

Job Profile

Job Title: Housing Benefit Service Manager

Job Grade: Level 5.2

Salary Range: £51,542 - £62,995

About Camden

Camden is building somewhere everyone can thrive, by making our borough the best place to live, work, study and visit. Because, we're not just home to UK's fast-growing economy. We're home to the most important conversations happening today. And we're making radical social change a reality, so that nobody gets left behind. Here's where you can help decide a better future for us all.

This role plays a critical role in supporting residents on low incomes to live in Camden through the accurate awarding of housing benefit and council tax support for those on legacy benefits. It will lead on ensuring compliance with DWP regulations and guidance and managing the Council's annual subsidy claim worth over £180m a year.

About the role

1. Lead the Housing Benefit Legacy and Transition teams and the subsidy officers to ensure efficient and effective performance, compliance with legislation/policies, good use of resources, positive customer experience and delivery of key outcomes.
2. Responsible for the accurate awarding of housing benefits and Council Tax Support (for those on legacy benefits) - some £180m per annum – and managing the subsidy claim and audit process.
3. The post will be the service expert on housing benefit and will keep abreast of legislation, government guidance and best practice to ensure compliance with quality and data governance requirements and effective and efficient performance.
4. Work collaboratively across multiple services within the Council and external stakeholders to develop and deliver on supporting those required to migrate to Universal Credit, including working with housing, social care and community partners to ensure those needing help can access it and risks of hardship are mitigated
5. Ensure quality assurance is embedded into working practices and lead on DWP and Camden accuracy initiatives, ensuring reviews are undertaken and errors/poor practice corrected and data is accurately reported to government in order to claim funding

6. Establishing effective systems for the recovery of overpaid benefit, including working closely with Credit Control for those no longer on benefits, and liaise with finance on forecasting collection rates.
7. Ensure the accurate and timely submission of all subsidy claims and statistical information to Central Government and manage the subsidy audit process with the Council's designated external auditor, including co-ordinating testing and discussions on errors.
8. Manage the end of year processes including annual benefit notifications, government returns, rent changes and end of year accounting processes.
9. Be responsible for providing accurate and up to date financial, statistical, and performance monitoring information from all systems operating within or controlled by the service.
10. Work closely with the Service Manager for Council Tax and Council Tax Support to ensure a joined-up approach to CTS for those on legacy benefits and UC.
11. To improve services for the customer, ensuring that housing benefit and other forms of financial support are awarded accurately and fairly and are accessible and easily understood by the customer. Those experiencing hardship or other forms of distress are identified and supported to access the correct pathways for help.
12. Use data to understand the end-to-end service performance and work closely with Contact Camden and other delivery partners to improve outcomes and experience for users and staff. Capture insight from users and drive improvements in customer experience across all channels including online, telephony and correspondence and design out ineffective or low value processes.
13. Drive service improvement, efficiency and performance in their teams, ensuring policies and procedures for the service are regularly reviewed in line with legislation, best practice and are delivered in accordance with Council policies and desired outcomes.
14. Lead the people in the teams in a positive, fair and inclusive way, embedding a culture and way of working in the teams that aligns with Camden's values and delivers good performance, positive morale in a pressurised service and staff development.
15. The post holder will manage risk effectively, ensure compliance with health and safety and financial regulations, support audits, budget monitoring and work to design out fraud and error where possible
16. Responsible for ensuring complaints, members enquiries, freedom of information requests, MP letters etc. are dealt with in a timely and accurate manner with any lessons learnt, implemented and embedded in a timely fashion within the service, thus promoting continual service development and delivery.
17. Develop effective working relationships with a range of stakeholders including Council Tax, Contact Camden, IT, Credit Control, welfare teams, housing, social care and early help services and finance and key external stakeholders such as Camden Advice Network, DWP, training providers and peers from other local authorities.

18. Prepare and/or assist in the preparation of Council, Cabinet or other Council committees (attending as necessary) along with government returns relating to Housing Benefit
19. Represent Camden on professional bodies, brief members and senior leaders and deputise for the Head of Service where necessary.
20. Carry out special tasks, assignments, reports or duties that are commensurate to the role and/or grade, where applicable as requested.

About you

Strong experience and knowledge of benefits services and regulations.

Excellent operational management experience, leading a demand driven, high profile, fast paced team with the personal resilience and prioritisation skills to manage competing priorities.

Good financial and analytical experience, using data to understand and forecast performance with an attention to detail

Good interpersonal and communication skills, evidencing sound political acumen, influencing and collaboration skills across organisational boundaries

Experience of using data and insight to drive continuous service improvement with a strong customer focus, clarity of purpose and problem solving

Good people leadership skills to motivate and develop teams of staff working across various locations including remote, office and peripatetic working.

Work Environment:

Hybrid working with the expectation of the equivalent of at least one day a week in Camden. They may be required to work at weekend to support the testing of system releases and end of year processes.

People Management Responsibilities:

Two teams, each with team manager and then 23 staff below them. In addition, the post holder may lead project teams crossing organisational boundaries.

Relationships:

Government agencies – DWP, DLUCH

Partners – Greater London Authority, London Councils, courts and tribunals, neighbouring boroughs, Camden Advice Network partners

Contractors – multiple contractors covering processing, printing and systems

Members – strategic development and member enquiries

Internal – staff and leaders across organisation, esp Finance, Housing, Social Care/Early Help, Welfare teams, Credit Control, IT, Contact Camden

Over to you

We're ready to welcome your ideas, your views, and your rebellious spirit. Help us redefine our corporate services, and we'll redefine what a career can be.

Is this role Politically Restricted?

Some posts at Camden are politically restricted, which means individuals holding these posts cannot have active political role. For a list of all politically restricted roles at Camden [click here](#).

Diversity & Inclusion

We want Camden Council to be a great place to work and to ensure that our communities are represented across our workforce. A vital part of this is ensuring we are a truly inclusive organisation that encourages diversity in all respects, including diversity of thinking. We particularly welcome applications from Black, Asian and those of Other Ethnicities, LGBT+, disabled and neurodiverse communities to make a real difference to our residents so that equalities and justice remains at the heart of everything we do.

Agile working

At Camden we view work as an activity, not a place. We focus on performance, not presenteeism. We create trusting relationships, we embrace innovation rather than bureaucracy and we value people. Collaboration is the Camden way, silo working isn't.

At Camden we are proud to be one of Hire Me My Way's inaugural campaign supporters. Hire Me My Way is a national campaign led by Timewise, designed to increase the volume of good quality jobs that can be worked flexibly in the UK (www.HireMeMyWay.org.uk). Hire Me My Way aims to treble the number of available good quality flexible jobs to 1 million by 2020.

Asking for Adjustments

Camden is committed to making our recruitment practices barrier-free and as accessible as possible for everyone. This includes making adjustments or changes for disabled people, neurodiverse people or people with long-term health conditions. If you would like us to do anything differently during the application, interview or assessment process, including providing information in an alternative format, please contact us on 020 7974 6655, at resourcing@camden.gov.uk or post to 5 Pancras Square, London, N1C 4AG.

