

## Decision under Delegated Powers

### Officer Requesting Decision (if necessary)

Customer Service Delivery Manager

### Officer Making the Decision

Head Of Paid Service

### Recommendation

To approve creation of a new part-time (32.5 hours per week) Scale 4 Customer Support Assistant post for an initial 12 month fixed-term period, based in the Customer Service Centre and reporting to the Customer Service Team Leader (M358).

### Reason

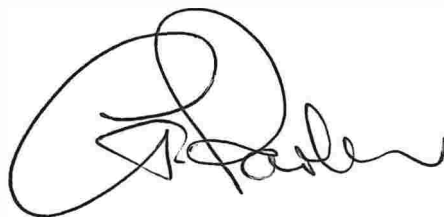
- 1) To support customers to access Universal Credit from computers or other mobile devices in the Customer Service Centre, and provide face-to-face advice and information on a range of services by the Council and its partners.
- 2) To ensure the council can adequately manage customer demand by providing focused resource to support Universal Credit claimants, enabling existing Customer Advisors to serve other customers in the Customer Service Centre and so maintain service quality and minimise waiting times.

### Authority for Decision

Authority to agree changes to the establishment, within budget and without major service or policy implications, affecting no more than five posts (irrespective of their post number) in any single case, is delegated to the Head of Paid Service (Item 6 on page 8-4 of the Constitution).

### Decision and Date

APPROVED



02 MAY 2018.

## **Background**

Universal Credit is a replacement for six means-tested benefits and tax credits (Jobseeker's Allowance; income related Employment and Support Allowance; Income Support; Child Tax Credit; Working Tax Credit; and Housing Benefit for those of working age), administered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). Universal Credit Full Service is being rolled out nationally, based on postcode area rather than local council electoral boundaries. Leicester will be moving onto Full Service from June and Loughborough from July.

Once the service has been rolled out to an area then any claimants who would have previously been advised to claim one of the above benefits (or existing claimants who experience certain changes in circumstances) will now have to claim Universal credit instead. This will therefore have an impact on all working-age people who currently claim benefits or who may claim benefits in the future (many of whom will also be Charnwood Borough Council tenants).

All claims will need to be made and managed online by claimants setting up Universal Credit claimant accounts.

This move to online / digital access only will not be easy for some of our customers to deal with, particularly the more vulnerable, those with limited or no internet access, and those with limited or no digital skills or with limited confidence in their own digital abilities. Based on the experience of councils where claimants have already migrated to Universal Credit Full Service, it is anticipated that many such customers will visit the Council to seek face-to-face assistance and support in initially registering for and then in ongoing access to their claimant accounts.

The DWP have provided grant monies to support the rollout of Universal Credit and the provision of assistance to enable claimants to access digital services, which are to be utilised to fund the creation of this new Customer Support Assistant post to provide the necessary support and assistance for claimants for an initial 12-month period.

## **Comments from HR**

HR Advisor: Anna Cairns (18/4/18)

Summary of Comments from HR: This new post has been graded by an Independent Job Evaluation panel and scored/graded at Grade 4.

The normal recruitment process should be followed.

HR seen recommendations (both draft and final, if amended): Y

## **Financial Implications**

The cost for the additional 32.5 hours at SCP18 (£16,575 + on-costs 37.8%) against budget code V007 is fully provided for from Universal Credit Grant monies received from the DWP (D200 D0804 - carried forward from 2017/18).

## **Risk Management**

No specific risks are associated with this report.

**Key Decision:** No

**Background Papers:** None

