

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: Benefits Officer (Compliance)	POST NO:	RBE37F
DIRECTORATE: Resources	SECTION:	Benefits
GRADE: 6	CAR ALLOWANCE:	Essential
DBS CHECK: No	DBS LEVEL:	N/A

PURPOSE OF THE JOB:

Undertake proactive exercises to review Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support, including visiting claimants in their homes, to ensure that the correct level of benefit and/or discount is granted. To assess or reassess entitlement to Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support as appropriate.

DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE TO: Senior Benefit Officer

DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR: None

LIMITS OF AUTHORITY: See attached sheet.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

(a) Service responsibilities

1. To identify claims using local information, risk based reviews and data matching where the level of entitlement to Housing Benefit and/or a discount may have changed.
2. To carry out reviews into claims to ensure that the information held is correct and up to date, and to reassess entitlements where appropriate.
3. Undertake initial investigation into irregularities arising from a visit in connection with Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support applications and Council Tax discounts.
4. When appropriate, undertake visits to interview claimants in their home and ensure that they are receiving the correct level of Housing Benefit, Local Council Tax Support and Council Tax discount.
5. Undertake visits to the most vulnerable claimants as appropriate.
6. Amend, cancel and suspend benefit claims effectively to avoid overpayments of benefit.
7. Calculate entitlement to Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support, including students and the self-employed, in accordance with the current legislation and the Council's Local Council Tax Support policy.
8. Process referrals from the Pan Essex data matching initiative and ensure that referrals are investigated, claims and council tax discounts are reassessed and the data is correctly recorded for statistical purposes.
9. To have, develop and maintain a detailed knowledge of legislation, rules, regulations, case law and good practice relating to the processes for Housing Benefit, Local Council Tax Support and Local Taxation.
10. Maintain an up to date knowledge of other welfare benefits. Provide advice to claimants as appropriate.

11. Ensure that all claims for Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support are processed accurately and within targeted timescales.
12. To be responsible for the verification of claim details. To request further information as appropriate.
13. To have an understanding of tenancy types and tenancy issues with regard to housing Benefit entitlement. To make referrals to the Rent Service as appropriate.
14. Collect and keep up to date performance data to ensure that the full impact of compliance work can be monitored.
15. Take statements in relation to benefit applications as appropriate.
16. Understand the legislative effects on the benefit schemes and to be able to convey this to applicants.
17. Undertake enquiries concerning entitlements to other welfare benefits using the link with the DWP's Customer Information System.
18. Deal with personal, postal and telephone enquiries relating to Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support.
19. Have a good working knowledge of the Benefits IT systems.
20. Identify and take the necessary action with regard to overpayments of Benefit.
21. Maintain a fraud awareness and make referrals for further investigation where appropriate.
22. Perform general administrative tasks.
23. To be involved in the Division's aspirations for improvement by participating in working groups and by assisting in the formulation of procedure notes as directed by Management Grade staff.

(b) Corporate responsibilities:

1. Ensure that all information relating to benefit claims remains confidential and not disclosed to any unauthorised persons, paying particular attention to the Data Protection Act.
2. Liaise and work with other sections and services of the Authority, the Valuation Office, the Pension Service and the Department for Work and Pensions as necessary.
3. To observe all of the requirements of Safeguarding and to report any potential concerns in accordance with the Council's Safeguarding Policy.
4. Perform such other duties appropriate to the grade as directed by the Assistant Director of Resources - Benefits, Benefits Manager or the Benefit Compliance Manager.

(c) Management responsibilities:

None

(d) Responsibilities for Health and Safety:

Epping Forest District Council is committed to the provision of high quality health and safety standards. In order to achieve this all staff employed by the Council have the following specific responsibilities, which are consistent with the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974:

- To take reasonable care for the health and safety of yourself and of other persons who may be affected by what you do or fail to do.
- To co-operate with Epping Forest District Council in order to enable statutory requirements to be implemented
- Not to intentionally interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.

(e) Responsibilities for Finance:

Ensure that benefit subsidy is correctly claimed and that the financial loss to the state welfare benefit schemes and the Council is minimised through the prevention of benefit fraud and error and the initial investigation of irregularities in benefit claims.

POLITICALLY RESTRICTED POST: No

REHABILITATION OF OFFENDERS ACT 1974: Exempt

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Head of Service)

Signed: _____ Date: _____
(Post Holder)

PERSON SPECIFICATION

POST TITLE: Benefits Officer

POST NO: RBE37F

		ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	ASSESSMENT METHOD (AF/I/ST/P)
1.	Education, Training and Knowledge			
(a)	GCSE grade C Maths and English or equivalent or to be able to demonstrate equivalent aptitude.	E		AF/I
	A good standard of written English.	E		AF
	IRRV Benefit qualification.		D	AF
(b)	Ability to undertake Safeguarding basic awareness training within 3 months of appointment.	E		I
(c)	Up to date knowledge of Housing Benefit legislation.	E		AF/I
	Up to date knowledge of the EFDC policy for Local Council Tax Support.		D	AF/I
	Up to date knowledge of Council Tax exemptions and discounts.		D	AF/I
	Up to date knowledge of welfare benefits.	E		AF/I
(d)	Use of Academy/Advantage Benefits system.	E		I
	Use of information@Work Document Management System including the use of workflow.	E		I
2.	Experience			
(a)	Working within a Local Authority Benefits Section.	E		AF
	Assessment and payment of rent rebates and Local Council Tax Support.	E		AF
3.	What skills are required on appointment in order to carry out the job?			
(a)	<u>Oral Communication</u>			
	To be an effective communicator by telephone and in person.	E		I
	The ability to converse at ease with members of the public and provide advice in accurate spoken English.	E		I
(b)	<u>Written Communication</u>			
	Able to write and compose formal letters.	E		AF/I
	Able to write and compose reports related to the role.	E		AF/I

		ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	ASSESSMENT METHOD (AF/I/ST/P)
(c)	<u>IT Skills</u>			
	Experience of using information@work Document Management system		D	AF/I
	Experience of using the Academy Benefits system		D	AF/I
	Experience of using a Benefits system	E		AF/I
(d)	<u>General Skills</u>			
	Conscientious and methodical approach to work.	E		I
	Ability to respond positively to instructions.	E		I
	Ability to deal with a number of conflicting demands and priorities.	E		I
	Required to be adaptable and flexible to meet deadlines.	E		I
4.	Expected Values and Behaviours			
(a)	<u>Trust</u>			
	Maintain high ethical and professional standards when dealing with personal and confidential information.	E		I
(b)	<u>One Team</u>			
	Demonstrate the ability to work well in a team environment, supporting colleagues, responding positively to changing work priorities and practices.	E		I
(c)	<u>Performance</u>			
	Able to manage own time and prioritise work and activities in an organised manner to meet agreed standards and deadlines.	E		I
(d)	<u>Innovation</u>			
	Demonstrate a strong personal commitment to quality and cost effective public services.	E		I
	Able to give examples of where improved new ways of working have been sought or introduced.		D	I
(e)	<u>Customer</u>			
	Demonstrate a strong customer focus.	E		I
5.	What are the physical demands required to carry out the job?			

		ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	ASSESSMENT METHOD (AF/I/ST/P)
	Physically mobile and agile as the post can involve long periods of driving and undertaking visits in a variety of locations each day	E		AF/I
6.	Other Requirements:			
	Access to own vehicle for business use.	E		AF
	Full, clean driving licence.	E		AF
	A satisfactory attendance record in accordance with the Council's Managing Absence policy, taking account of your individual circumstances.	E		AF/I/R

Signed: _____
(Director)

Date: _____

- AF - Application Form
- I - Interview
- R - References

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL LIMITS OF AUTHORITY	
Post No: RBE37F	Post Title: Benefit Officer (Compliance)
Authority:	Comments:
<p>Spending Control Officer</p> <p>For budgets and expenditure codes attaching to the post as set out in the Council's budget document and subject to direction by the Head of Service.</p>	Not Applicable
<p>Authorised Signatory</p> <p>As set out in the schedule maintained by the Head of finance and updated from time to time by the Head of Service.</p>	Not Applicable
<p>Financial Regulations</p> <p>As required by Heads of Service or as directed by the Council.</p>	The Benefits Division is responsible for paying benefit in excess of £45m pa. The postholder must ensure that payments are correctly made, overpayments are correctly calculated and recovered wherever possible and fraud is prevented. Any failures can lead to a significant financial cost to the authority.
<p>Delegated Authorities</p> <p>As determined by the Head of Service in accordance with the schedule of delegated authorities in the Council's Constitution.</p>	Not Applicable
<p>Statutory Authorities</p> <p>As determined by the Head of Service and approved by Council specifically or as delegated.</p>	<p>The administration of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit is a statutory requirement for the Council. The payment of Local Council Tax Support is determined by a local policy approved by the Council. The postholder must adhere to the principal Acts and Regulations that govern the payment of these benefits which are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Security Act 1986 • Social Security Administration Act 1992 • Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 • Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 • Council Tax Benefit Regulations 2006 • Social Security Administration (Fraud) Act 1997 • Data Protection Acts 1984 and 1998 • EFDC Local Council Tax Support policy
<p>Signing of Correspondence</p> <p>As determined by the Head of Service in any relevant category of correspondence.</p>	Not Applicable
<p>Supervisory/Managerial</p> <p>As determined by the Head of Service.</p>	Not Applicable

