

VALUATION TRIBUNAL SERVICE

Appointment of Planning Manager



July 2021

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Planning Manager (advert)

The Valuation Tribunal Service (VTS) is a statutory, non-departmental public body (NDPB) sponsored by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and administers non-domestic rating and council tax appeals. We provide general procedural advice on these matters and support the Valuation Tribunal for England (VTE).

Due to the forthcoming retirement of the present incumbent, we have an exciting vacancy for a Planning Manager to join the Senior Management Team at the VTS. Excellent organisation and logistical planning skills are essential in this role as you will be providing effective planning in arranging the Tribunal hearing programme of cases throughout England and managing resources to ensure the right people are in the right place and at the right time, as well as providing an excellent user service internally and externally.

As our Planning Manager, you will be a highly motivated, user focussed and enthusiastic individual able to rise to the ever-changing challenges that face a service delivery organisation in providing excellence to our service users.

You will have overall responsibility for managing a group of around twelve and be responsible for a budget linked to tribunal hearings. The focus of the team is to arrange hearings, provide assistance in the administration of Tribunals pre-hearing, collate all key papers through our IT systems and ensuring all the relevant evidence is available for the hearings and for all appeal types (Council Tax liability and valuation, Council Tax support/reduction, or Non-Domestic Rating). Team members have regular contact with the parties prior to the hearing and are the initial public face of the VTS. The group combines an even split of office based staff and home workers so having experience of managing remotely as well as face-to-face would be an advantage.

You will be expected to liaise closely with other colleagues, most notably the Performance Manager and his team, who attend and clerk the Tribunal Hearings. You will also need to ensure that the lay judiciary (members of our sister organisation, the Valuation Tribunal for England) are effectively allocated to hearings and that hearings are managed accordingly. As a member of the Senior Management Team you are expected to engage positively in the development of various projects to meet future service aspirations.

You must be a confident individual and able to demonstrate excellent organisational, time management and customer care skills, in addition to high level communication and interpersonal skills. This role will give you a great opportunity to bring in fresh ideas and build upon the success of the previous postholder. We will expect you to bring forward your own improvements to the services we provide to our stakeholders, and in particular to improve our user survey. This position can be challenging and occasionally pressurised so you should be someone who can respond flexibly and

with agility to any challenges that might crop up in respect of our hearing programme, our tribunal hearing events and resource management.

There is an opportunity for this position to be home-based. However, you will be required to attend our London office on a regular basis.

We offer a salary ranging from £53,046 to £58,426 for home working or £56,760 - £62,140 if office-based in London). Progression depends upon successful performance in the role in accordance with VTS criteria.

We also offer membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme and 25 days annual leave, which starts from 1 April each year. This rises to 30 days after 5 years' service. We also offer two further closure days each year as determined by the employer.

Probation

The successful applicant will be on probation for a period of six months. Performance within the period will be assessed in accordance with the VTS's Probation Policy. Unsatisfactory performance during this period may result in the termination of the appointment.

How to apply

To apply for this role you should complete the attached application form and return to us by no later than 23:55 on Sunday 22 August 2021. Late applications will not be accepted.



VALUATION TRIBUNAL SERVICE

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE:	Planning Manager
REPORTS TO:	Director of Operations & Development
SALARY:	SCP 49 – 54 (£53,046 - £58,426 if outside London, equivalent SCP on London scale if London based)
LOCATIONS:	London or home based, but a regular presence in London is required if the post is home based
RESPONSIBLE FOR:	Direct effective, performance and operational management of the Planning Team - including Office Managers Indirect management of all Tribunal Support staff

CONTACTS

Internally - All staff within the Valuation Tribunal Service – specifically the Tribunal Delivery/Performance Team; Chief Executive; VTS Board; Directors; Managers and Registrar and Deputy Registrar; President; Vice Presidents and Members of Valuation Tribunals for England (VTE).

Externally – MHCLG as sponsor Department, all other stakeholders and VT users, Professional bodies and organisations, members of the public, third party contractors and statutory bodies.

Date of JD: July 2021

MAIN PURPOSE OF JOB

To manage and lead the workload planning, residual case management and administrative support functions in order to meet the effective delivery of targets and the VTS's business plan

To maintain optimal level of performance and provide advice and support to the Director of Operations & Development on planning and resource allocation issues impacting on services.

To review and improve planning and resource allocation processes, monitoring performance, providing analysis and metrics to bring about ever improving services.

To develop and train the team to deliver a fully functioning, high quality residual case management and administrative/Tribunal Support function ensuring all key deadlines are planned and delivered in a streamlined way in order to meet organisational KPIs.

To be an active member of the Head Office senior management team reporting on planning effectiveness and associated responsibilities.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

Tribunal resource management and planning

Responsible for devising a national Valuation Tribunal hearing programme on a quarterly basis and reviewing its operational effectiveness. Scheduling tribunals and allocation of staff and VTE Members to tribunal hearings and to approve scheduling before hearings are convened. Work collaboratively with the Performance Manager to ensure effective clerking resource of tribunal hearings.

Responsible for venue management and ensure that venues provide appropriate facilities and are of a standard that meet health and safety and access requirements for all parties. Monitor, review and commission venues to ensure that they are fit for purpose and that they provide VFM, are cost-effective and are compliant with the necessary statutory requirements such as the Disability Discrimination Act/Equality Act 2010/Health & Safety at Work etc. Act.

Responsible for the effective planning and implementation of remote (on-line) and audio Valuation Tribunal hearings.

Coordinate the effective delivery of initial user support to appellants and parties to an appeal and to ensure a high level of impartial and accurate advice is provided to users that reflects in the user survey.

Maintain and promote VTS best practice in processes and approach to planning, including the implementation of improvements identified within the user survey.

Actively monitor and report on targets and KPIs including recommendations for process and planning improvements; support the Director of Operations & Development by monitoring and reporting on current and projected hearing programme plans and trends, ensuring financial propriety and a cost effective approach to all operational planning activity. Provide recommendations to maximise resource efficiency in response to potential fluctuating work demands.

Analyse and act on statistical reports, liaising with the Performance Manager.

Monitor and manage team progression, identifying resource / skills gaps to ensure forecast workload demands are met.

Responsible for the effective and value-for-money planning and allocation of staff and members to tribunals taking account of location, travel and ease of access for stakeholders, staff and members.

Performance/KPIs

Assist the Performance Manager to develop, monitor and report upon appropriate metrics and corporate KPIs for the planning and administrative services under the management of the postholder and ensure suitable reporting upwards to the Director of Operations & Development and thereafter EMT.

Regularly review individual and team performance and identify and manage performance issues to bring about appropriate resolution.

Produce verifiable statistics to determine performance/quality information for onward reporting to EMT, other senior managers and the Board.

Responsible for reporting on valuation tribunal hearing achievements and success.

Ensure effective and robust systems and protocols are in place for assessing and conducting post-hearing reviews and evaluations.

Complex cases

Report the identification of any complex cases to the Registrar and/or Deputy Registrar at an early stage and determine appropriate resources required to deal with such cases liaising with managerial and other work colleagues as required.

Mentoring and technical support

Develop, train and lead the planning and office administration/Tribunal Support team, driving up standards, understanding and delivering process improvements. Identify areas for improvements and provide the environment in which staff can positively contribute, influence change and develop expertise.

Ensure effective management and mentoring support is available to the whole team to carry out their day-to-day planning and administrative support functions.

Identify needs and provide appropriate training and mentoring for staff to ensure quality of service is both consistent and meets the highest standards of performance required by the VTS.

Provide advisory and procedural support to the planning and administrative support team as and when required.

Work with the Training Manager to develop appropriate training and development opportunities and development plans for tribunal support staff.

Customer Care

Investigate (and deal with as appropriate) complaints about the planning and administrative/Tribunal Support functions in accordance with the Customer Charter and support the Business Development Team in dealing with FOI and data requests.

Monitor customer care within the planning and administrative support team and provide support and advice to the team in improving customer focus and enhancing the 'customer experience'.

Quality assurance and improvement

Quality assure and maintain the highest levels of initial customer satisfaction from contacts taking account of any advice from the Chief Executive, President of the VTE, Director of Operations and Development, the Registrar, Deputy Registrar, and VTS senior managers.

Establish protocols and arrangements for monitoring quality assurance to ensure a high level of planning and residual case management/office support activities. Ensure effective and candid reporting of both qualitative and quantitative information to the relevant managers (for onward submission to EMT and the Board).

Attend venues periodically to assess quality and suitability and identify areas for individual and collective improvements in the resources used by the VTS.

Communications and external stakeholders

Ensure effective communication with the Tribunal delivery/Performance team and internally within the planning function and ensure supportive relationships are maintained and developed with other internal stakeholders and managers.

Liaise and work constructively with the Director of Operations & Development, Performance Manager, Registrar and Deputy Registrar to ensure that a high performing, high quality, effective and seamless service is provided to stakeholders.

Liaise with external stakeholders such as appellants, the VOA, Billing Authorities, Agents to ensure quality services are provided and that there is an honest but robust dialogue on service quality issues and developments.

Maintain and develop effective communication channels, working relationships and ensure appropriate involvement of key stakeholders, other departments and colleagues in the development of the service.

Corporate management

Ensure implementation and compliance with all policies and procedures to support standardisation of planning and tribunal support issues across the VTS network.

Find ways of improving user satisfaction levels and proactively address any concerns raised in user survey results relating to service delivery.

Participate in corporate project teams and working groups as required by the Director of Operations & Development and/or Chief Executive. Member of Senior Management Team (SMT).

Work closely with other senior managers and teams within the VTS.

People Management

Responsible for day-to-day management of all HR type issues in the planning and administrative support including (but not limited to) - sickness, performance management, disciplinaries, PDRs.

Carry out performance development reviews with direct reporting staff in accordance with VTS policy and to the timeframe specified, ensuring that all staff have challenging objectives in place providing the opportunities for development and training so that they can deliver high quality services. Take proactive action in line with HR policies in the event of underperformance.

Work with colleagues to ensure health and safety obligations are effectively discharged for the team.

Keep the planning/Tribunal Support organisational structure under regular review to ensure the team is organised to deliver services effectively, liaising with the Director of Operations & Development, EMT and the Head of HR & Training on any potential changes.

Resource management

Continually review appropriate resource levels and, as appropriate, facilitate the successful recruitment, induction and performance of staff under the control of the postholder.

Support the Director of Operations & Development's financial responsibilities by proactively contributing to budget monitoring, setting, forecasting, spending and reporting.

Manage allocated budgets and resources as required in accordance with VTS Financial Regulations, rules and scheme of delegation.

IT and service development

Identify opportunities for the development of improved IT functionality to enhance speed and quality of service and reduction in administrative/paper workload.

Support ongoing project work and facilitate necessary changes in administrative processes as a consequence of improved IT systems.

Adopt a culture of continuous improvement to ensure that all policies and processes are regularly reviewed for accuracy and updated accordingly dealing with non-compliance where this is found.

General

The above-mentioned duties are neither exclusive nor exhaustive and the postholder may be required to carry out such other duties as required, within the grading level of the post and the competence of the postholder.

Person Specification (all essential unless indicated otherwise)

- Understanding of the importance of planning and resource allocation mechanisms
- Experience of balancing complex logistical considerations (such as staff, members, physical/financial resources, and geographical locations) to provide value for money and stakeholder focused services which balance staff needs and ensure an appropriate work/life balance whilst delivering work requirements
- Ability to analyse a wide range of data and make reasonable recommendations based on data
- Experience of managing diverse teams where development to achieve higher levels of competence and skills is required
- Experience of managing performance to achieve positive outcomes for the VTS
- Experience of working collaboratively with senior managers and colleagues
- Commitment to VTS aims, objectives and policies
- Ability to write coherently, cogently and concisely
- Ability to present complex and sometimes conflicting information clearly and logically to enable the reader to quickly focus on key issues
- Awareness/appreciation of local taxation
- Dedicated to the provision of quality advice and service improvement
- Committed to highest standards of customer care and stakeholder experience
- Ability to analyse and deliver upon improvements to processes that support the delivery of a tribunal service
- Ability to assess complex problems, articulate viable solutions and act proportionately
- Awareness of the need to provide continued value for money in the tribunal services the VTS provides
- Experience of dealing with complaints
- Ability to think and act strategically

APPLICATION PROCESS

Guidance on making an application is contained in Annex A. To apply for the post, please complete the form in Annex B.

Please note we do not accept CVs only – but they can be used as supporting documentation. It is therefore very important that you complete all the relevant sections of the application form to describe how you meet the requirements for the job in relation to the Job Description and Person Specification as they will be used to determine who is selected for interview assessment.

The closing date for applications is **23:55 on Sunday 22 August 2021**.

Applications should be sent to our e-mail address:

HR.Admin@valuationtribunal.gov.uk.

E-mail is our preferred method during Covid

Alternatively send hard copies to:

HR Team
Valuation Tribunal Service,
Second Floor, 120 Leaman Street
London E1 8EU

Data protection

The VTS is a data controller and to comply with the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act, will only use the data you provide for the specific purpose of human resources management and will not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose. More information about how we handle your data can be seen in the privacy notice at <https://www.valuationtribunal.gov.uk/privacy/>

Equal opportunities

The VTS is an equal opportunity employer: applications are invited from all suitably qualified individuals irrespective of ethnicity, gender, disability, marital status, age, religion or belief, or sexuality. Please complete and return the Diversity Monitoring Questionnaire in Annex C. This will help us to monitor selection decisions to assess whether equality of opportunity is being achieved. The information on the form will be treated as confidential and used for statistical purposes. The form will not be treated as part of your application.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The recruitment process is in two stages:

Stage 1

Application Form (Annex B) – to be returned no later than **23:55 on Sunday 22 August 2021**. Applications will be acknowledged.

Stage 2

Interviews and testing – The VTS may use both personality and ability tests to try to help ensure we recruit the right candidates. Further details of this will be provided if you are successful in being shortlisted for interview. The assessment process may also involve you making a short presentation, details of which will be provided in due course if you are successfully shortlisted. The interviewing panel will comprise the VTS Director of Operations and Development and another senior manager. The interview will be conducted in 120 Leaman Street, London. A member of the HR team may be present in an advisory capacity. All these arrangements are naturally subject to any Covid restrictions.

The timetable is as follows -

Closing date of applications:	23:55 on Sunday 22 August 2021
Interview Date:	Likely to be W/C 6 September 2021
Second Interview Date (if necessary):	TBC
Appointment Offered by:	Before end of September 2021

If you have any queries about any aspect of the appointments detailed in this information pack, or if you wish to have an informal discussion, then please e-mail Human Resources at HR.Admin@valuationtribunal.gov.uk The VTS respects the privacy of any initial approach or expression of interest in this role, whether formal or informal.

ANNEX A

GUIDANCE NOTES ON COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION FORM

Read the job profile and person specification carefully

Before completing your application form you should carefully read through all the literature sent to you in the application pack as it will let you know what requirements we want the person to have for that particular job.

Both the Job Description and Person Specification list the key responsibilities, knowledge, skills and abilities and commitment you should possess. The advert also contains useful background information.

Prepare a rough draft first

You can avoid making errors in your application form by writing a rough draft before you complete your final version.

Personal details – section 1

You should complete fully the personal details in section 1 of the application form.

Person Specification – section 2

Your experience, strengths and skills

You need to tell us how you demonstrate the skills, knowledge, experience and commitment set out in the Person Specification. You should consider how you can apply (present and past) experience, strengths and skills to the job. Examples can be drawn from any relevant experience gained from career, home, social leisure, voluntary, interests etc. You should ensure you write clearly and concisely and address how you match the requirements of the headings set out in Section 2.

Other information – section 3

You have the opportunity to add any further information in Section 3 if you have not covered key issues in Section 2.

Why are you applying for this job?

In your application you need to state why you are interested in applying for this job in Section 3.

Qualifications

Please list qualifications obtained post-16.

Continuous professional development

Please state what activities you have undertaken in the last five years that have contributed to your continuous professional development.

Other relevant information – section 4

Integrity

You need to complete Section 4 by ticking the appropriate box. If you have answered yes to any question, you should provide details on a separate sheet.

Declaration & signature – section 5

You need to complete Section 5. If you complete the form and send it by email, you will be asked to sign it at the interview.

Submitting your application

You must ensure that your application can be clearly read. If you choose to hand write your application you must use black ink, as the form will be photocopied.

It is your responsibility to ensure your completed application form arrives before the advertised closing date as late applications will not be considered. You should ideally keep a copy of your completed application for your own reference.

ANNEX B

APPLICATION FORM

All sections of this application form should be completed accurately and returned to the HR Team, preferably via email to HR.Admin@valuationtribunal.gov.uk .
Alternatively send a hard copy to HR Team, Valuation Tribunal Service, Second Floor, 120 Leaman Street, London E1 8EU. Please mark it "Private and Confidential HR only"

Continue on a separate sheet if necessary for any part of your application.

The closing date for applications is **23:55 on Sunday 22 August 2021**. Late applications will not be accepted.

SECTION 1 - PERSONAL DETAILS

Title

Surname

First Name(s)

Address

Telephone numbers:

Day

Home

Mobile

Home e-mail address (if applicable)

SECTION 2 - PERSON SPECIFICATION

Please tell us how you demonstrate the skills set out in the job description, advert and in particular the person specification contained on page 10 of this Information Pack. You may wish to use examples from your career, voluntary, community or unpaid work. ***You may also want to attach your latest CV in addition to completing this form.***

- **Please refer to the documentation in telling us about your abilities and experience and how you meet the requirements of the role, using examples to support your comments.**

Continuation sheet 1

Continuation Sheet 2

Continuation Sheet 3

SECTION 3 - OTHER INFORMATION

- Please give details of essential training you have received or essential continuous professional development you have undertaken in the last 5 years.

Please list any post-16 academic or professional qualifications which you hold

Subject(s)	Date Obtained	Institution/Awarding Body	Level (e.g. A level, degree)	Pass/Fail & Grade

Continue on separate sheet as necessary.

Please note it is our policy always to check relevant qualifications

SECTION 4 – OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION

Any employee could find that matters or incidents, which previously attracted no attention, could become matters of public interest once the person concerned holds such a post.

Please answer the following questions by ticking the appropriate box.

Have you:

	Yes	No
(1) been convicted of any offences (other than minor motoring offences) which are not spent in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 in the UK or abroad;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(2) been charged with any offence which is still pending;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(3) become bankrupt over the past 10 years;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(3) been dismissed from any office or employment over the past 10 years;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(5) ever been disqualified from either acting as a Company Director or in the management of a Company;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(6) ever been a Director, Partner or Manager of a Company which has gone into liquidation, receivership or administration;	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
(7) any other information which you would consider relevant to an assessment of your suitability for this post; for example business interests or personal relationships, which may lead to an allegation of conflict of interest.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please provide details on a separate sheet, if you answer “yes” to any of the above questions. Please note: a “yes” answer to any of the questions (1) to (7) above will not necessarily disqualify a candidate for this position. Each case will be treated on its merits. However, failure to disclose relevant information may result in the appointment being summarily terminated.

SECTION 5 – DECLARATION & SIGNATURE

I declare that the information I have provided is true and accurate. I understand that false or misleading statements or deliberate omissions may be regarded as grounds for withdrawal of any offer or, after I have started employment with the VTS, possible dismissal without notice. I agree that the information given on this form may be processed in accordance with the data protection legislation for the purposes of recruitment and selection and any subsequent appointment process.

Signed:

Name (in block letters):

Date:

APPLICATION FORM CHECKLIST

Please use this checklist to ensure you have completed every section and included everything to allow your application to be assessed.

Section

Completed – please tick

Personal Detail - section 1

Your basic personal details

Person Specification - section 2

Your skills, experience and how you meet the job requirements

Other information - section 3

Anything relevant to your application that you've not included under section 2, what attracts you to the role, relevant training/CPD in last 5 years, your qualifications post-16.

Other relevant information - section 4

Integrity section detailing criminal convictions, solvency etc.

Declaration and signature – section 5

ANNEX C

Diversity Monitoring Questionnaire

The VTS has a policy of equal opportunity. Everyone who is eligible to join the VTS regardless of ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, marital status, disability, age, or sexuality, will receive equal treatment when applying for jobs.

As an organisation, we want to ensure that working in the VTS is a rewarding opportunity, which promotes the diverse talent that we have. To do this, we need to collect data on the make up of our workforce so that we can check whether our HR policies and systems (such as promotion, pay, access to learning and development, etc.) are operating fairly for all groups of staff. In addition, it will help us develop appropriate diversity and equal opportunities policies.

We would like to reassure you that the information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence. Data will be held on the VTS’s Human Resource database, to which only a small number of authorised people have access. When the data is used, it will be for anonymous statistical and research purposes only. Data will **not** be used for selection purposes.

We would like to thank you in advance for your co-operation.

1 **Name**

Post: **Planning Manager**

2. What is your ethnic group?

Choose ONE section from A to E, then tick the appropriate box to indicate your cultural background.

A White

- British
- Irish
- Any other White background -
Please tick and state below:

B Mixed

- White and Black Caribbean
- White and Black African
- White and Asian
- Any other Mixed background -
Please tick and state below:

Annex C continued

C Asian or Asian British

- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- Any other Asian background -
Please tick and state below:

D Black or Black British

- Caribbean
- African
- Any other Black background -
Please tick and state below:

E Chinese or other ethnic group

- Chinese
- Any other ethnic group, please tick and state below:

3. Disability

The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as ‘a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on [the person’s] ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities’. Case law has established that the disability could be physical, sensory or mental and must be expected to last at least 12 months.

Do you consider yourself to have a disability? Yes No

If ‘Yes’ please specify nature of disability.

Do you need any special arrangements/facilities Yes No
if you attend an interview?

Please state requirements in box below if you ticked ‘yes’

4. Gender

Male Female

5. Age (as at last birthday)

6. Marital Status

Please tick as appropriate

Single Cohabiting Married Widowed Divorced