

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

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| **Post Title**: Customer Contact Advisor (2 Skills) |
| **Department**: Corporate Core | **Post No**:  |
| **Division/Section**: Customer Support and Collections/Contact Centre  | **Post Grade**: TBC |
| **Location**: Whittaker Street, Radcliffe | **Post Hours**: 8.45am to 5.00pm Monday to Friday 36.25 hours, limited flexi-time scheme in operation. |
| **Special Conditions of Service**: Provide, where necessary, appropriate support in contingency or civil emergencies (covering 24 hour call out duties if requested) as part of the Council’s Corporate Emergency Plan.  |
| **Purpose and Objectives of Post**: * Deal with all enquiries providing a high quality, efficient and courteous service over the telephone, face to face or digitally; resolving queries at first point of contact in accordance with Government Legislation and council policies and procedures. Using your comprehensive knowledge respond to a range of enquiries for 2 specialist areas from the skills detailed below. (dependant on circumstances and service demands).
* Give advice and guidance and assess eligibility for services, discounts and benefits.
* De-escalate potential complaints, using your own initiative whilst working to standards.
* Negotiate and maximise the collection of debt by administering effective payment arrangements.
* Promote the council’s web site, self-account and online forms.
* Provide excellent service in accordance with the Council’s Corporate Customer Care Charter whilst meeting service performance targets.
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| **Accountable to**: Customer Contact Manager, Contact Centre Team Managers |
| **Immediately Responsible to**: Contact Centre Team Managers/Contact Centre Assistant Team Manager |
| **Immediately Responsible for**: None |
| **Relationships: (Internal and External)**Internal ExternalStaff from all council departments Members of the publicStakeholders from all services Six Town, Landlords & Housing AssociationsLiaison with the CRM Team SchoolsCouncillors SolicitorsICT Division GP’s Police/Fire/Emergency services  Bailiffs/Debt recovery agencies voluntary sector organisations Citizens Advice Bureau Language Line/Intepreters Primary and Community healthcare trusts  CCG, NHS, Hospitals,  Acute and Mental healthcare trusts providers Advocacy services Regulatory bodies  |
| **Control of Resources**: computer and several relevant software packages, paper, stationery, headsets, printers.  |
| **Duties/Responsibilities**:  |
| 1. Resolve enquiries from the public/representatives by telephone, email, digital/social media or face to face, delivering a comprehensive service to customers relating to a range of enquiries for your 2 specialist skills. Answer calls promptly and demonstrate a good telephone manner presenting a professional image of the council. Adhere to the contact centre standards and ensure data protection checks are carried out, following opening/closing scripts and offer additional services. Maintain a minimum of the team average call and after call time detailed in the standards. Demonstrate your knowledge to answer calls without assistance from a manager 85% of the time, and understand when to call for help refraining ringing back office services.
2. Ensure contacts are answered focusing on quality and efficiency and resolution on first contact without shortcuts or unnecessary waste in order to work together to achieve performance targets and be aware of what they are. Delivering a high level of service whilst adhering to council policies and procedures and preventing repeat calls.
3. All switchboard calls to be transferred to correct departments 95% of the time asking relevant questions to ensure they are transferred to the correct person/service.
4. Have the skills and knowledge to deal with vulnerable customers including those in debt, homeless, mental health illnesses, dementia, and those who have suffered a bereavement; providing support and empathy, deciding the relevant course of action for their wellbeing whilst exercising initiative and recording accurate information. Refer customers to relevant support partners as necessary including referrals to visiting officers, the staying well team, support fund and external charities or agencies to help support them and improve their health and wellbeing.
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| 1. Assist with the training of new members of staff in systems and procedures relating to the work of the customer contact advisor.
2. Have a multi-skilled flexible approach towards the changing work patterns and diverse needs of the services, providing cover for alternative services and reception.
3. Maintain a professional approach using tact, sensitivity and courtesy at all times, even in situations where confrontation arises and can sometimes be a potential hostile atmosphere.
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| 1. Have a comprehensive knowledge of numerous IT systems used within the contact centre. Navigate, interrogate, update and maintain these systems to ensure enquiries are resolved efficiently with accurate information.
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| 1. Follow up matters which cannot be dealt with immediately and take responsibility for ensuring issues concerning other services, agencies and organisations are referred promptly to the appropriate contact.
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| 1. Process card payments in line with the councils’ webstaff policy and set up and promote direct debit and re-occurring card payments. Calculate and process refunds and request cash transfers.
2. Deal with queries and escalations to a high standard and use initiative to prevent queries escalating to complaints.
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| 1. Set up and promote self service channels including the council’s self account, web forms, direct debit, recurring card payments, ebilling and ebin alerts.
2. Keep up to date with the Council’s policies and activities and be fully conversant with the web site and all forms available.
3. Participate in customer service initiatives and council projects as required including proactive call backs collecting outstanding debt, surveys and promoting our web site.
4. Assist customers in the understanding and completion of documents/application forms, and validate, record, scan, upload and indexing documents as required.
5. Respond to third party request from police, other authorities and outside agencies whilst adhering to GDPR, data protection and attend court if necessary.
6. Be aware and report any potential fraud in line with the council’s policies and procedures.
7. Engage appropriate services such as Language Line/British Sign Language/Type talk/ Interpretation Officer when necessary.
8. Encourage information sharing internally and with other Council services, partners and external organisations in accordance with Data Protection and GDPR guidelines and national, corporate and departmental policies on confidentiality and the management of shared information.
9. Undertake training on an ongoing basis to develop skills, service knowledge and awareness of departmental and council activities. This includes keeping up to date with current processes and relevant legislation which may vary from time to time and work proactively with colleagues to improve service delivery.
10. Regularly contribute ideas, suggestions and feedback to provide a valuable contribution to the success of the service.
11. Carry out any other duties commensurate with the grade of the post.
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| Resolve all contacts from 2 of the following specialist skills **Council Tax and Business Rates**1. You will require a comprehensive knowledge of Council Tax and business rates Legislation, keeping up to date with changes to legislation, policy and procedures being aware of corporate debt, fraud and council policies.
2. Maximise the collection of council tax and business rates debt by administering effective payment arrangements using your comprehensive knowledge of council tax and business rates recovery procedures.
3. Carry out regular face to face and telephone interviews for vulnerable customers to deal with complex enquiries and obtain sufficient information to complete applications for council tax support and any changes which may affect council tax.
4. Advise customers in understanding their entitlement to council tax support scheme and respond to complex enquiries and ensure the maximum uptake of discounts, reliefs and exemptions.
5. Process changes to council tax/business rates records to establish and calculate liability, to determine and grant discounts and check transactions and recovery process is correct.
6. Advise customers who may be paying council tax for the first time. Negotiate with the customer to identify and set up the most appropriate payment arrangement taking into account their individual circumstances whilst ensuring we can collect the debt.
7. Determine and implement the most effective method of recovering money for council tax/business rates following the issue of a summons, granting of a Liability Order up to and including the enforcement process whilst having regard to the councils recovery and corporate debt policies. Use negotiation and decision making skills to set up special arrangements with the flexibility to offer one off payment plans and include or waive courts costs where you deem appropriate and agree payment options to enable recovery. Explain the recovery process to the customer.
8. Make outgoing calls for proactive debt recovery negotiating immediate payment in full wherever possible.
9. Give guidance to landlords/their representative relating to landlord payment enquiries.
10. Liaise with back office relating to debt recovery agencies and provide advice to customers for debt recovery as required.

**Housing Benefit, Benefit overpayments and Support Fund**1. You will require a comprehensive knowledge of housing benefit and welfare reform regulations keeping up to date with changes to legislation, policy and procedures, and corporate debt, fraud and council policies.
2. Give advice and guidance to customers regarding the appeals procedure and discretionary housing payments.
3. Arrange and carry out regular face to face and telephone interviews for vulnerable customers to deal with complex enquiries and obtain sufficient information to complete applications for housing benefit, DHP’s and complex queries.
4. Advise customers in the understanding of their entitlement explaining the benefits scheme, respond to complex enquiries and to ensure the maximum uptake of benefits, discounts, reliefs and exemptions, using your knowledge of universal credit and welfare reform.
5. Ensure benefit payments are stopped where necessary to prevent or minimise overpayments and issue notification letters to customers, landlords/representative.
6. Recover overpayments of rent allowance, rent rebate and discretionary payments from customers and landlords by the most cost effective method complying with legislation and procedures. Use negotiation and debt recovery skills to agree the most effective payment methods and agree payment plans to enable recovery.
7. Liaise with back office relating to debt recovery agencies and provide advice to customers for debt recovery as required.
8. Provide a detailed explanation and document why an overpayment of benefit has been created and how it will be recovered.
9. Complete support fund applications and use your knowledge of universal credit and welfare reform to ensure applicants meet the criteria and are receiving all relevant benefits and support.

**Operational Services** 1. You will require comprehensive knowledge of (100 plus) operational council services to respond accurately and to understand what actions the council can/will take and what we have to do legally across a multitude of services including highways, waste and environmental services.
2. Have an awareness of seasonal changes and the impact on specific services and how this relates to emergency planning and know when to invoke emergency procedures.
3. Deal with escalations and complaints where the council has failed to deliver a service or meet its SLA, negotiate with services and where possible offer alternatives. Log repeat escalations whilst negotiating new timescales with the customer.
4. Recover payments for fines and services by the most cost effective method explaining the recovery process to the customer.
5. Give advice and guidance to customers regarding the appeals procedures for fines, including parking and truancy fines.
6. Navigate the CADCORP maps system to identify council adoption and ownership of property/land to ensure correct advice is given and cases raised to the appropriate service within the council.
7. Liaise with back offices to ensure ownership is taken in emergency circumstances.
8. Provide advice to landlords and builders HMO enquiries, accreditation, pest control and bins.
9. Access and understand council tax and housing benefits records to establish residency and entitlement for discount for applicable services.
10. Record complaints and advise customers on the Council’s Complaints Procedure.
11. Log Freedom of Information requests accurately and send to relevant officer.

**Advice Information and Booking Services**1. You will require comprehensive knowledge of services to respond and provide advice on planning applications and election services, keeping up to date with changes to legislation, policies and procedures.
2. Have an awareness of seasonal changes and the impact on specific services and how this relates to emergency planning and know when to invoke emergency procedures.
3. Deal with escalations and complaints where the council has failed to deliver a service or meet its SLA, negotiate with services and where possible offer alternatives. Log repeat escalations whilst negotiating new timescales with the customer.
4. Navigate the CADCORP maps system to identify council adoption and ownership of property/land to ensure correct advice is given and cases raised to the appropriate service within the council.
5. Liaise with back offices to ensure ownership is taken in emergency circumstances.
6. Recover payments for fines and services by the most appropriate and cost effective method, explaining the recovery process to the customer.
7. Provide advice and guidance to customers regarding the appeals procedures for planning applications, blue badge decisions and fines including parking/truancy fines.
8. Access and understand council tax and housing benefits records to establish residency and entitlement for discount for applicable services.
9. Accurately input data and process blue badge applications, order the badge whilst displaying an empathetic manner when taking sensitive personal data.
10. Report lost, stolen and deceased blue badges and cancel and re-order badges accordingly.
11. Book appointments on behalf of services including registrars, licensing
12. Order goods and services on behalf of services e.g. copy birth certificates and take payment, order scaffolding and skip permits and take payments.
13. Provide advice on a range of services including elections, planning, registrars, blue badges, registrars, Patient Advice and Liaison service and family information services.
14. Respond to a range of queries on behalf of the CCG for the Patient Advice and Liaison service investigating the query and provide a response to prevent complaints or signpost where relevant. Provide an outcome and act at all times in accordance with internal policies and relevant legislation. This will involve working closely with a variety of people including patients, carers, advocates, healthcare professionals and administrative staff. This will span a variety of organisations including CCG partners, healthcare providers, local authorities and emergency services. Provide non-clinical advice to patients, clients and relatives.
15. Providing support and cover for the Patient Advice and Liaison service complaints and FOI service.
16. Record complaints and advise customers on the Council’s Complaints Procedure.
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| **Safeguarding:**As an employee of Bury Council you have a responsibility for, and must be committed to, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and for ensuring that they are protected from harm.**Equality Diversity and Inclusion:**Demonstrate and promote a commitment to Equal Opportunities, Diversity and Customer Care in accordance with good practice and guidelines.**Data Protection:**­­­­­­­­­­Have a comprehensive understanding of freedom of information act and the general data protection regulations whilst working in a confidential environment.**Health and Safety:**The post holder is responsible for Employees Duties as specified with the Corporate and Departmental Health and Safety Policies.Where an employee is asked to undertake duties other than those specified directly in his/her job description, such duties shall be discussed with the employee concerned who may have his/her Trade Union Representative present if so desired. (See paragraph 203 of supplemental Conditions of Service) |
| **Job Description prepared by:** | **Sign:**  | **Date:** |
| **Agreed correct by Postholder:**  | **Sign:** | **Date:** |
| **Agreed correct by Supervisor/Manager:** | **Sign:** | **Date:** |

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**

**CUSTOMER SERVICE ADVISOR**

**Corporate Core**

| **Short-listing Questions** | **Essential** | **Desirable** |
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| Experience of working in a busy frontline contact centre for the public in a customer service related environment.  | ✓ |  |
| You must have the ability to take ownership and generate solutions to problems at first contact reducing the need for repeat contacts from customers.  | ✓ |  |
| Experience in using active listening and effective questioning skills and efficient decision making skills to successfully de-escalate potential complaints. Experience of working to standards and using your own initiative.  | ✓ |  |
| Experience and ability to follow complex processes/policies & business rules to answer customer enquiries.  | ✓ |  |
| The ability to accept criticism and work well under pressure and deal with distressed, irate and aggressive members of the public in a responsive, sympathetic and tactful manner. | ✓ |  |
| Proven experience of maintaining high personal standards of performance, working in a contact centre target driven environment whilst adhering to the customer care charter. | ✓ |  |
| Experience of dealing with specialist services adhering to legislation and policies and the ability to develop your knowledge of specialist service areas. Have an understanding of council services.  | ✓ |  |
| Experience of active listening and negotiation skills in a debt collection environment. | ✓ |  |
| Experience in using multiple computer systems quickly and effectively ensuring accuracy and attention to detail.  | ✓ |  |
| The ability to multi task and flexibility to adapt to fast changing work environments. | ✓ |  |
| Experience in developing productive working relationships with colleagues and team members and contributing to team objectives. | ✓ |  |
| Have an understanding of the importance of maintaining confidentiality. | ✓ |  |
| Have the ability to converse at ease with customers and provide advice in accurate spoken English for an extended period of time where necessary. | ✓ |  |