

## JOB DESCRIPTION AND PARTICULARS OF APPOINTMENT

- Job Title: Benefits Officer
- Post Number: P10536/P10538/TBC/TBC
- Grade and SCP: Grade 7 SCP 12 - 17
- Directorate: Finance

### Where your role fits at Shropshire Council

At Shropshire Council we are rightly proud of our achievements and we have proven to be a resilient local authority in our response to the many challenges we overcome, particularly over recent years. We will be continuing this momentum with ambition and a focus on delivering our four key priorities outlined within the Shropshire Plan: Healthy People, Healthy Environment, Health Economy and Healthy Organisation.

We are committed to achieving this by aligning everything we do to our vision 'Shropshire - living the best life'; to tell everyone that Shropshire Council is a great place to be.

We will enable a skilled, happy, healthy, diverse, inclusive, empowered, and proud workforce that influences and leads change, addressing any inequalities.

As a member of the Benefits Team within the Revenues and Benefits Service, you will support the achievement of these key priorities, making a real difference to the lives of people in Shropshire.

The Revenues and Benefits Service sits within Finance. The Revenues and Benefits Service provides a wide range of services on behalf of the Council that affect the lives of every household and business in the county as well as the many customers paying for the services provided by the whole of the Council.

### Overview of your role

The main purpose of the post is to provide administrative, and customer focussed support within a Benefits Team to assist towards the Revenues and Benefits Service meeting its performance targets and aspirations.

### Who will your manager be and what will you be responsible for?

You will be:

- Responsible to a Benefits Team Manager who is in turn responsible for the post holder's health and safety, training and development.



## What will you be doing?

- To process all Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support claims in accordance with Government legislation, Housing Benefit legislation and in accordance with the Council's localised Council Tax Support Scheme.
- To ensure that all claims for Housing and Council Tax Support are processed accurately and within the targeted timescales.
- To identify, calculate and correctly classify all types of overpayments in order to maximise subsidy. To implement relevant recovery action where appropriate.
- To have regard to the subsidy implications of all data input and decisions made in respect of all claims.
- To produce standard and non-standard letters which require an in depth knowledge of procedures for effective and timely liaison with benefit customers.
- To deal with customer's enquiries in person also by telephone, in writing, by email and by text.
- Make recommendations regarding the backdating of claims for authorisation by the Senior Benefit Officer and action as appropriate.
- Make recommendations regarding 1<sup>st</sup> stage appeals for authorisation by the Senior Benefit Officer and action as appropriate.
- Interrogate and extract information from the Customer Information System provided by the Department of Works and Pensions.
- To recover overpaid Housing and Council Tax Benefit in accordance with the regulations and the Council's policy guidelines.
- To maximise benefit uptake in the County by identifying and advising customers on their potential entitlement to other welfare state benefits.
- To exercise vigilance in the identification of potentially fraudulent claims and to refer to SFIS as appropriate.



- To liaise with other bodies and agencies, where necessary, in order to facilitate the prompt and accurate assessment of Housing and Council Tax Support.
- Undertake such other duties associated with the activities of the Benefits Unit as may be required from time to time.

The above duties are an illustrative outline and are not an exhaustive list. You will be expected to become involved in a range of work to enable the service to respond effectively to the changing requirements of the Council and changes affecting the workforce.

## What we expect of you

You will:

- adopt a customer focused approach when delivering your service, ensuring engagement with service users and maintenance of an appropriate personal profile,
- act as an advocate for your service and work collaboratively with colleagues across the whole Council to meet the needs of the people of Shropshire,
- meet individual, service and personal development targets agreed through the Personal Development Review Process, learn from experience and are committed to continuous improvement individually and as an employee of the Council,
- work with colleagues to meet your team's key performance indicators, support a culture of team working and ensure the team functions successfully in support of the Council's corporate and service objectives.
- meet the behaviours and competencies adopted by the Council in the way in which they achieve their objectives and carry out their work.
- A priority for the Council is the protection of vulnerable people, ensuring they are able to live as independently as possible. The post-holder will promote and engage with Council's responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and adults, and protect their right to be safe from harm.

## What are your conditions of Service

The conditions of service are those laid down by Shropshire Council, which have been adopted and amended as necessary from those laid down by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services.

Your primary work base will be at The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay with the requirement to regularly work from home.

Your post is subject to the following:

- The post is permanent for 37 hours per week,



- Normal office hours are 8.45pm – 5.00pm Monday - Friday with a minimum lunch break of 30 minutes. Occasional evening work may be required,
- The post is subject to the Council's annualised hours scheme as implemented within the specific work area.

This post carries eligibility to join the Local Government Pension Scheme. Information about this will be sent with any formal offer of appointment.

Annual leave entitlement is a pro rata flat rate scheme of 207 hours (28 days) annual leave plus bank holidays, with five days extra awarded to those staff with five years local government service giving an entitlement of 244 hours (33 days). Two days of an employee's allowance (pro rota for part time staff) must be taken at Christmas for any potential Christmas closures. Employees who work in a building/service which is required to open over the Christmas period, the two days leave (pro rota) can be carried over into your next leave year but must be used by the end of March.

The appointment is subject to one months' notice in writing on either side.

The appointment is subject to six months' satisfactory probationary service during which time the notice period will be one week on either side.

Smoking is not allowed in Council buildings, in Council vehicles or in any Council place of work.

It is a condition of your appointment that you provide a suitable vehicle for the performance of your duties and that this is readily available for use during normal working hours. You are entitled to claim for reimbursement of the costs of travel on council business at the rate of 45 pence per mile.

## What pre-employment checks will we undertake?

The appointment is subject to receipt of the following pre-employment checks;

1. Satisfactory employment references,
2. Medical report,
3. Evidence of the qualifications required for the post/listed on your application form,

All applicants who are appointed to this post will be subject to a **Basic Disclosure check** once the appointment is confirmed. This check will include details of any unspent convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Supplying false information or failing to disclose relevant information could be grounds for refusal and could amount to a criminal offence

