

Kent County Council

Job Description: *Pensions Officer*

Directorate:	Chief Executive's Department
Unit/Section:	Finance Division / Pensions
Location:	Maidstone (Invicta House)
Grade:	KSG
Responsible to:	Pensions Team Manager

Purpose of the Job:

The Kent Pension Fund provides high quality financial services, ensuring the correct calculation of pension benefits. This position plays a lead role in the provision of pension administration services to external and internal customers. The Kent Pension Fund (Pensions Administration) consists of a variety of different work teams. This post will require undertaking highly complex and technical work, projects and training across all teams and subjects. A Pensions Officer will be expected to provide best in class customer service to all members of the Kent Pension Fund, colleagues within the Council and external customers of the Fund. Pensions Officers will produce high quality, right-first-time communications measured against our key performance indicators and statutory obligations via letter, telephone and email. Pensions Officers undertake highly complex pension administration tasks regarding the benefits payable from the Kent Pension Fund. Work independently to resolve complex technical queries, liaising with the technical team to provide professional guidance and advice relating to these benefits to our members and stakeholders. Pensions Officers will be expected to provide extensive support and training to their peers, leading by example and demonstrating a positive and professional attitude to their duties.

Main duties and responsibilities:

1. Undertake all aspects of high-level pension administration duties for the team, including the checking of colleague's work, in respect of benefits payable from the Kent Pension Fund. Pensions Officers will be expected to undertake duties that involve making complex decisions within an agreed framework. Accurately handle complex customer enquiries effectively across different services via telephone, email and written response using proven highly developed technical, communication and analytical skills.
2. Deal sensitively and manage a wide range of challenging situations with customers and peers. Proactively identify and resolve issues and provide support to colleagues.

3. Process sensitive data. Update systems utilised by the Kent Pension Fund and proactively identify and resolve issues with data. Liaise with a diverse range of customers in a friendly, professional, and responsive manner. Use own judgement to approach and solve complex problems based on proven experience and knowledge of the Local Government Pension Scheme. Facilitate the resolution to highly complex pensions administration tasks.
4. Interpret diverse financial and regulatory information and apply highly technical knowledge of policies and procedures to provide customers and colleagues with accurate information and support to their enquiries.
5. Handle confidential and sensitive information in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements.
6. Complete and monitor a wide range of complex financial reconciliations and identify and resolve discrepancies independently.
7. Extensive understanding of historical and current Local Government Pension Regulations, as well as over-riding legislation and the effect that these have on calculations. Ability to use this knowledge to effectively communicate complex and technical information to individuals with all levels of understanding.
8. Lead on subject areas within the pensions administration work providing training, guidance and advice and liaising with the Technical Consultants when changes to processes are needed. Ensure areas of work are being dealt with in a timely manner making others aware of any adverse situations and managing expectations and resources.
9. Use highly developed, proven knowledge and experience of the Scheme and working practices to make suggestions that support a continuous improvement culture within the section.
10. Adopting a proactive approach to your own development. Willingness to undertake further professional higher-level training.
11. Be proactive in approach to influencing pension section improvements and implementation of new processes. Adopt a flexible approach and be available to help and work on projects when required to do so.
12. Represent the section at events, either providing presentations or face to face meetings for scheme members and reporting back to the management team with regard to relevant information.
13. To undertake any other ad hoc responsibilities aligned with the overall purpose and grade of the role.

Footnote: This job description is provided to assist the job holder to know what their main duties are. It may be amended from time to time without change to the level of responsibility appropriate to the grade of post.

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The following outlines the criteria for this post. Applicants who have a disability and who meet the criteria will be shortlisted.

Applicants should describe in their application how they meet these criteria.

	CRITERIA
QUALIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Educated to Level 3 Diploma/A-Level including minimum GCSE level 4 in English and mathematics or equivalent and/or proven ability to deliver the requirements of the role.• Certificate in Pension Administration (CIPP) or equivalent and/or proven higher level operational experience.
EXPERIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Proven extensive experience of working in pensions administration and undertaking highly complex casework.• Experience of delivering best-in-class service to customers and colleagues. High-level communication skills, demonstrating the ability to provide and translate highly complex information and advice in a sensitive and understanding manner over the phone and in writing.• Experience of working effectively as part of a team and leading when required. Experience of working independently, using own initiative, including working alongside partner-organisations.• Experience of using a computerised pensions administration system to a high level e.g. Altair, including task management and document imaging.

SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Ability to communicate effectively and professionally with members and stakeholders of the Kent Pension Fund. Respond to highly complex technical queries and provide detailed advice referring to regulatory guidelines, including the use of specialist terminology.
- A positive individual who engages well with colleagues and fosters excellent team spirit. The ability to work in partnership with the management team to develop and maintain excellent working relationships.
- Able to travel into the office when required. Willing and available to work flexibly across the opening hours of the service according to changing demand.
- Work on own initiative and as part of a team. Provide high level support and technical guidance, share knowledge and experience with colleagues.
- Ability to deliver a right first-time approach to work in a target led environment.
- Demonstrate personal resilience when working in an environment of constant change and supporting the development of peers.
- Ability to sensitively manage challenging situations and support colleagues with difficult conversations with scheme members and stakeholders. Be the first point of contact for colleagues who need immediate support in dealing with challenging situations.
- Ability to build rapport and trust with a diverse range of customers and stakeholders in a professional manner.
- Ability to prioritise, be flexible and manage workloads to meet targets, and respond effectively to fast-paced transformation.
- Confidence to challenge and influence the development of new and current procedures and suggest ideas for improvement, using in-depth knowledge and extensive experience.

KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of the role of Kent County Council within Local Government and extensive knowledge of the Kent Pension Fund. • Detailed knowledge of Microsoft applications including Word, Excel, Teams, PowerPoint, and Outlook (or equivalent), Pensions administration systems, such as Altair. • High-level technical knowledge of pensions administration and proven comprehensive knowledge of the regulations in respect of the Local Government Pension Scheme. Willingness to undertake further professional training, to ensure knowledge and understanding is kept up to date. • Knowledge of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and information handling and sharing.
KENT VALUES AND CULTURAL ATTRIBUTES	<p>Kent Values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are brave. We do the right thing, we accept and offer challenge • We are curious to innovate and improve • We are compassionate, understanding and respectful to all • We are strong together by sharing knowledge • We are all responsible for the difference we make <p>Our values enable us to build a culture that is:</p> <p>Flexible/agile - willing to take (calculated) risks and want people that are flexible and agile</p> <p>Curious - constantly learning and evolving</p> <p>Compassionate and Inclusive - compassionate, understanding and respectful to all</p> <p>Working Together - building and delivering for the best interests of Kent</p> <p>Empowering - Our people take accountability for their decisions and actions</p> <p>Externally Focused - Residents, families and communities at the heart of decision making</p>