**EXETER CITY COUNCIL**

**Job Description**

**JOB TITLE :** Senior Benefits Subsidy & Integrity Officer

**GRADE :** 7

**POST NO :** 2184, 3993

**SERVICE :** Help Me with My Financial/Housing Problem System

**UNIT :** Customer Access

**REPORTS TO :** Benefits & Welfare Managers

**RESPONSIBILE FOR :** None

**LIAISON WITH :** Customers, Officers and Councillors of the Authority, DWP, External Auditors, other Local Authorities, IT systems suppliers, other relevant organisations and stakeholders.

**PURPOSE OF JOB**

1. To ensure the technical processing systems used within Benefits consistently achieve optimum performance, and are supportive to the System in a customer focussed way.
2. To protect the subsidy and reputation of the Council by working with internal and external auditors, carrying out necessary accuracy and integrity checks and housekeeping jobs, and taking any relevant corrective action on the system.
3. To ensure the correct amount of Housing Benefit Subsidy is claimed, including balancing to internal systems, submitting estimates and claims on time, and forecasting future expenditure.
4. To drive improvements within Benefits using ICT, leading and implementing projects which change the way existing systems are used or introduce new technology.
5. To provide advice and support to staff within the system regarding technical, subsidy and assessment queries, finding solutions to technical and integrity problems.

**MAIN ACTIVITIES**

1. **Maintain system accuracy – ensure accurate subsidy claim**
   1. Be the representative of the Benefits service in dealing with internal auditors, challenging findings where appropriate and taking relevant corrective action on the system.
   2. Represent the authority in dealing with external auditors, working to protect the subsidy claim and reputation of Exeter City Council.
   3. Put in place adequate systems, processes and checks to ensure an accurate subsidy claim is submitted and the risk of qualification at audit is minimised.
   4. Prepare and submit timely and accurate subsidy claims including initial estimate, mid-year estimate, final claim and any necessary amendments.
   5. Prepare and submit such figures as required by accounts team.
   6. Correcting claim and discount integrity errors and identifying other data integrity issues, making database modifications through the tables as required.
   7. Generating, checking and submitting all required statutory data returns for Benefits on time, and collecting and reporting measures for the system.
   8. Undertake stats and table amendments, subsidy integrity checks and classifications.
   9. Create, maintain and update Access databases and Excel spreadsheets used to support the Capita system.
   10. To protect the subsidy by carrying out daily checks and monthly monitoring, reporting errors and mentoring staff where errors are found.
   11. Balance the DHP claim and regularly monitor and report expenditure.
2. **System performance – customer focus**
   1. Responsible for the maintenance, development and reconciliation in relation to Benefits, of the Academy Revs and Bens system, and related modules, including testing, housekeeping, upgrades and making adaptations to ensure optimum performance, and the accuracy and integrity of the operating system at all times.
   2. To be responsive to solving system faults in order to minimise disruption to the service.
   3. Work with other Council services where Benefits systems interact with other areas.
   4. Accurately implementing all new system releases in a timely manner and providing appropriate training, guidance and support to staff.
   5. Undertaking the year-end routines for Benefits, including up-rating all statutory system parameters, the bulk updating of all welfare benefits, council tax and council rent liabilities, recalculating benefit awards for the whole caseload, and issuing annual award notifications.
   6. Maintaining the scheduler, system, division and report parameters; data archiving and authoring letter template changes.
   7. Correcting CIS interest indicators on unlinked ATLAS / ETD.
   8. To be the point of contact for Rent Officer, audit and technical queries.
   9. To be responsible for the Victer system, including check work and undertaking the testing of new releases, and providing advice on the changes included in new releases and their effect on procedures and practices and integrated systems.
3. **Improvements through technology**
   1. Use data to highlight financial implications, forecast savings and propose initiatives to save money or bring in income, as appropriate.
   2. Extract data where requested to inform reports and System improvements.
   3. Maximise use of automation opportunities where these will reduce demand on the service overall including ATLAS and bulk HA rent increases.
   4. To project manage all technical projects for Benefits as required, including keeping a check on expenditure, producing project progress reports, collating data required, managing resources, producing project plans and Equality Impact Assessments, preparing training notes and delivering training.
   5. Implementing and then maintaining all technical projects as required for Benefits, including self service, channel shift, avoidable contact and a SMS solution. Preparing and delivering training and guidance, answering queries and providing ongoing support.
4. **Provide expert advice, support and training**
   1. Work proactively to identify trends and patterns in errors identified through housekeeping and system maintenance work.
   2. Take early intervention action to tackle minor errors, preventing them from threatening Housing Benefit subsidy claims.
   3. Report error information back to the Benefits & Welfare Managers, and, where appropriate, address specific errors with the Officer concerned.
   4. Supporting and motivating staff within the system to be accurate and confident in decision making and in using the operating systems, by providing all technical and where appropriate, integrity training of staff.
   5. Work with Senior Benefits and Welfare Officers and Benefits & Welfare Managers to use what help has been requested by staff and errors identified to inform training priorities and plans.
   6. To provide technical advice, and on pull support to other Officers and Members of the Council, other Authorities, Agencies and external organisations as required, and provide data and information for Freedom of Information requests for Benefits.
5. **Other**
   1. Assisting with Senior Benefits and Welfare Officer duties including quality assurance checking as required.
   2. Carry out data matching and compliance work including HBMS, NFI and any ad hoc matching exercises agreed from time to time.
   3. To represent the Authority on internal and external groups and Committees as required, including the Capita user group, and provide feedback.
   4. Assessing claims for benefit, including those of a more complex nature, where necessary as part of normal duties and in times of backlog.
   5. Any other duties commensurate with the grade.

**DATE LAST UPDATED:** December 2015