

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

<b>POST TITLE:</b>	Revenues Officer
<b>GRADE:</b>	9
<b>DIVISION / UNIT:</b>	Resources
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	Income Operations
<b>REPORTS TO:</b>	Revenues Team Leader or Senior Officer

### **PURPOSE OF THE JOB**

To manage a particular caseload in the day-to-day administration, billing, collection and recovery of Council Tax (an annual debit of £176M), and Business Rates (annual debit of £320M) and BIDs (annual levy £4M). Interpret and apply the Local Government Finance Act 1992, relevant regulations and Southwark Council's own policies and procedures, ensuring that Best Value indicators on council tax & NNDR collection and debt reduction targets are achieved for your caseload and that quality assurance frameworks are established such that accuracy of data is maintained.

To identify and take the appropriate collection action on accounts relating to Miscellaneous Income & Housing Benefit Overpayments, liaising with service departments in respect of uncollectable debts.

To seek the most efficient collection routes meeting council and customers' needs and influence the implementation of best practice processes in performance and service delivery so that the team meets its collection targets and supports broader corporate objectives.

To be responsible for the accurate establishment of liability and maintenance of Council Tax, NNDR and BIDS databases.

To take responsibility for a particular area of legislation and contribute to the development and implementation of Council policy in relation to Revenues, HBOP and Miscellaneous income collection and to ensure that the service is operated in accordance with those policies and regulations.

To represent the Council in all Courts having jurisdiction for the collection and administration of Council Tax and NNDR, selecting cases from your caseload for Court and managing the court process making application for a range of Court orders appropriate for the administration and collection of Local Revenue due to the Council.

### **PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES**

#### **Responsibilities**

1. Be responsible for meeting individual and team targets in the delivery of the Revenues Service including Council Tax billing and recovery, NNDR including BIDs and

HBOP recovery as agreed as part of the annual appraisal process, managing a specific case load with autonomy as part of the team's operation.

2. Provide expert advice to your customers:

- ☐ Respond to, take action and provide technical advice on customers' enquiries, information and applications by telephone, written correspondence, or face-to-face, accurately maintaining customer accounts.
- ☐ Make all necessary investigations including requesting further information from the customer, other internal and external departments and any other relevant stakeholder/party, recording information on appropriate databases and communicating the outcome in plain English to the customer, their representative or stakeholder.
- ☐ Identify and take proactive action on revenues cases where there is a potential entitlement to discounts, exemptions or any other liability reductions.
- ☐ Ensure agreed working practices, procedures and legislation including discounts are applied correctly, dealing with all enquiries in a polite and professional manner, remaining customer focussed at all times.

3. Prepare and analyse management information and data and implement or recommend actions arising in the following areas:

- ☐ Prepare data required for the timely submission of government returns.
- ☐ Identify recurring operational issues and identify opportunities for process, team and service improvement, managing these as formal projects where appropriate, implementing those within your own caseload and working with Team Leaders to implement improved processes across the wider service to achieve a significant improvement in performance during the next 3 years
- ☐ Assist in the maintenance and development of record systems and operational procedures, leading on those in your area of expertise.
- ☐ Assist in the compilation of statistical information for areas such as complaints, members enquiries, Freedom of Information requests, and quality monitoring.
- ☐ Develop reports, analysis and recommendations to support Corporate Strategy in matters relating to Best Value.
- ☐ Meet with and assist auditors (internal & external) and inspectors (e.g. Best Value), providing advice during preparation of reports.

4. Maintain effective working relationships and respond to enquiries from registered social landlords, internal council housing, Housing Benefits sections, other local authorities, businesses and BIDs companies, voluntary sector organisations and other central/local government departments. Liaise, work closely with and attend meetings with service providers and stakeholders, as required.

5. Be responsible for the induction and training of new staff and of delivering training to existing staff as part of their development process. Mentor, give guidance in complex areas and quality assure the work of Revenues trainee staff in processing revenues changes.

6. Liaise with and instruct the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) to ensure liability is correctly assessed and/or where alterations/amendments to properties may be required, updating the property database as directed by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) ensuring the database accurately reflects and reconciles to the Banding List. To provide information and produce written responses to valuation appeals when required.

7. Maximise debt recovery by identifying and taking the appropriate recovery action on debtors' accounts, in line with working procedures and council policies:

- ☐ Manage cases on Attachment of Benefit and Attachment of Earnings Orders and ensure correct allocation of payments on receipt.
- ☐ Manage cases referred to the bailiffs and other collection agencies, inform them of changes to liability affecting the debt and ensure correct allocation of payment on receipt.
- ☐ Develop recommendations for write-offs and process these in compliance with Council policy and procedure.
- ☐ Identify, select, prepare and manage cases for committal action, winding up, bankruptcy and other appropriate court and charging orders. Respond to enquiries from service providers and liaise with the Council's Legal Team in relation to such cases.
- ☐ Provide debt counselling, benefit and welfare advice and direct debtors to other agencies for further help when appropriate.
- ☐ Understand the Council's Anti-Poverty Policy, the Corporate Debt Reduction Policy and the Financial Inclusion Policy and target action in individual cases in support of this.
- ☐ Manage cases to recover Housing Benefits overpayments

8. Ensure robust quality assurance is implemented by:

- ☐ Working with both internal and 3rd party service providers in the development and implementation of performance monitoring frameworks.
- ☐ Supporting the Councils Feedback forum in the delivery of the Councils Corporate Complaints service and delivery of the Councils Complaint charter.
- ☐ Develop opportunities for joint activity with other local authorities, partners, consultants and others.
- ☐ Identify and ensure that risks and issues are being tracked and mitigated as effectively as possible.
- ☐ Maintain systems to measure performance against established standards and contractual targets across both internal services and services provided by 3rd party suppliers, particularly monitoring the Resilience Partner.
- ☐ Monitor performance across both internal and external providers, particularly the Resilience partner, according to agreed standards and take necessary action to communicate, advise and assist according to agreed performance levels and targets
- ☐ Establish and implement necessary communication strategy for the improvement and awareness of quality issues across all departments
- ☐ Report as necessary on changes in standards (internally and externally initiated) and on performance against standards
- ☐ Monitor and report on Local Government indicators and competitor activities and provide relevant reports and information

## **Court Representation**

9. Represent the Council on your own caseload in all appropriate Courts with delegated authority for the recovery and collection of Local Revenue due to the Council:

- ☐ Select cases for action, applying appropriate types of action
- ☐ Manage the case with all elements including review, monitoring, preparation and giving evidence in Court proceedings.
- ☐ Represent the Council at Valuation Tribunals, Judicial Reviews and in litigation matters where actions are brought against the local authority,
- ☐ Interpret legislation and Court decisions to influence and change processes within the wider Revenues and Benefits services.

- ☐ Interpret legislation and Court decisions to provide expert advice to customers and their representatives, dealing with enquiries and agreeing payment arrangements.
- ☐ Liaise with all appropriate Courts and Court personnel on general court administrative issues to ensure an efficient service is delivered to your customers and stakeholders.

10. Assist & advise the Team Leader and assist the authority's legal team in the preparation of Judicial Reviews, debt matters etc.

## **Strategy**

11. Maintain an expert knowledge of Revenues legislation including the interpretation of new legislation and current case law:

- ☐ Take responsibility for a particular portfolio from the Revenues legislation
- ☐ Advise on policy and procedure development, remaining up to date with professional standards, current best practice and technical knowledge in service delivery.
- ☐ Advise Senior Officers, the resilience and other partners, internal departments and stakeholders of changes in legislation, best practice and guidance for application management necessary to maintain the services delivered to Council customers, influencing their operations where appropriate.
- ☐ Draft reports for Cabinet, Members, Senior officers and other working groups on your area of expertise.
- ☐ Develop and maintain quality management tools, systems and records appropriate to support performance out turns, government returns and internal and external audit requirements
- ☐ Support the complaints team by providing information, technical advice and expertise regarding Customer complaints and Members' enquiries.
- ☐ Assist in the preparation of statements on Revenues collection matters for Southwark's press office.

12. Maintain an external focus, liaising with internal and external agencies, customers, consultants, contractors and officers as required. Seek opportunities for joint activity including shared services with other local authorities, partners, consultants and others; participate in benchmarking and other inter-authority liaison groups relevant to the service; attend appropriate corporate and departmental working groups or panels including CIPFA, London Revenues Group, User groups and professional conferences.

## **Other**

13. Operate and promote the Council's policies and procedures in accordance with the Data Protection Act guidelines, Freedom of Information and Human Rights Acts and process requests for information.

14. Undertake any other duties appropriate to the grade and level of work as reasonably required by the Team Leader or Managers.

<b>JOB CONTEXT</b>
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15. The Council is continuing a programme of modernisation and change to deliver on a number of key objectives with the aim of facilitating the Council in moving to become a modern, customer-oriented organisation.

16. The Service consists of four sections, Revenues and Benefits Operations being the two main operational delivery units, Improvement and Development which drives strategic development and oversees implementation of major change within the service and Customer Service which is responsible for customer strategy, front office activities and overall performance monitoring.

17. This role will involve the interpretation and application of legislation, working with lower grade staff to assure accurate day-to-day administration of the Revenues system including an appropriate quality assurance framework.. The post holder will be expected to lead on a particular area of legislation while having a comprehensive expert working knowledge, and to identify and lead improvements in that area.

18. The post will formally report to the Revenues Team Leaders.

19. The post has no direct responsibility for staff.

20. As well as daily contact with the Revenues Team Leader and the Operations Manager Revenues, the post holder will liaise regularly with diverse contacts including the following:

- ☐ All other revenues teams & Team Leaders including recovery and processing
- ☐ Charge payers and their third party representatives
- ☐ Registered Social Landlords, and private landlords
- ☐ Other Southwark Council departments
- ☐ Council Members/MPs'
- ☐ External agencies such as external auditors and the Valuation Office Agency
- ☐ Tracing and debt collection agencies

There is a requirement for the post holder on occasions, to work outside normal office hours and at different venues to meet the needs of the service.

### **Health & Safety**

The role requires a full understanding of the statutory and best practice requirements of working in a public environment.

### **Job sharing**

This post is not open to job share.

### **Grade/Conditions of Service**

The employment is subject to a probationary period of twenty six weeks from your start date of employment with Southwark Council, during which time you will be required to demonstrate to the council's satisfaction your suitability for the position in which you are employed.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

The person specification is a picture of skills, knowledge and experience required to carry out the job.

	Essential (E)	How assessed (S/ I/ T)
<b>Knowledge, including educational qualifications:</b>		
1. Extensive knowledge of revenues including relevant legislation and regulations	E	S
2. 5 GCSE's including English and Maths or equivalent or relevant work experience	E	S
<b>Experience:</b>		
Significant experience of revenues administration, working practice and procedures preferably in a delivery role	E	I
Experience of dealing directly with, and advising, members of the public in a professional manner in all circumstances	E	S I
Experience of attending and interviewing customers at court	E	I
<b>Aptitudes, Skills &amp; Competencies:</b>		
Ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing with a variety of people at different levels both in and outside the Council	E	S
Ability to co-ordinate, plan and prioritise the workload and meet deadlines when faced with conflicting priorities	E	I
Effective interpersonal skills, tact, diplomacy and listening skills to enable development of working relationships with customers, colleagues and all stakeholders	E	S
Ability to work independently and within teams to meet targets and deadlines	E	I
Ability to provide a customer focused service.	E	I
Ability to use computer systems including word processing, spreadsheets and databases for correspondence, reports and performance monitoring.	E	I
Ability to deal with complex queries whilst ensuring good attention to details to resolve issues that arise	E	S I
Effective desk-based investigative skills, which utilise all available IT avenues to resolve cases successfully.	E	I
<b>Special Conditions of Recruitment:</b>		
Comply with and promote the Council's Equality and Diversity policies		

<b>Key:</b>	<b>S</b>	Shortlisting criteria	<b>I</b>	Evaluated at interview
	<b>E</b>	Essential	<b>T</b>	Subject to test