**Job Profile comprising Job Description and Person Specification**

**Job Description**

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| **Job Title:**  SSA Business Rates Officer | **Grade**:  Scale 6 – SO2 |
| **Section:**  Council Tax, Business Rates and HB Recovery | **Directorate:**  Resources |
| **Responsible to following manager:**  Business Rates Manager | **Responsible for following staff:**  n/a |
| **Post Number/s:** | **Last review date:**  February 2020 |

**Working for the Richmond/Wandsworth Shared Staffing Arrangement**

This role is employed under the Shared Staffing Arrangement between Richmond and Wandsworth Councils. The overall purpose of the Shared Staffing Arrangement is to provide the highest quality of service at the lowest attainable cost.

Staff are expected to deliver high quality and responsive services wherever they are based, as well as having the ability to adapt to sometimes differing processes and expectations.

The Shared Staffing Arrangement aims to be at the forefront of innovation in local government and the organisation will invest in the development of its staff and ensure the opportunities for progression that only a large organisation can provide.

**Job Purpose**

To provide a professional, proactive, customer focussed service to maximise revenue for the organisation, through the assertive administration, collection and advanced recovery of business rates and BID levies, which will focus the service in meeting their statutory and legal obligations and SSA objectives, whilst maximising collection and recovery of the aforementioned charges.

**Specific Duties and Responsibilities**

**Scale 6**

* Responsible to the Business Rates Manager to maintain an IT database consisting of open and closed accounts relating to approximately 15,000 live business rates assessments across both Boroughs, plus any associated BID accounts.
* Respond to written general correspondence and occasionally take telephone calls to provide advice, information and assistance relating to business rates and BIDs to customers, outside agencies or other public authorities.
* Adhere to current legislation and regulations relating to business rates and BIDs.
* Proactively identify any reductions that are relevant to cases and facilitate the application for such reductions. Be able to assess eligibility to any reduction and advise the customer as necessary.
* Identify and progress appropriate recovery action against customers through the statutory recovery process using lists of arrears cases and case referrals. Allocate Enforcement Agent (EAs) payments, advising EAs of direct payments and account amendments. Set and monitor SPARS (payment arrangements). Checking of the database along with general housekeeping.
* Attend and represent both Councils at both the Magistrates Court and High Court as required. This will involve negotiating payment arrangements with challenging customers and giving evidence under oath where required.
* Contribute towards the development of good working relations and collaborative arrangements with relevant third party organisations including private, voluntary and other public organisations, to forge effective partnership working.
* Undertake any other duties as may reasonably be required as directed by the Business Rates Manager across all areas of business rates and BIDs.

**Competency at Scale 6 and the knowledge and experience of the Scale SO1 must be shown to move to the next grade (Scale SO1)**

* All duties shown at Scale 6 achieved to a high standard and over an extended period, as determined by the Business Rates Manager.
* Ability to interpret and deal with more complex areas of the regulations on complex cases.
* Attend High Court attendance for any case referrals as an expert witness, with specialised technical knowledge.
* Provide support to Business Rates Inspector in terms of administration, such as contacting customers about visits, writing completion notices, Charitable Inspections, Section 44a notices, and providing Health and Safety backup where required. Occasional ad hoc visits may be required as part of inspector support.

**Competency at Scale SO1 and the knowledge and experience of the Scale SO2 must be shown to move to the next grade (Scale SO2)**

* All duties shown at Scale 6 and Scale SO1 achieved to a high standard and over an extended period, as determined by the Business Rates Manager
* To carry out changes to rateable values as advised by the valuation office and perform reconciliation of the rateable values and application of transitional relief, as necessary.
* Progress recovery cases through the insolvency route by identifying and making case referrals and then by liaison with both Councils’ appointed practitioners and insolvency solicitors.
* Deal with complex enquiries, complaints and appeals from customers by phone, face to face or in writing.
* Ensure all Member and MP enquiries about service delivery are dealt with promptly and effectively.
* Interprets and assists in the implementation of any changes in complex and detailed legislation.
* Represents the Service at internal and/or external meetings.
* Contributes to training of more inexperienced Business Rates staff

**Generic Duties and Responsibilities**

* To contribute to the continuous improvement of the services of the Boroughs of Wandsworth and Richmond.
* To comply with relevant Codes of Practice, including the Code of Conduct and policies concerning data protection and health and safety.
* To adhere to security controls and requirements as mandated by the SSA’s policies, procedures and local risk assessments to maintain confidentiality, integrity, availability and legal compliance of information and systems
* To promote equality, diversity, and inclusion, maintaining an awareness of the equality and diversity protocol/policy and working to create and maintain a safe, supportive and welcoming environment where all people are treated with dignity and their identity and culture are valued and respected.
* To understand both Councils’ duties and responsibilities for safeguarding children, young people and adults as they apply to the role within the council.
* The Shared Staffing Arrangement will keep its structures under continual review and as a result the post holder should expect to carry out any other reasonable duties within the overall function, commensurate with the level of the post.

**Additional Information**

The role is a combination of office based and home working depending on service needs (on completion of the probation period).

This is a high volume and pressurised work environment, which is target based and performance driven. Service requirements will constantly shift within the department to maximise collection and ensure statutory and case law compliance.

**Team structure**

For the current structure please go to The Loop.

**Person Specification**

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| **Job Title:** SSA Business Rates Officer | **Grade**: Scale 6 – SO2 |
| **Section:** Council Tax, Business Rates and HB Recovery | **Directorate:** Resources |
| **Responsible to:** Business Rates Manager | **Responsible for:** N/A |
| **Post Number/s:** | **Last Review Date:** February 2020 |

**Our Values and Behaviours**

The values and behaviours we seek from our staff draw on the high standards of the two boroughs, and we prize these qualities in particular:

**Being open.** This means we share our views openly, honestly and in a thoughtful way. We encourage new ideas and ways of doing things. We appreciate and listen to feedback from each other.

**Being supportive.** This means we drive the success of the organisation by making sure that our colleagues are successful. We encourage others and take account of the challenges they face. We help each other to do our jobs.

**Being positive.** Being positive and helpful means we keep our goals in mind and look for ways to achieve them. We listen constructively and help others see opportunities and the way forward. We have a ‘can do’ attitude and are continuously looking for ways to help each other improve.

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| **Person Specification Requirements** | **Assessed by**  **A**  **&**  **I/ T/ C (see below for explanation)** |
| **Knowledge** | |
| Understanding of all aspects of Business Rates and BID legislation, collection and recovery. | A/I/T |
| Proficient at verbal and written communication on business rates and BID related matters. | A/I/T |
| Knowledge of modern IT systems in the context of Local Taxation. | A/I |
| In depth knowledge of practices and procedures that promote continuous improvement to service delivery of business rates and BIDs. | A/I |
| (SO2) In depth knowledge of complex legislation relating to business rates including rates avoidance and retention policies. | A/I |
| **Experience** | |
| Track record of working in the field of Business Rates which required an understanding of legislation and procedures | A/I |
| Regular court attendance at both the Magistrates Court and High Court as required. | A/I |
| (SO1) Managing and arranging inspection work | A/I |
| (SO2) Managing insolvency cases, calculating and explaining transitional relief, dealing with complaints and Member enquiries. | A/I |
| **Skills** | |
| Expert user status of specialist IT systems associated with business rate and BIDs, including ability to assist with testing etc. | A/I |
| Dealing with conflict and negotiation | A/I |
| (SO2) Ability to produce and present appropriate management information in support of the aims and objectives of the section / SSA / Councils | A/I/T |
| **Qualifications** | |
| (SO2) IRRV or equivalent professional training | A/I/C |

**A – Application form / CV**

**I – Interview**

**T – Test**

**C - Certificate**