

LONDON BOROUGH OF HACKNEY

Job Description

POST TITLE: Service Accountant

DIRECTORATE: Finance and Resources

SERVICE: Generic role

GRADE: PO4

LOCATION: London Borough of Hackney

RESPONSIBLE TO: Group Accountant

RESPONSIBLE FOR: Supervision of Accountancy Assistant

PURPOSE OF THE JOB:

The postholder will provide high quality, user-focussed and proactive financial support and challenge to a range of service areas in managing their finances and delivering the efficiency programme, along with accurate and timely information to support budget-setting, budget monitoring and accounts closure.

MAIN AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY:

- Work with relevant budget holders to produce the three main pillars of the annual budget cycle (budget setting, regular budget monitoring, and accounts closing) accurately, to timetable and with clear audit trails of workings, across capital and revenue.
- To provide proactive, high quality and informed financial advice at all levels of operational decision making, with the necessary challenge and/or justification where necessary
- To build strong working relationships across the authority, and with external stakeholders where relevant, and particularly with the services being supported, to ensure best results in operational decisions
- To provide accurate financial information as necessary for statistical returns, Freedom of Information requests and other information requests (internal and external), as required by the services, and with service input where relevant.

- To know and apply the relevant financial controls, checks and balances in every day working, taking into account the authority's financial standing orders and scheme of delegation, and wider legislation, and other relevant key documentation
- To deputise for the Group Accountant where necessary, including management of Accountancy Assistants in the team
- Provide project management support and finance expertise to the business on specific projects as required
- To be up-to-date on emerging issues in local government particularly in the services being supported
- To scan information for emerging financial risks in service areas and to alert managers accordingly
- To work with relevant budget holders and managers to identify solutions and mitigate against emerging financial risks
- Coach and develop Accountancy Assistants within your service to improve their expertise and understanding of more complex finance issues and retain an up-date knowledge in their professional areas

NB: All employees are expected to adhere to the Council's Diversity & Equality and Health and Safety Policies.

Person Specification

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Technical Experience/skills/knowledge

- Experience of working in a customer focused management accounting environment
- Experience of cost centre management across budget setting, budget monitoring and accounts closing (capital and revenue)
- Experience of working with budget holders and providing a service to clients
- Advanced spreadsheet skills
- An understanding of local government finance and local government services
- Experience of working on your own initiative, but with the judgement to identify issues which need to be referred upwards for guidance in order to minimise risk to the organisation

Qualification

- Fully qualified AAT or part qualified CCAB and / or experience of working in an accounting environment within a large organisation

Accountability

- Accountable for the provision of high quality financial information and advice to relevant stakeholders (budget holders, peers, senior management, the public)
- Must ensure that financial information is prepared taking into account relevant accounting rules, principles and/or codes
- Accountable for managing and maintaining positive working relationships across the Council and externally, and progressing the interests of Hackney.

Delivery

- Experience of delivering accurate information within necessary timescales

Decision making

- Ability to make decisions through the analysis of relevant information and risk assessment
- Ability to assist budget holders in making appropriate operational decisions through the provision of the appropriate financial information
- Ability to make decisions that demonstrate commitment to the Council's vision for a better Hackney

Working Together

- Experience of cross organisational working, taking into account others views and that harnesses the benefits of having a diverse workforce.
- Experience of developing teams that takes account of the needs of diverse stakeholder groups.
- Experience of working with, and ability to explain complex financial information to, a wide range of stakeholders
- Experience of building positive relationships with a range of both internal and external stakeholders, understands political drivers and the role of Members

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