forecasting Benefits income and expenditure and associated subsidy implications. Manage the overall subsidy claiming process so as to maximise subsidy income and minimise financial risk, liaising with External Audit and corporate and Benefits accountants to verify subsidy claims and estimates.
7. Continually review, develop and improve systems, processes and services. Look for and initiate improvements in economy, efficiency, effectiveness and quality of service from a customer perspective and optimise effective use of technology and system integration to enhance service delivery.
8. Seek and develop opportunities for joint initiatives with other service areas, external partners and local authorities in order to achieve shared objectives, deliver savings and generate income.

9. Ensure there are effective processes and management information systems in place to monitor and review the overall performance of the Service, based on key customer, financial and operational outcomes and for completing Government returns. This includes developing, producing and analysing performance and other data for managers and relevant Council Committees.
10. Evaluate the impact and requirements of new legislation or Council policies and develop policies and procedures in response to these, identifying options and solutions for implementation and initiating appropriate changes in office procedures, computer systems and training as required. To ensure that Benefits policies and procedures are underpinned by sound understanding of subsidy implications and linked clearly to customer outcomes and overall service objectives.
11. Be responsible for accurate and timely responses to requests for Freedom of Information and Subject Access Request, ensuring that the Council's interests with regard to information governance and data protection are fully complied with.
12. To develop a resilient, highly motivated and empowered workforce in the team able to adapt to new challenges and services, remaining focused on delivering high standards to Ealing residents.
13. Ensure that there is an effective training and development programme for the service, supported by guidance manuals, written procedures and robust evaluation of the impact of learning and development interventions.
14. To oversee the creation of training materials and provide training and seminars on policy, procedures and the use of IT systems to staff, other council departments and external groups when necessary.
15. Ensure that the Service has effective and robust quality assurance arrangements in place to achieve the highest standards of accuracy and customer, financial and service outcomes, and which take account of key service risks such as subsidy and compliance with legislation. Act on the outcomes of quality assurance and audit findings to ensure that effective corrective action and learning and development is undertaken and the root cause of failure is addressed.
16. To ensure the completion of regular complaints analysis and reporting findings to the Head of Service and other Service Managers. Develop and undertake remedial plans when necessary to improve customer satisfaction.
17. Working with other Service Managers, share responsibility for the development of initiatives and mitigation of impact of welfare reform to ensure responses are integrated with Benefits and Customer Services administration. To provide ongoing monitoring and analysis of Welfare reform impacts and mitigation.
18. Be responsible for review and development of Ealing's Local Council Tax Support Scheme.

19. Assist and advise the Head of Service in the formulation, planning and development of strategies, policies and procedures. Ensuring that all activities and correspondence comply with legislative regulations, reporting requirements, and the changing agenda for the service.
20. Maintain an up to date detailed knowledge of Benefits computer systems, assist in identifying faults and omissions, specifying enhancements and take lead responsibility for ensuring that new developments are tested adequately before being implemented.
21. Be responsible for the creation and development and provision of information and publicity for the service.
22. Support effective working relationships with relevant stakeholders and act as an ambassador and advocate with external organisations.
23. Keep up to date with developments in service delivery and best practice to ensure the service performs effectively and to the highest standards.
24. To represent Benefits Service and the Council at meetings, high level steering groups, Court, Tribunals and to stakeholders, customers and senior representatives of other organisations. To produce succinct and structured written communication, conveying clear messages concerning complex matters to these and a range of other audiences.
25. Carry out duties with due regard to the council's customer care, equal opportunities, information governance, data protection and health and safety policies and procedures.
26. To carry out any other such duties consistent with the role as determined from time to time with a high degree of flexibility as required to deliver the services standards and targets set in response to customer and organisational needs.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- Maximisation of benefits subsidy income and reduction of risks
- Development and delivery of effective policies and procedures including Council Tax Support scheme
- Development and implementation of quality assurance processes and procedures to ensure quality of assessments and to reduction of errors
- Analysis of risk assessments completed together with recommendations for remedial actions including training
- Service compliance with legislation and reporting requirements to set deadlines
- Training packages developed and delivered to high standards and set deadlines
- Service correspondence and information devised and reviewed periodically in line with requirements and changing legislation, policies and procedures

KEY RELATIONSHIPS (INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL):

Internally: Up to and including Service Director level with other sections within the Chief Executives Group

Externally: DWP, Job Centre Plus, District Values, HMRC, Law Centres, CAB, Solicitors, Accountants and other professional advisers, Housing Associations, Voluntary and Community Sector Organisations, Landlords, other regulatory bodies,

AUTHORITY LEVEL (PEOPLE, POLICY, FINANCIAL):

- Responsibility for liaising with internal and external auditors, ensuring audit activities are managed, facilitated and coordinated effectively
- Monitoring and forecasting Benefits subsidy income and expenditure and associated subsidy implications.
- Development of systems, processes and services to ensure highest standards of accuracy and efficiency of the service.
- Creation of Benefits policies and procedures are underpinned by sound understanding of subsidy implications and linked clearly to customer outcomes and overall service objectives.

Person Specification

ESSENTIAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & ABILITIES:

*** Key criteria – applicants need only address points with * please give examples.**

1. * Detailed knowledge of the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support schemes, including subsidy legislation
2. Broad knowledge of other related legislation, including other Welfare Benefits, Council Tax and Housing
3. * Knowledge of the current local government and welfare reform agendas and the ability to implement related initiatives for service development
4. * Understanding of requirements of Housing Benefit Subsidy Claims and understanding of their relationship to local authority budgets
5. * Experience of interpreting complex legislation requiring the application of discretion or judgement, developing policy and procedures and understanding their impact on customers, systems and other service areas
6. * IT literate with knowledge and experience of benefits software packages and Windows-based applications particularly use of spreadsheets and databases for detailed and complex data analysis
7. Excellent leadership and management skills
8. * Effectively manage people, performance and budgets

9. * Strong, demonstrable critical awareness, analytical and problem solving skills.
10. Excellent communication, influencing and negotiating skills; with a variety of audiences including senior management, operational staff, IT providers and senior representatives of other organisations
11. * Ability to understand and use management information and controls to deliver effective performance management and quality assurance
12. * Ability to develop policy and procedures understanding their impact on customers
13. Ability to effectively manage projects within timescales and budget
14. * Ability to respond effectively, quickly and flexibly to a continuously changing, complex and pressurised environment, to ensure that key decisions are made and challenging deadlines are met
15. * Ability to identify effective solutions to a variety of problems, to deliver continual improvements in service, and to initiate, drive and manage change
16. To demonstrate an ability to manage a wide range of issues, work collaboratively across boundaries and understand corporate and departmental implications of actions.
17. A dynamic, committed individual with the resilience and drive to cope with the demands and pressures of the post including the ability to cope effectively at times of crisis
18. A thorough understanding of and demonstrable commitment to the principles of Equal Opportunities and customer care
19. Ability to contribute to the longer term development of the service area

ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATION (S):

- N/A

Values & Behaviours

Improving lives for residents	Trustworthy	Collaborative	Innovative	Accountable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is passionate about making Ealing a better place • Can see and appreciate things from a resident point of view • Understands what people want and need • Encourages change to tackle underlying causes or issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does what they say they'll do on time • Is open and honest • Treats all people fairly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambitious and confident in leading partnerships • Offers to share knowledge and ideas • Challenges constructively and respectfully listens to feedback • Overcomes barriers to develop our outcomes for residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tries out ways to do things better, faster and for less cost • Brings in ideas from outside to improve performance • Takes calculated risks to improve outcomes • Learns from mistakes and failures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages all stakeholders to participate in decision making • Makes things happen • Acts on feedback to improve performance • Works to high standards