

SOUTH DERBYSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL JOB DESCRIPTION

DIRECTORATE: **Resources and Transformation**

SERVICE: **Customer Services**

POST TITLE: **Benefits Officer**

GRADE: **Scale 5**

REPORTS TO: **Benefits Team Leader**

RESPONSIBLE FOR: **N/A**

The post holder will require a DBS Disclosure.

JOB SUMMARY

To administer Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction in accordance with government legislation, case law and local policy and to collaborate with customers who have Housing Benefit overpayments to ensure they pay their debt in line with agreed payment plans.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. To calculate, with the aid of the on-line computer system, Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction entitlement from information supplied by applicants and/or the Department for Work and Pensions.
2. Examine claim forms, verify supporting documents and cross-check information provided, to determine the evidence necessary for the assessment and award of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction.
3. To liaise with other departments in the authority and external organisations (including the Department for Work and Pensions, Social Services, Private Landlords and Housing Associations) regarding the efficient and accurate administration of Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction.
4. To action information and notifications received from customers, landlords, the Rent Service, HMRC and the Department for Work and Pensions so that Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction claims are accurate and customers are notified accordingly.
5. To assist in the answering of queries and providing information to benefit applicants, landlords, internal departments and external organisations both verbally and in writing.
6. Managing housing benefit overpayment related calls from claimants and landlords. This includes explaining the overpayment clearly, providing written information, and pursuing recovery action.
7. Such other duties as may, from time to time, be reasonable with the experience of the postholder and the grading of the post
8. To keep up to date with changes in legislation, policies and procedures.

Specific Duties

1. To accurately calculate Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction entitlement efficiently to avoid overpayments and minimise impact on subsidy.
2. To accurately process information received through the Verify Earnings and Pensions alert service, Universal Credit Data Share Manager and ATLAS Manager.
3. The despatch of documentation (including benefit notifications, cancellations, overpayment notices and review forms).
4. To assist with the reconciliation of benefit records with other revenue records and with those of the accountancy and housing sections.
5. To assist with the compilation of referrals to the Rent Officer Service.
6. To give advice to members of the public regarding eligibility to and the operation of the Housing Benefit and Council Tax Reduction Scheme.
7. To provide explanations to enable claimants (and, if appropriate their landlords or representatives) to understand the calculation of their entitlement to Housing and Council Tax Reduction.
8. Meet performance targets in the assessment of claims and ensure the correct completion of performance management tools.
9. Identify fraudulent claims and refer to the investigating department.
10. Sign post customers to other welfare benefits and financial assistance they may be entitled to.
11. Prepare a monthly file of housing benefit overpayment cases to investigate and submit this to HMRC via the DWP protocols
12. Initiate contact with cases identified on the monthly return file from HMRC - and work through forms of recovery commencing with the most efficient methods of direct payments - from the customer right the way through to invoking enforcement action where less expensive and less invasive recovery methods fail.
13. Monitor cases suitable for the Payment Deduction Program with DWP, receiving and allocating payments, recalling unsuitable cases and moving to appropriate recovery plan

General

1. To ensure adherence to the Council's Health & Safety Policy.
2. To comply with General Data Protection Regulations.
3. To comply with the Council's Employee Code of Conduct
4. To support, promote and comply with the Council's Equal Opportunities and Fairness Scheme when undertaking the duties of the post.

Date Issued: 24th November 2025

Issued by: Benefits Processing and Performance Manager