

Job Description

JOB DETAILS	
Job Title	Business Rates Officer
Service Area / Team	Business Rates & Corporate Debt
Reports to	Business Rates & Corporate Debt Team Leader
Post Number	TBC
Grade & Annual Salary	D/E Level 1(D)/ Level 2(E)
Politically Restricted Post	No
DBS Requirement	Basic

JOB PURPOSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximising revenue due to the council by accurately processing, visiting, collecting and recovering Business Rates due within the statutory requirements. Consistently offering the highest level of service to our customers resolving issues with the least amount of contact. <p>At Level 2 the post holder will be expected to deal with more complex issues and cases, including taking the lead on investigative work, preparing case files and attending court. The main duties and responsibilities will be taken largely autonomously, using own initiative to secure best outcomes for the council, with limited supervision.</p>

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	Frequency (daily/weekly/ monthly/annually etc)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To process all Business Rates administration efficiently and accurately in line with current legislation and the operating procedures of the service. 	Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist the Business Rates & Corporate Debt Team Leader and Manager in preparation for annual billing. 	Annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manage multiple workstreams to ensure work is processed fairly and in date order, including but not limited to incoming emails and workflow. 	Daily

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To set up new properties, reporting to the Valuation Office, liaising with planning and the Valuation Office. Processing valuation schedules, street naming and numbering reports and maintenance of all property listings. 	Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To process BACS, DD reports efficiently and accurately to ensure minimal loss in revenue. 	Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure prelists are worked thoroughly to provide the best possible service to ratepayers, maximise Council revenue and protect the Council's reputation. 	Fortnightly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To calculate apportionments, discounts, exemptions, reliefs and refunds on Business Rates accounts, including debt transfers. 	Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and Building Control delegate lists to be checked and visits arranged accordingly. 	Weekly and Monthly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for visiting Business premises in the District: Empty premises, monitoring New Builds and issuing Completion Notices, to advise customers on splits, mergers, Section 44A relief and report to the Valuation Office Agency as appropriate. 	Weekly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prepare and refer write off's and debt management write off's where appropriate 	As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring credits are refunded or allocated as soon as practical, once identified. 	Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To research relevant legislation and case law in order to make independent decisions regarding accounts 	As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To take all incoming calls to the Business Rates & Corporate Debt team. 	As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify and refer irregularities of information to the Business Rates and Corporate Debt Team Leader or the Business Rates and Corporate Debt Manager. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To share information and ensure shared records are kept up to date promptly. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assist with the training/mentoring of new staff. 	As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To deal with ad hoc workstreams efficiently and effectively i.e. KIN referrals and Destin HUB. 	As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subscribe to knowledge hubs such as IRRV, Business Rates Information Letters to ensure continuous learning. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To promote a positive team spirit by working well with other team members, sharing responsibility of common goals and understanding different roles and responsibilities. 	Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To share information, knowledge and best practice with other team members in order to promote an ethic of continual improvement within the team. 	Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop good working relationships across the council and to have respect for other team members. 	Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To build good working with internal and external stakeholders e.g. Valuation Office Agency, Enforcement agents, Insolvency practitioners etc 	

Level 2 duties	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action accounts identified as insolvent, liaising with insolvency practitioners and submitting proof of debt promptly for the Council's claim. 	As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To administer the recovery of NNDR debt owed to the council via the court list, arrears reports and enforcement agent returns, using tracing methods and persuasive and negotiating techniques to maximise income to the Council. 	Monthly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To attend court, representing the authority for Court actions relating to Council Tax and Business Rates liability. 	Bi-monthly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managing recovery on accounts post liability order and insolvencies 	As required

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITIES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adhere to the council's safeguarding policies and procedures and undertake relevant training in order to help protect children and vulnerable adults within the district. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To comply with legislation, council policies and procedures including the Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act, Information Security Policy, the Code of Conduct for Officers and to participate in any Emergency Planning activities as required. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To actively demonstrate the values and behaviours of the council. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure our customers are valued by taking into account their views and needs in all that we do. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To contribute to the development and achievement of relevant corporate and service objectives by suggesting ideas for service improvements. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To communicate openly and honestly with colleagues, members and customers. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To undergo any training necessary to be able to fulfil the requirements of the job. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To carry out other duties commensurate with the grade, skills, experience and qualifications of the post holder as directed and as may be required from time to time. 	

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION	
Responsibility for Staff (direct reports)	NA
Responsibility for Staff (indirect reports)	NA

Financial / Budgetary Accountability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall Accountability/control (£ value) • Directly Managed (£ value) • Income Generation (£ value) 	NA
Responsibility for Physical Resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicles / Equipment / Tools • Information Systems • Buildings / External Locations • Maintenance • Stocks / Supplies / Procurement 	<p>Responsible for laptop, footprint device and mobile phone.</p> <p>Responsible for regularly updating the processing systems e.g. e-Financial and Northgate system in relation to liability for business rates with due regard for confidentiality and accuracy.</p>
Responsibility for Service Contracts	NA

The wider context of the role (if applicable)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions on accounts in terms of who is liable and who to bill.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approx 4000 Ratepayers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions on whether to reward reliefs or exemptions.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decide on writing off balances up to £25.00 and preparing any higher amounts to be verified and/or authorised by the Business Rates and Corporate Debt Team Leader.

NATURE OF CONTACTS	
Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colleagues • Managers
External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of the public • Business Owners • Insolvency practitioners • Enforcement Agents • Valuation Office Agency • Rating Agents •

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

- **Describe how and by whom the post is managed**

The postholder will be managed by the Business Rates & Corporate Debt Team Leader. The postholder should be able to work with minimal supervision, only seeking advice on more complex or rare cases.

- **Describe the level of initiative and/or independence expected**

The postholder makes decisions based on existing policies and legislation. Adequate guidance notes are available. There is some discretion for payments and/or payment methods on arrears.

At level 2 – The post holder is required to deal with and respond independently to more difficult issues as and when they arise.

- **Location - Flexible / fixed desk worker**

The post is based at the Civic Centre, Folkestone but designated as a flexible worker to enable mobile working as appropriate according to the service area requirements. The postholder is also required to visit business premises as a lone worker.

- **Describe the level of IT competence and skill required for the post holder**

The postholder is required to use NEC Revenues and Benefits as well as eFinancials and Northgate document management. The postholder would be expected to have a good working knowledge of the Microsoft package and Teams.

- **Describe the working conditions**

The postholder has to carry out visits totalling approximately 1 day per week.

- **Describe any emotional demands on the post holder**

The emotional demands on the postholder would come from reactions of ratepayers to action being taken against them, this can result in anger and upset. Some landlords and particularly rating agents can be quite aggressive in their approach.

- **Describe any physical demands placed on the post holder**

The postholder has to be able to drive to visits and navigate around towns/villages in the District.

- **Describe any mental demands placed on the post holder**

Most tasks will be relatively short for a fully trained Officer. Completing schedules will require more concentration and could be interrupted by an incoming call.

At Level 2 - Prepping a liability order court and taking the court itself will put more pressure on the officer and require full, uninterrupted concentration **over a longer period of time.**

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Progression in Role

- **Starting – the required related knowledge / skills / qualifications and experience required at selection**

- GCSE's in Maths and English or recent experience that demonstrates proficiency.
- Recent experience in working within a customer services/Revenues/Valuation environment.
- Competent IT skills and experience of operating MS Office systems such as Word, Excel and Outlook

- **Induction – what initial induction / training is required to become proficient in this role?**

During the first few weeks of employment the post holder will be expected to follow the basic corporate induction framework, attend the next available formal corporate induction session and complete any departmental induction requirements.

In addition, the post holder will need to:

- Learn the functionality of systems including NEC, NDM and eFinancials and gain experience in using these applications
- Learning the relevant legislation that underpins Non Domestic Rates
- Learn the internal procedures for Non Domestic Rates processing and visiting
- Understand the financial and reputational impact of their work

- **Proficient – how would this be displayed in the role?**

- To independently refer and upload changes to the VOA.
- To independently work the VOA schedules actioning any other changes on the accounts, actioning refunds and completing interest calculations.
- Manage own workload efficiently, diarising prelists, using event dates and ensuring corrections are rectified promptly.
- Use knowledge hubs available to independently complete work.
- Become an integral part of the wider Business Rates & Corporate Debt Team assisting with incoming calls.
- Ensuring that any empty/new properties are monitored in a timely manner

- **Advanced (Level 2) – what additional characteristics will be displayed?**

- Identify and recommend service improvements.
- Deal with more complex and unusual cases unsupported.
- Promptly and accurately process Non-Domestic Rates insolvency cases, ensuring proof of debt submitted to secure any available payment to the Council.
- Have the confidence to negotiate and recover arrears from ratepayers with various methods available maximising revenue.

- To attend Magistrates court making the Business Rates application and putting forward the Council's case when a defendant appears before the bench.

Folkestone & Hythe District Council Person Specification

Post Title: Business Rates Officer

Important Information for Applicants:				
The criteria listed in this person specification are the requirements for the post. Where the method of assessment is stated to be the application form, your application needs to demonstrate clearly and concisely how you meet each of the criteria, even if other methods of assessment are also shown. If you do not address these criteria fully, you may not be shortlisted. Please give specific examples wherever possible.				
Factors	Criteria	Means of Assessment		
		Application	Interview	Test
Qualifications	Essential (Level 1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good basic education to GCSE A-C standard or equivalent (including Maths & English), or experience that demonstrates proficiency 	✓		
	Desirable (Level 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> IRRV technician / willingness to achieve or equivalent experience 	✓		
Experience and Knowledge	Essential (Level 1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recent and relevant experience in an administrative role within a customer services environment Good IT skills including experience of operating MS Office systems such as Microsoft Office, Word, Excel, Outlook and Teams 	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	
	Desirable (Level 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previous experience in a similar role Demonstrable experience / knowledge of non-domestic rates legislation Knowledge/experience of NEC and NDM systems Recent and relevant Revenues experience 	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
	Essential (Level 1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to interpret relevant legislation and Council policies and procedures and apply this to specific cases 		✓	

Skills and Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The postholder must be able to navigate around the district to visit relevant non domestic properties • Ability to work as part of a team • Ability to operate on own initiative with minimal supervision • Excellent written and oral communication skills • High level of attention to detail and accuracy • Competent user of IT, particularly Microsoft Office • Proactive and committed to continued service and personal development • Ability to adapt and proactively organise and prioritise work effectively in order to meet deadlines and maintain high standards at all times • Ability to demonstrate a professional and customer orientated approach • Excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to operate and build excellent working relationships at all levels 	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
	Desirable (Level 2) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excellent negotiation and persuasive skills enabling the recovery of arrears and maximising revenue ▪ Ability to deal with complex cases and situations ▪ Ability to interpret complex management information and take proactive action ▪ Ability to present information in Court in a clear and concise way ▪ Willingness to proactively learn legislation and procedures regarding other corporate debt functions 		✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	