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Council Tax Recovery & Inspection Team Leader

Job Description

Position Pay Level: 7
Position Pay SCP: 30-35
Salary: £43,253 - £48,795 **(inclusive of Local Weighting Allowance of £1,130 per annum)**
DBS requirement: Standard

Reports to: Revenues Manager
Responsible for: Specialist Recovery of Council Tax, Management of the Enforcement Agents Contract, ensuring all inspection functions are fulfilled.
Number of reports: 5
Financial Responsibilities: c. £125m income

Main purpose of Job:

As the Council Tax Recovery and Visiting Team Leader, you will lead and manage the Council Tax Recovery and Visiting teams ensuring delivery of the services objectives. You will need to provide strong, effective resource management across the team. Your five key deliverables will be:

- To be responsible for the provision of a cost efficient and proactive Council Tax Recovery and Visiting teams maximising both in-year and arrears, while maximising the collection fund yield for Council Tax and Business Rates through effective visiting resources.
- To be the Council's lead officer in the field of Council Tax Recovery and effectively manage the performance of the Council Tax Recovery and inspection teams to maintain a high level of professionalism and knowledge.
- To be the Council's lead Council Tax Recovery and inspection officer ensuring compliance with statutory legislation in the collection and recovery of Council Tax and the monitoring of all new/changes to residential and business premises and the effective visiting of all empty properties.
- To develop and implement innovative new ways of providing information and services to customers and to continually develop the use of new technologies and working practices.
- To co-ordinate the development, implementation and maintenance of effective systems procedures and controls working closely with the R&B Systems and Controls team, within the Revenues computer systems to safeguard the Council's finances and protect its reputation.

Main Accountabilities:

Strategy development

To actively support the Revenues Manager in the development and service delivery plan for Council Tax that supports the delivery of the Corporate Plan. To work closely with the Revenues Manager to ensure there is joined up working across the Revenues and Welfare Service.

Corporate leadership

As part of a Revenues Management team, you will need to deliver and continuously improve services and collaborate with colleagues, elected Members and partners to support the implementation of objectives in a range of cross-council initiatives. You should ensure that the staff that you manage recognise their contribution to the strategic objectives the council has set.

Service leadership and management

To ensure sound and robust leadership and management of the Council Tax Recovery and Visiting teams.

To identify opportunities to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the teams to ensure the delivery of continuous improvement; and creating a positive environment for people to perform, supporting, and encouraging their personal and professional development for current, and where applicable, future roles.

To set high, but realistic, performance management standards ensuring they are met and improving individual performance, challenging unacceptable performance and behaviour on a consistent basis when necessary.

Ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to progress all debts through the recovery cycles and setting clear framework so staff can identify the most suitable means of recovery to maximise income.

Resources / Financial management

Effective human resource management, ensuring all HR policies are applied fairly and consistently within the service.

Support the Revenues Manager in delivering the Revenues service annual budget.

Partners and stakeholders

To build constructive relationships with members, partners, colleagues across all service areas and contribute to developing and protecting the reputation of the council.

Promote a culture of partnership working and stakeholder involvement and look for opportunities for joint working with partners and other service areas.

Business change

To explore, recommend and implement innovative systems and processes that will continually improve performance.

The post holder will be expected to proactively embrace and drive the council's channel shift agenda, promoting the transition of services to digital platforms wherever possible. This will involve identifying opportunities to move customer engagement and transactional processes online, reducing reliance on more traditional contact methods, and supporting residents to access services digitally.

To seek to improve the efficiency of the service and cost through opportunities presented by technology.

To engage effectively with customers (internal and external), in order to understand their requirements from the service and meet their needs wherever possible.

Compliance

To keep abreast of developments in the field of debt recovery and enforcement law and ensure that service operates in accordance with modern good practice.

Interpretation and implementation of all legislative changes and/or changes in council policy and advise senior managers of relevant issues relating to policy and strategy; and ensuring that any new legislation is implemented effectively and incorporated into working processes, legislation, and customer needs.

Ensure that services are delivered in compliance with existing and new health and safety legislation and ensuring that duties are pursued in a safe manner with due regard to the health and safety of self and others.

Equality and diversity

Uphold and promote the aims of the council's equality and diversity policies to ensure non discriminatory practices in all aspects of work, and that diversity is embedded in everything, from workforce planning and policy development to service delivery

Specific responsibilities

- Coordinate day-to-day Council Tax Recovery and Visiting operations, supporting the Revenues Manager and working with the Council Tax Team Leader to prioritise workloads and allocate resources using data and insight. Use relevant IT systems to meet collection targets and respond to account changes and customer enquiries.
- Participate in staff recruitment and selection; document regular 1-2-1s on Cornerstone, set annual objectives, undertake personal development reviews, and set and monitor performance and quality targets and compliance with regulations, procedures and data security. Set improvement targets and escalate unmet targets to the Revenues Manager. Manage sickness absence, return-to-work interviews and Occupational Health referrals; undertake risk assessments, investigation interviews, grievance and disciplinary hearings as required.

- Provide technical advice, guidance and training to the Council Tax team to maximise collection and implement legislative and procedural changes. Attend regular specialist training to maintain accurate advice and service delivery.
- Identify and recover outstanding monies, applying judgement, legislation and best practice to select appropriate recovery methods. Negotiate payment arrangements, support customers in difficulty and refer to the Debt and Welfare team. Take legal action for persistent broken arrangements or missed payments, including attachments of earnings/benefits, committals, charging orders, bankruptcy and liquidation; initiate online benefit deductions and ensure continued collection complies with governing legislation.
- Identify cases for Enforcement Agents, act as their main contact and manage the flow of work and debt collection potential of cases passed to partner solicitors and agents. Monitor service-level agreements, attend partner meetings and escalate unresolved issues to the Revenues Manager.
- Identify irrecoverable debts, prepare write-off reports and evidence, and update systems.
- Develop the Council Tax recovery timetable with the Council Tax Team Leader, support year-end processes and contribute to setting Summons and Liability Order costs. Ensure Enforcement Agent cash receipts are posted and reconciled to Agresso monthly.
- Prepare and present Council Tax and Business Rates appeals to Valuation Tribunals and represent the council on all Revenues matters at the magistrates' court.
- Assist with processing work arising from the National Fraud Initiative and other data-matching or review initiatives, maintain customer confidentiality and service integrity, and safeguard council resources against fraud.
- Handle customer enquiries by telephone, letter, email, online and personal visit, balancing customer and council needs within relevant codes and standards. Ensure enquiries, Freedom of Information requests from customers and interested bodies, stage 1 complaints and Councillor enquiries are completed within corporate timeframes.
- Prepare reports, support statutory and statistical returns with supporting documentation, and provide information to internal and external auditors. Attend internal and external meetings, including outside normal working hours where required to deliver the Council Tax service.
- Maintain and review team forms, leaflets, letters, online documents and webpages, recommending changes; liaise with software, stationery and equipment suppliers as required.
- Lead projects to introduce new systems, services and procedures; support implementation, maintenance and monitoring of discretionary schemes, policies and working practices, keeping staff informed.
- Deputise for the Revenues Manager and undertake duties commensurate with the grade, or comparable duties elsewhere in the organisation, to support management development and service flexibility.

Person Specification:

Council Tax Recovery & Inspection Team Leader

Area	Description	Essential/ Desirable	Method: Application (A) Interview (I) Test (T)
Experience	Considerable experience of working in a Council Tax or Debt Recovery service.	E	A
	Proven ability to lead, manage, develop and motivate staff.	E	I
	Demonstrable experience of delivering effective training.	E	A
	Experience of dealing with those in difficult circumstances with the ability to show empathy including minority groups and vulnerable people	E	I
	Experience of handling customer complaints and resolving complex issues.	E	A
	Experience of using computerised financial based systems	E	A
	Experience of business/service planning establishing performance targets and monitoring procedures.	E	A
	Experience of monitoring information and producing reports	E	I
Skills and abilities	Be able to communicate effectively at all levels both verbally and in writing in order to promote the service area in a positive and professional manner.	E	I
	Sound numeracy and literacy skills along with financial logic	E	A
	Experience of representing an organisation externally both operationally and strategically with experience of providing politically neutral information to Elected Members.	E	I
	The ability to handle sensitive and confidential information professionally, discreetly and within the law.	E	A
	Ability and determination to deal with enforcement and legal situations.	E	I
	The ability to work flexibly, effectively time managing projects and duties in order to meet all competing deadlines.	E	I
	Ability to understand and disseminate complex and ever-changing legislation.	E	I

Area	Description	Essential/ Desirable	Method: Application (A) Interview (I) Test (T)
	The ability to offer services based on customer needs in the most efficient way, to support digitally excluded and identify behaviours that will accelerate the digital transformation	E	I
Knowledge and understanding	Knowledge of Council Tax Legislation and Regulations and sound knowledge of other types of debt collected by local authorities	E	I
	Good understanding of Welfare Benefits.	E	A
	Understanding, knowledge and ability to follow guidelines that ensures compliance with Health and Safety at Work, Data Protection, and other statutory requirements.	E	A
	An understanding and commitment to promoting and implementing the council's Equal Opportunities policies.	E	I
	An understanding of local government services.	E	I
Qualifications	3 A levels, or equivalent.	E	A
	IRRV Technician qualification or higher, or relevant experience	E	A
	Management or supervisory qualification	D	A