

Post Specification

Post Specification - Key Information

- **Post Title: Benefits Manager**
- **Date: January 2025**
- **Post Group Number: 8470**
- **Job Family: Regulation and Technical**
- **Job Family Role Profile: RT15**
- **Final Grade: 15**

To be read in conjunction with the job family role profile.

Service Area Description

The Revenues and Benefits service sits within the Resources Directorate, specifically within the Finance service, and is responsible for the professional, timely and accurate collection, recovery and enforcement of monies due, and for the administration of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support to our residents.

The Revenues and Benefits service is responsible for the following key functions:

- Council Tax
- Business Rates
- Debt Recovery
- Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support
- Housing Benefit overpayment recovery

Housing Benefit broadly consists of:

- Rent allowances – private rented dwellings
- Rent rebates – Council owned dwellings
- Supported accommodation
- Temporary accommodation
- Subsidy claims submitted to the Department of Works & Pensions
- Discretionary Housing Payments

Council Tax Reduction broadly consists of:

- The provision of, and administration of local support in compliance with the Westmorland and Furness Council Tax Reduction scheme

Purpose of this Post

The Benefits Manager will lead a team in the delivery of an effective, quality Benefits Service through the development and delivery of a range of functions and initiatives, with responsibility for the operational management and performance of the team, providing clear guidance and direction which promotes and develops a culture of continuous improvement, compliance and efficiency.

They will ensure employees deliver the service in line with the Council's Values, Ways of Working, performance management approach and positive behaviour, and provide strong, effective resource management and play a key role in the future transformation of the service.

The post holder will deputise for the Interim Service Manager for Revenues and Benefits and the Interim Strategic Lead as and when required and work closely with the Revenues & Benefits Management Team.

The Revenues & Benefits service has anchor buildings and teams located in Barrow, Kendal and Penrith. The Benefits Manager will be based at Penrith, although there will be a requirement for regular travel to other sites.

Key Job Specific Accountabilities

- Take professional lead for the benefits service to ensure the running of the service to achieve organisational objectives
- Provide expert advice to a range of levels both within the service and in the wider organisation including senior management and elected members
- To be responsible for staff management in relation to the service area, including recruitment and selection, performance and development, motivation, equality, counselling, discipline, grievance, consultation and negotiation with staff
- To play a key role in the Revenues & Benefits service transformation programme including planning and implementation of change and determining operational and technical objectives and responses to ensure the operational running of the service
- Contribute to producing, monitoring and reviewing Service Plans, including comprehensive operational work plans, and set challenging operational targets
- To take the lead and collaborate with others on the delivery of an effective, quality service through the development and delivery of a range of functions, initiatives and projects that provide our customers with value for money
- To ensure maximum quality and accuracy of benefit administration in order to protect the Council's financial standing and provide an excellent customer experience
- To ensure the prompt processing of housing benefit and council tax reduction administration, including the recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments
- Ensure accurate and timely completion of Benefits statistical returns, including subsidy, management information and end of year processes
- Play an active role in the completion of subsidy workbooks, calculations, and be a key contact for internal and external auditors, particularly in relation to the annual Housing Benefit Assurance Process
- Ensure processes are compliant with the Department for Work and Pensions Memorandum of Understanding
- Deal with (and provide expert advice for colleagues as appropriate in relation to) the complex and contentious cases, including appeals, drafting and preparing appropriate written responses to customers, councillors, other agents and the appeals/tribunals service as required.
- Ensure prompt responses to complaints, information requests and MP enquiries.
- Constantly evaluate forms / letters / procedures for legality and relevance in order to ensure the most effective and efficient service possible.
- Monitor workloads to ensure that resources are directed to the areas of greatest need. Determine appropriate and efficient methods of work allocation and respond to changes in demand as necessary.
- To take the lead in the collation and reporting of Benefits Services performance indicators for the Team and ensure each indicator has a full and proper audit trail.
- Timely and accurate translation of new or revised legislation, policy, guidance and system changes into operational practice and process, ensuring a fully compliant Benefits service
- Represent the Council at appeals tribunals

- Represent the Revenue and Benefits Service at meetings with all stakeholders and partners etc. and ensure positive relationships are developed and maintained
- To provide cover for other managers within the Revenues and Benefits service area as required
- Assess, develop, direct, motivate and provide support to Officers under your line management, e.g. flexi, sickness etc. and undertake any necessary recruitment, induction and development of staff.
- Undertake all other roles and tasks that are consistent with the level of this post, or that fall within the broad spirit or scope and purpose of the role supporting the professional delivery of the Revenues and Benefits service in a timely and effective manner

Please note: Annual targets will be discussed during the appraisal process.

Key Facts and Figures of the Post

- **Budget Responsibilities:** No direct budget responsibility
- **Staff Management Responsibilities:** Line Management 1 x Benefits Team Leader,
- **Other:** (Any other relevant facts and figures)

Essential Criteria

Qualifications:

Managers will be educated to degree standard or significant experience in a similar role.
 IRRV qualification at Technician level or above
 Professional accreditation with IRRV

Knowledge:

Extensive technical, legislative and specialist knowledge in a Benefits environment gained over a significant period of time

Substantial and comprehensive knowledge of all aspects of Benefits in order to lead the service, provide expert advice and ensure the service is working towards organisational and Government objectives and standards

Evidence of being able to interpret a variety of complex benefits legislation and administration protocols, and the ability to apply this operationally to achieve organisational objectives

Evidence of developing and / or supporting partnerships and collaborating with Directorates

Good standard of IT literacy in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Outlook and Capita/Academy Revenues and Benefits software

Experience:

Substantial experience of leading a team in a Benefits environment, demonstrating strong people management skills

Evidence of managing significant change and the application of well-developed negotiation, influencing and persuasion skills

Expertise:

Ability to operate in a complex specialist and changing environment

Ability to monitor and manage performance, and analyse data and draw conclusions

Ability to take the overall lead in all aspects of benefits administration and compliance with a solution based approach

Ability to provide expert advice and support in complex and challenging cases

Ability to support the delivery of transactional services to customers

Ability to demonstrate effective leadership and development of a multi-disciplinary team

Ability to plan and formulate own work activity with minimal supervision

Ability to effectively communicate and offer expert advice to a range of levels in a variety of forms and strong experience of working with a wide range of stakeholders including elected members

Effective organisational and decision making skills

Ability to work under pressure and to tight deadlines, enthusiasm, drive and commitment to achieving successful outcomes

Being proactive in finding best practice, guidance and innovative and creative solutions, and applying them to local circumstances

Desirable:

Management qualification

Experience of delivering innovative solutions to improve service delivery

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

- This post requires a DBS check.
 - DBS Basic
- and a BPSS check

Job Working Circumstances

Emotional Demands: Ability to manage the emotional demands of the role. The job involves dealing with some of the most vulnerable customers within our community

Physical Demands: N/A

Working Conditions: Although the role is generally office based, there will be some flexibility to work from home, subject to agreement by the line manager
There is also a physical need to move throughout office buildings and attend external meetings or training events with a variety of different organisations.

- **Other Factors:** N/A

Other Factors:

In order to meet the duties of the post the job holder must be able to travel independently around the area