

**RICHMONDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL
JOB DESCRIPTION**

JOB TITLE	Benefit Assistant	POST NUMBER	REVS BENS 10
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MAIN PURPOSE OF JOB:

The processes undertaken by the Revenues and Benefits Service involve large scale communications and high volume activity which is complex. They are dependant upon a wide span of law, regulations and case law and the effective and accurate use of inter related IT systems. Both the local taxation function and the administration of benefits are subject to frequent changes in legislation and government guidance. These changes require substantial training on a regular basis for existing staff and new entrants to the service.

SUPERVISORY/MANAGERIAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

SUPERVISION AND GUIDANCE:

Responsible to Senior Assessment Officer and Principal Benefits Officer

RANGE OF DECISION MAKING:

To accurately process claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction by making decisions on Council Tax liabilities, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction entitlement and recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments by applying legislation, guidance and procedures to ensure each applicant receives their full entitlement and repays their debts.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR ASSETS, BUDGETS, MATERIALS, ETC:

RANGE OF DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. To provide advice to customers on the Housing and Council Tax Reduction schemes, including giving estimates of benefit entitlement where appropriate.
2. Responsible for the verification, assessment, calculation and input of all types of Housing/ Council Tax Reduction applications by:
 - Communicating with members of the public by email, letter, telephone and on a personal basis.
 - Liaison and advising with external organisations such as Rent Officer, private landlords including Housing Associations.
 - Liaison with the government bodies in respect of clarifying, identifying and verifying entitlement to other welfare benefits such as Income Support/Job Seekers allowance.
 - Work closely with other departments on benefit matters particularly
 - Customer Services, Revenues and Housing.
 - Maintaining an up to date knowledge of Housing/Council Tax Reduction legislation and apply these to the working system.
 - Maintaining an up to date knowledge of the computerised benefit systems and the document management system including CIS and VEP where appropriate.

- Verifying the income and capital and circumstances of all applicants where required.
- Determining overpaid benefit including the recoverability and classification of overpayments for Housing Benefit, responding to associated queries and engaging with debtors to arrange repayment.
- Liaison with and preparation of referrals where irregularities are suspected for further investigation by the Veritau Fraud Investigators.
- Updating Council Tax records to ensure the correct liability is being charged before awarding Council Tax Reduction.

3. Accurate maintenance of all associated records
4. To promote a positive and customer focused approach to service delivery
5. Advise customers of potential entitlement to benefits
6. To give advice to customers in respect of other welfare benefits where appropriate, ensuring the customer receives the full benefit entitlement.
7. To liaise with Government departments, organisations and third parties as appropriate.
8. To promote the Housing and Council Tax Reduction schemes.
9. To assist in take up campaigns.
10. To attend and represent the Council at forums and meetings as and when required.
11. Such other duties as may from time to time be allocated to the postholder consistent with the responsibilities of the post.

CONTACTS:

SPECIAL CONDITIONS OF SERVICE:

COMPILED BY:	ASSESSMENT DATE:
COMPILED DATE:	ASSESSED BY: JW/JH
	POST GRADE: 5

Job Description
agreed by postholder.....

Date.....