

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER:

TO: EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE – 26th JUNE 2006

SUBJECT: BENEFITS SERVICE STAFFING

FROM: CUSTOMER INFORMATION AND ADVICE DIRECTORATE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To request Member approval for the re-designating of posts T03270 & T03310 from Benefits Assistant to Benefits Document Management Centre Officer.
- 1.2 To request Member approval for the re-designating of posts T03300 from Benefits Assistant to Assessment Officer.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The council has a corporate objective of managing its services openly, effectively and efficiently. A key action in achieving this objective is to develop an Electronic Document and Records Management System. The system would allow paper documents to be electronically scanned and then referenced so that they could be held in a central “document store.”
 - 2.1.1 To manage this process the council has established a Document Management Centre (DMC) and following a learning stage involving the Planning Service, a roll-out programme for all the council’s service areas has been agreed.
 - 2.1.2 Each service area is required to examine its current processes and procedures and bring forward plans to transform the way it delivers its service which encompass the new ways of working.

Proposed Benefits Processes

- 2.1.3 The Benefits Service has already moved its post opening function to the DMC and it is envisaged that the resource already provided will be sufficient to deal with the scanning of documents. However, the second part of the document management process is referencing (assigning a claim number). An analysis of the work associated with referencing has concluded that this would be more efficiently done in the DMC in conjunction with some of the tasks which are currently carried out on the pre-assessment team. The functions which could be performed in the DMC are:
 - Document Referencing;
 - Pending claim creation;
 - Requests for information;
 - Return of original documents.

Staff Requirements

- 2.1.4 An analysis has been made of the number of claims received in the post and total number of documents received over the last year. This suggests the following figures:

New claims in the post	= 1200
Total documents received (including above)	= 32,000

This suggests that 5 claims in the post and 120 documents are received each day.

To deal with each claim takes 30 minutes (Total 150 minutes) and to reference a document and assign it to the appropriate document type takes 2 minutes (240 minutes). Therefore the total time to deal with the tasks would be approximately 390 minutes (6.30 hours). However, it is recognised that this is a new area of work and to ensure the robustness of the business it is considered prudent to deploy two officers (15 hours) to deal with the work. This will provide adequate cover for holidays, sickness, training etc.

Implications for the Pre-Assessment team

- 2.1.5 The pre-assessment team has three officers graded at H. The new job descriptions have accountabilities that are similar in nature to those of the pre-assessors; however, they also require competencies which are not currently required viz understanding of scanning and referencing functionality; understanding of IBS workflow functionality.

It is proposed that the 3 Pre-Assessment posts are deleted from the establishment and replaced by two officers in the Document Management Centre undertaking the duties detailed above and a third Assessment Officer post be created.

3 POLICY AND BUDGET FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 Members have identified that a key objective for the Council is to manage its resources openly, effectively and efficiently. This is reflected in Corporate Strategy target CO 1. The proposals in this report help to achieve this in the Benefits Service.

3.1.1 Revenue Cost

- 3.1.2 Re-designation of posts T03270 & T03310 from Benefits Assistant to Benefits Document Management Centre Officer would have no cost as it is envisaged that the new posts would be graded at H.

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|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| 3.1.3 Re-designation of post T03300 from Benefits Assistant | = | £17,668 |
| to | | |
| | Assessment Officer | = £18,545 |
| | | ----- |
| | | £-877 |

- 3.1.4 The increased cost can be met from within the Benefits Budget by a virement from the Overtime Provision. Therefore there will be no revenue effect for the authority.

4 RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 Members approve the proposals detailed in Section 1 of the report.

Andrew Jones
Head of Revenues and Customer Services

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Areas in District Affected: All
Key Decision: No
Included in Forward Plan: No

For further information about this report please contact:

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