

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support Caseworker

Role Profile



Service:	Exchequer Services, Finance and Systems
Band:	Band 5
Reporting to:	Exchequer Services Team Leader (Assessments and Client Services)
Responsible for:	No Direct Reports

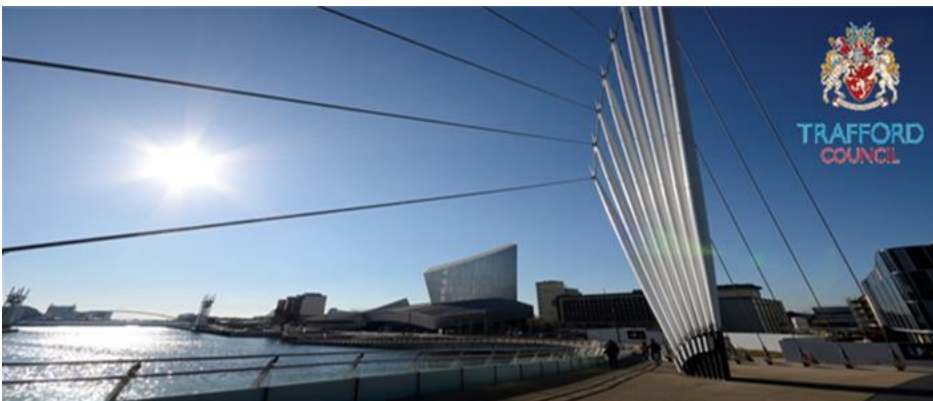
About Us

Trafford is a great place to live, work, learn and visit. From its leafy suburbs, to its more urban areas, the borough takes pride in its strong, diverse communities, its cultural and sporting heritage and its position at the heart of the region's economic powerhouse.

Trafford Council and its partners in the public, private and third sectors have a Vision which sees us working together to close inequality gaps and maximise Trafford's huge potential.

Our vision: Trafford – where all our residents, businesses and communities prosper

At the heart of our vision is a common cause – we want to make Trafford a better borough. We want to make it a place where everyone has a chance to succeed and where everybody has a voice. Through our new vision, we are making a commitment to work together across different services and agencies to make the best use of our resources.



Our Culture

Trafford Council employs around 2300 non-school members of staff and as one of the biggest employers in the borough, we work hard to make Trafford Council an employer of choice. We care what you think and believe you are more than just a job role. We have a great benefits' package and a real focus on your health and wellbeing, as well as, extensive learning, succession and development opportunities.

For us, it's not just about *what* we achieve as an organisation, but *how* we do it. Therefore, all employees are expected to display our **EPIC** values.

At Trafford Council we are EPIC

We EMPOWER – We inspire and trust our people to deliver the best outcomes for our customers, communities and colleagues.

We are PEOPLE CENTRED – We value all people, within and external to the organisation and give those around us respect. We will act with honesty and integrity in all that we do, and create an environment that enables everyone we work with to thrive and succeed.

We are INCLUSIVE – We are committed to creating an environment that values and respects the diversity and richness differences bring.

We COLLABORATE – We build relationships, collaborate; treat people as equal partners and work together to make things happen.

About the Role

This Role Profile outlines the key tasks you will be expected to perform to give you an understanding of a typical day and the key activities that you will be expected to deliver or contribute to the delivery of.

The 'About You' section explores what qualifications, experience, skills and knowledge you will need for the role.

We are a values-based organisation and you will need to reflect our values, as well as the requirements in 'About You' in your application.

Overview

Exchequer Services sits within the Finance and Systems directorate. The Assessments and Client Services team is a high performing, outcome based, resident focused service which performs a number of operational and front-line contact tasks, including the full end to end delivery of the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support service. You will be the specialist Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support caseworker in a fast-paced team, dealing with complex cases, escalated cases including customer complaints, reviews and appeals, as well as supporting managers with complex matters such as supported accommodation cases and subsidy related matters.

Your Main Priorities

- Provision of a high quality, customer facing advisory case worker service to Trafford residents, partners and internal and external stakeholders in relation to Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support related matters.
- Acting as a key single point of contact to residents, partner agencies and stakeholders from the initial identification/contact through to offering full advice and support and ultimately the resolution of the matters raised.
- Dealing with more complex matters of Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support administration, including investigating and responding to stage one complaints and providing a statement of reasons for a decision
- Supporting managers in investigating and conducting complex Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support case reviews and provide support in preparing tribunal submissions

Key duties

- Provide an accessible and high-quality Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support advice and information service to an excellent customer service level including face to face advice, home visits (joint with professionals in appropriate cases), telephone advice, and interviews in a variety of settings.
- Provide expert advice in relation to Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support matters including escalated complex matters referred by the relevant internal teams
- Working across the service and Council to ensure that the caseworker ethos 'you only have to tell your story once' is adhered to and ensuring warm handovers take place in cases that have to be signposted for further advice and support
- Attending the relevant Exchequer Services panels to offer advice and support on relevant cases and to discuss or present complex cases requiring further support from other internal and external agencies
- Attending team meetings, organised events and drop-in surgeries to provide Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support advice at a variety of localities across the borough.
- Liaise with the Department for Work and Pensions, External Subsidy auditors, Valuation Tribunal, Tribunal Appeal Service and stakeholders such as housing associations.
- Keeping abreast of developments in Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support and associated Welfare Benefits law, policies and practices.
- Advising, training and expertly mentoring colleagues in all aspects of the role where required
- Undertaking any other duties that commensurate with the grade which may be from time-to-time required by management

About You

Qualifications and Professional Development

- GCSE Grade A-C (4-9) or equivalent, in Maths and English
- IRRV (Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation) qualification (Full/Tech/Apprenticeship) or willingness to attain this qualification (start within 12 months)
- Commit to undertaking a Customer Excellence training program, including dealing with customers over the phone and face to face
- Willingness to continually improve and update skills and knowledge

Experience and Knowledge

- At least 2 years' work experience in a Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support environment
- At least 2 years' work experience of working in a customer service environment, preferable in a Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support background, demonstrating the working practice of the customer service 'you only have to tell us once' ethos
- Specialist up to date Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support knowledge including Supported Accommodation to provide advice internally, externally as well as directly to residents and claimants
- Experience of dealing with complex cases, including making discretionary decisions
- Proven success in developing effective working relationships with colleagues, stakeholders and partner organisations
- Proven experience of delivering difficult outcomes in a professional, sensitive but assertive manner to residents
- Experience of administration systems in a large organisation, including the use of ICT software systems, preferably in a Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support background as Microsoft Word and Excel
- Detailed knowledge of the requirements of Data Protection & GDPR across all platforms and how to deal with a breach of data

Skills and abilities

- Ability to be actively involved in internal and external audits, including in relation to the Housing Benefit subsidy claim
- Ability to carry out reviews and independently prepare and issue a Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support statement of reasons
- Ability to build strong, positive working relationships with colleagues, stakeholders and partners
- Ability to liaise with other teams and agencies and ensure warm handovers take place where further support and advice is required
- Proven ability to mentor staff
- Highly motivated and proven track record of achieving targets and results
- Ability to remain objective and professional when communicating ~~dealing~~ with residents and representatives and discussing personal, sensitive and financial information
- Proven ability of communicating in an excellent manner with residents, partners, stakeholders, Councillor's, MPs, both written and verbal, with the ability to remain calm under pressure
- Ability to attend internal panels to discuss or present complex Housing Benefit and/or Council Tax Support cases
- Ability to undertake reviews, support managers with preparing appeals and to resolve stage one customer complaints
- Willingness and flexibility to work across the borough in a place-based way and to adapt positively to change and fluctuating work demands to support changes in the evolving service delivery model

- Proven ability of managing a workload, personally organising and prioritising work to consistently achieve individual targets set and meet deadlines
- Excellent communication skills, (written, verbal and electronic) with experience of communicating effectively with varied audiences and to explain complex guidance and regulations to non-specialists, presenting information in a format easily understood
- Good literacy and numeracy skills to undertake calculations and produce clear calculations, letters and other documentation

Special Conditions

- DBS required

Date prepared/revised :	5.1.23
Prepared/revised by:	Louise Shaw/Rachel Burns/Helen Machin
Job Evaluation	January 23

Health and Safety

To operate safely within the workplace with regard to the Council's health and safety policies, procedures and safe working practices. To be responsible for your own Health and Safety and that of other employees.

Equalities & Diversity

To work within the Council's Equalities and Diversity Policy, embracing through personal example, open commitment and clear action that diversity is positively valued, resulting in access for all by ensuring fair treatment in employment, service delivery and external communications.

Customer Care

To continually review, develop and improve systems, processes and services in support of the Council's pursuit of excellence in service delivery.
To recognise the value of its people as a resource.

Training and Development

To identify training and development needs with your manager, taking an active part in your Personal Development and Review Plan. To access development opportunities as they arise and share learning with others and where appropriate, actively encourage a learning environment and development within others.

Policy

To work at all times within the established policies and practices of the Council, within the framework established by the Council Constitution and associated guidance.

Information Governance

Confidentiality is of prime importance. In the normal course of duties, the post holder will have access to personal and or sensitive information relating to service users, staff and contractors, as well as information of a commercially sensitive nature. Such information should not be communicated to anyone outside or inside the Council unless done in the normal course of carrying out the duties of the post. Disciplinary action will be considered where a breach of confidence and or data breach has been established.

All information obtained or held during the post-holders period of employment that relates to the business of the Council and its service users and employees will remain the property of the Council. Information may be subject to disclosure under relevant legislation.

To ensure information is shared safely and complies with information governance standards and associated legislation.