

Northumberland County Council

JOB DESCRIPTION

Post Title:	Overpayments Officer	Director/Service/Sector Finance Group/ Financial Services/ Revenues and Benefits		Office Use
Band:	5	Workplace: Various		JE ref: 676 HRMS ref:
Responsible to:	Overpayments Team Leader	Date: January 2010	Manager Level:	
Job Purpose: To carry out the recovery of overpaid housing benefit by the most effective method in each case, acting on decisions made by the benefits assessment team; to advise customers on all matters relating to overpayments.				
Resources	Staff	None		
	Finance	Day to day monitoring of revenues and benefits budget (very large budget) and taking appropriate action to recover overpayments.		
	Physical	Operate the Revenues and Benefits IT system and document management system		
	Clients	Housing Benefits Claimants and Customer Services staff		
Duties and key result areas:				
<div>1. To assist the Overpayments Team Leader to maximise the collection of recoverable housing benefit overpayments in line with legislation, Council policy and best practice.</div> <div>2. Exchanging orally and in writing complex and contentious information with a range of audiences, including non specialists and assisting in overpayment recovery.</div> <div>3. To monitor repayment arrangements and take appropriate action where required.</div> <div>4. To pursue the most effective form of recovery action, having regard to the particular circumstances of each case.</div> <div>5. To deal with all customer contact relating to overpayments by telephone, e-mail, post or third party enquiries.</div> <div>6. Offer advice on housing benefit.</div> <div>7. Utilise all options to trace debtors and ascertain information that will assist in resolving issues and clearing debts.</div> <div>8. Maintain and update customer accounts.</div> <div>9. Negotiate instalments or alternative methods of recovery, at the request of customers or their representatives, or acting on information received</div> <div>10. On all contact with claimants, payees and their representatives, emphasise their duty to notify all changes promptly, encourage them to do so, and inform or remind them of how and where to make such reports.</div> <div>11. Refer cases for write off when applicable.</div> <div>12. Actively assist in the development of policies and procedures and service plans and make suggestions for continuous improvement to ensure high quality services are delivered</div> <div>13. To participate in Team Meetings and service reviews where appropriate.</div> <div>14. Assist in project work where required and keep up to date with changing legislation.</div> <div>15. Ensure output of work is in line with service standards and data protection principles.</div> <div>16. Adopt effective and constructive relationships with colleagues and external contacts to promote effective partnership working for the delivery of high quality services.</div> <div>17. On a rota basis or as directed, attend interviews with customers and/or their representatives at a Council office or other venue</div>				
The duties and responsibilities highlighted in this Job Description are indicative and may vary over time. Post holders are expected to undertake other duties and responsibilities relevant to the nature, level and extent of the post and the grade has been established on this basis.				
Work Arrangements				
Transport requirements:		None		

Working patterns: Working conditions:	Flexible
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PERSON SPECIFICATION**

Post Title: Overpayments Officer	Director/Service/Sector Finance Group/ Financial Services/ Revenues and Benefits	Ref: 676
Essential	Desirable	Assess by
Knowledge and Qualifications		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 GCSE's or equivalent inc Maths and English • In depth knowledge of the Housing Benefit Regulations 2006 and associated Statutory Instruments and Circulars • Knowledge of the main operational, procedural and practical issues relating to the service • Awareness and commitment to proactive customer care • Awareness of the Data Protection Act <p>Working knowledge of best practise in service delivery</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IRRV Technician • Evidence of personal development 	
Experience		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clerical/administrative experience. • Experience of being part of a team • Experience of operating computerised systems • Desire of providing effective customer care • Experience of dealing effectively with others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working in a Benefits Section in a local authority • Experience of debt recovery work 	
Skills and competencies		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent communication skills both written and verbal • Good Listening skills • Ability to work to deadlines • Ability to work as part of a team • High degree of confidentiality required • Ability to keep accurate computerised and written records and reports of action taken • Must be numerate and apply a methodical approach to problem solving • Organisational and time management skills • Diplomacy, tact, influencing and negotiating skills • Ability to remain calm and logical in difficult circumstances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECDL 	
Physical, mental and emotional demands		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to work on own initiative • The job required general awareness and sensory attention with lengthy periods of concentrated mental attention • Must be punctual and reliable • Able to deal confidently with a full range of requests and respond in a mature and courteous manner in sometimes difficult situations 		

Other

Key to assessment methods; (a) application form, (i) interview, (r) references, (t) ability tests (q) personality questionnaire (g) assessed group work, (p) presentation, (o) others e.g. case studies/visits