ADUR & WORTHING
COUNCILS

Job Description & Person Specification

Authority	ADC / WBC
Directorate	Housing & Communities
Post Title	Customer Service Adviser (First Line)
Post Number	TBC
Accountable to	Customer Service Team Leaders x3
Responsibility for	None
Key leadership relationships	**Internal:** Members of the Council, Chief Officers and all other appropriate Council officers and managers **External:** Members and Officers of other bodies, specialist agencies, media, contractors and consultants, partner agencies across the public, private and voluntary sectors.
Work style	Blended
Last updated	07/24

Job Description: Principal purpose of job (role summary)

To provide advice and query resolution for Adur & Worthing residents/customers regarding a wide range of council services, and to do so without onward referral wherever possible.

Services on which the post holder advises (unaided by scripts) include Revenues & Benefits, Housing, Adur Homes, Waste & Recycling, Environmental Health, Planning, Building Control, Leisure & Parks and General Enquiries.

Both our Contact Centre and our Face to Face areas are high volume, fast paced environments that assist a diverse customer base. Each post holder is based in one of those two environments, but will provide cover for the other when needed.

Expectations of post holder

Willingness to embrace change and ability to adapt to new ways of working.
Enthusiasm for working across teams in collaboration and partnership in order to help deliver Our Plan.
Act with honesty and openness, and be brave enough to contribute your ideas and get involved.
Bring your passion for delivering a high quality service for our residents to your role.
Engage proactively in your performance and development conversations, and embrace opportunities to learn and grow.
Live how we work with each other and our customers: ● We listen ● We say what we think and do what we say ● We are inclusive and kind ● We are ambitious ● We think and act beyond ourselves and our service ● We are a team
Promote the service and Councils positively at all times.

Role specific duties and responsibilities
Provide excellent customer service in accordance with the councils' customer service standards. Communicate professionally and warmly at all times, assess and address customer needs and ensure the customer is aware of next steps and of a timescale for those. Acknowledge issues that the council cannot resolve and signpost the customer to alternative support providers when possible.
Pre-empt future customer contact by highlighting information and advice beyond that which the customer has asked for. Pre-empt "failure demand" by managing customer expectations appropriately.
Manage and positively influence challenging customer interactions to suitable resolution and preempt escalation of customer distress/anger. Provide explanations of the councils' decisions and actions with reference to relevant legislation, policy and Procedures.
Continually develop knowledge of all the councils' services, functions and roles, sharing any updates across the team to ensure a consistent approach is taken by all advisers. Similarly, develop and maintain up to date knowledge of the national benefits system in in order to deal with a large volume of benefits queries.

Promote the recovery of council tax revenue by advising customers on likely recovery action should the customer's account fall into arrears and, without referral, negotiate repayment plans tactfully but assertively. Exercise discretion to withdraw a final demand, where satisfied with the arrangements made. Apply single person and other discounts to customer accounts when appropriate.
Develop and maintain good general knowledge of the councils' computer systems, digital platforms, software systems and applications, in order to record and answer customer enquiries/information quickly and accurately. Ensure that strict confidentiality is maintained in accordance with GDPR/other relevant legislation.
Actively promote to customers the means by which they can access information or request council action, guide and assist customers to shift contact channels and be ready to support multi-channel access via phone, face to face, eforms, online applications, social media, webchat etc.
Liaise with service providers and partners as needed to ensure resolution of customer issues that do need other service input (e.g. contractors booked to carry out repairs). Escalate urgent enquiries via the appropriate service protocols if required.
Meet/exceed all applicable performance targets/key performance indicators relating to enquiry handling and adviser productivity. The post holder must handle calls efficiently, but without a negative impact on the customer experience. Participate in all training and coaching offered (and/or train less experienced staff when appropriate) and be responsive to new ideas/changing circumstances e.g increased use of floor walking in face to face areas.
Proactively identify potential risks from and to customers who may be vulnerable, angry, upset or in crisis. Training will be provided to identify safeguarding issues and to raise these with the councils' specialist safeguarding team.
Accurately process card (and, less frequently, cash) payments for customers in line with financial regulations.
Contribute to identifying and implementing customer service improvements, via customer satisfaction surveys, initiatives and projects. The post holder is best placed to identify frequently asked questions/frequently raised problems highlighted by our customers regarding council services and is expected to report these, with recommended solutions, to other service areas and to the wider customer service team. The post holder also needs to identify shifts in customer access preferences and to adapt recommendations accordingly.
Work as part of an effective team, with a flexible approach to cover the variety of duties and demands, including covering or providing assistance in any section of the department when necessary, whether due to annual leave/sickness or to respond to peaks/troughs in particular access channels.
Undertake such other duties as may reasonably be allocated to the postholder.
Undertake all duties in accordance with Council policies and the Code of Conduct for Council Officers, in particular those relating to Customer Care and Equal Opportunities.

Undertake any duties regarding health, safety and welfare at work, civil contingencies and business continuity which may reasonably be allocated to the postholder as a result of legislation, codes of practice or Council policies.
Duties specific to Face to Face Customer Service:
Complete council forms with customers, check and inspect forms for pre-assessment prior to passing to the Revenue & Benefits team, and validate customer documents in line with relevant guidelines and using ultraviolet scanners to detect and reduce fraud.
Operate with autonomy in a customer facing setting and sometimes without on-site supervision, including at outreach locations when required (outreach requirements not anticipated to be frequent).
When working from the Shoreham Centre, be responsible for the safekeeping, administration and sale of keys for all Adur Homes communal properties. Maintain a log of keys coming in/out of the Shoreham centre and allow use of Master keys by contractors and of keys for void properties and garages by appropriate personnel.
When in Shoreham, process Foreign Pension forms by verifying the identity of the applicant, completing relevant paperwork and using the Chairman of Adur Council's seal on the legal documentation. In Worthing, this task is performed by the Mayor's Office.
Provide assistance to Face to Face customers on how to use self-service options (on council self-service computers or the customers' own devices)
Duties specific to Contact Centre Customer Service
Receive calls on the councils' VIP number, which is a priority line provided to Elected Members. Resolve Member queries or action requests to put them in touch with specific council officers.
Present service information and customer-relevant information from across the councils at daily team meetings and highlight information/speaker input that would be helpful to address emerging customer themes or issues.
Advise out-of-area callers who use our Tourist board number and provide information/local brochures to those out-of-area callers.

As the post holder, you will be required to undertake such other duties as may be required within your grade and competence, and therefore the list of duties in this job description should not be regarded as exclusive or exhaustive.

Duties will be set out in this job description but please note that the Council reserves the right to update the job description, from time to time, to reflect changes in, or to, the role. The post holder will be consulted about any proposed changes. Significant permanent changes in duties and responsibilities will require agreed revisions to be made to this job description.

Adur & Worthing Councils recognise the need to ensure the welfare of children and vulnerable adults when they come into contact with services provided by the Councils. Employees, volunteers and Elected Members have regular contact with the general public during the course of their work and are in a position to observe signs which might indicate that a person is at risk of harm and abuse. If signs, which cause concern, are observed, all employees (temporary and permanent), volunteers and Elected Members have a duty to report allegations, disclosures and suspicions of abuse or neglect in line with the Councils' Safeguarding Policy.

Person Specification:

The core skills and competencies below are taken from our organisational Skills and Competencies Framework v1.0 and are an indication of the expectations we have of our employees. The full document will be shared with you as part of the onboarding process.	
Participative	Build strong relationships with people inside and outside your team and organisation to make a difference to improved outcomes for the local area Engage in clear and positive written and verbal communication to help people understand what you want to achieve and how they can help Value the unique strengths of people from different backgrounds to promote a culture of inclusion, equality and diversity More detail can be found in the Participation Skills & Competencies.
Adaptive	Adopt an active interest in learning and development opportunities that will enable you to strengthen and broaden your skills Experiment with new ways of working to help continuously improve how we deliver outcomes (including through the use of digital tools and platforms) Anticipate new challenges & opportunities to be able to adapt to change around you
Resilient	Embrace a consistently positive attitude and effectively prioritise workload to support your own wellbeing Cultivate a supportive environment with colleagues so people feel part of a team that looks out for each other Prioritise the use of resources that helps us be financially and environmentally sustainable
Leadership	Be open to coaching approaches to support others in finding solutions to problems Role model the principles above to inspire others to demonstrate positive behaviours Develop an understanding of the political processes that guide our organisation and show commitment to the safeguarding of others

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	• GCSE level passes or equivalent education (Maths & English essential) • DBS Basic check	• Customer service qualification
Knowledge	• Telephone or face to face customer service experience in a fast paced/high volume context. • Post holder must be able to learn fast and to be able to retain and recall knowledge about a broad range of council services in order to respond on the spot in order to resolve multi-faceted queries.	• Knowledge of Council services and/or associated legislation/policy, especially council tax/business rate, housing services and benefits, housing repairs and management, waste/recycling and environmental health matters. • Previous call centre &/or face to face customer advisory experience
Experience	• Minimum experience requirements for the role	• Experience over and above minimum requirement.
Communication	• Strong communication skills and the ability to adapt style/content to suit the audience, plus ability to produce high quality written work. • Ability to work largely autonomously, to resolve customer queries without referral to colleagues whenever possible. • Tact and diplomacy are key in this role to deal with difficult/distressing situations and to calm customers who may become upset and/or angry, • Good numeracy skills to carry out calculations, process or reprofile payments/explain forms/bills	• Complaint handling skills • Familiar with local ICT systems used by the team e.g. Orchard, Liberty Create/Converse

	• Good IT skills with an ability to use a multitude of applications and ensure customer records are captured correctly. • Analytical skills, to understand and solve problems using service knowledge. • Ability to work well in a team, demonstrating cooperation and supporting skills. • Ability to build trusting, collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers. • Ability to deal consistently with conflict and to remain calm and solution-focused when others become angry or distressed.	
Relationship Building	• Minimum level of relationship skills needed • Types of relationships the role needs to maintain	• Relationship building skills over and above minimum requirement
Analytical	• Good problem-solving skills, and the ability to display good judgement when dealing with customers.	
Planning/ Organising	• Organisational skills and ability to maintain attention to detail on a sustained basis • Able to prioritise tasks, adapt to varying demands and manage call/visit lengths appropriately and sensitively.	
Abilities	• Physical Ability to use IT/telephony systems.	

	• Able to deploy between customer service locations	
Mental	• Able to remain calm and positive under pressure • Demonstrates personal resilience and mental stamina to deal with large volume of calls or visitors or enquiries via other channels each day	
Emotional	• Emotional intelligence to recognise and manage own and others' emotions. • Emotional resilience and ability to maintain appropriate professional boundaries when listening to customers who are in difficult or distressing circumstances	
Working conditions / Style	• Although the council supports flexible working, due to the operational needs of this service, flexibility in working hours is very restricted. • Staff engaged in face to face settings will be expected to wear a uniform or adhere to an appropriate dress code standard.	
Other requirements	• Valuing kindness and compassion in the workplace • Acceptance of political restriction • Able to travel within the Adur District and Worthing Borough	

Job description & Person Specification agreed by:

Post holder (Print name):	
Signature:	
Date:	