



Job Profile comprising Job Description and Person Specification

Job Description

Job Title: Income Maximisation Officer	Grade: PO1
Section: Allocation & Provision	Directorate: Housing and Regeneration
Responsible to following manager: Deputy Income Maximisation Manager	Responsible for following staff: n/a
Post Number/s:	Last review date: March 2023

Working for the Richmond/Wandsworth Shared Staffing Arrangement

This role is employed under the Shared Staffing Arrangement between Richmond and Wandsworth Councils. The overall purpose of the Shared Staffing Arrangement is to provide the highest quality of service at the lowest attainable cost.

Staff are expected to deliver high quality and responsive services wherever they are based, as well as having the ability to adapt to sometimes differing processes and expectations.

The Shared Staffing Arrangement aims to be at the forefront of innovation in local government and the organisation will invest in the development of its staff and ensure the opportunities for progression that only a large organisation can provide.

Job Purpose

To lead and manage all temporary accommodation accounts ensuring maximum income collection of approximately £26 million, making sure that applicants pay their full charges in a timely and regular way.

To proactively, and sensitively pursue debt and ensuring that arrears are minimised Advising on preventative action to be taken to prevent clients falling into arrears, and completing financial assessments to ensure that applicant are in receipt of all income and benefits they are entitled to.

To recommend court action/eviction processes as required and/or the write off of irrecoverable debt. To do the foregoing via regular and detailed interviews with often vulnerable homeless households.

Specific Duties and Responsibilities

1. Responsible for and managing a patch of rent accounts to proactively maximise income collection on current and former tenant accounts. Through regular monitoring you will be responsible for ensuring that clients pay all their temporary accommodation charges and to minimise any arrears on account by taking timely action, agreeing where necessary repayment plans to ensure arrears do not increase and ensure applicants are aware of the legal implications of possession action
2. Identifying early intervention to ensure that the client does not become intentionally homeless by preventing escalating arrears. Leading and working within a multi agency framework, including liaising and working closely with partner agencies to increase clients access support.
3. To assess and assist tenants to maximise their income by ensuring that they are claiming their full benefit entitlements and managing existing debt by offering detailed advice. To identify and refer cases that require specialist advice and debt counselling. To support and advise tenants with Housing Benefit and Universal Credit claims and requesting backdating.
4. Completing affordability assessments for applicants in relation to Suitability of Accommodation in accordance with the homelessness Code of Guidance. Responsible for creating solutions for those where the accommodation charges are unaffordable
5. To provide financial advice to tenants to ensure that they can afford their charges and not become homeless from the accommodation Where necessary, identify and refer to external agencies to provide additional support and assistance to ensure successful tenancy sustainment
6. To be responsible for managing a case load of cases and being the lead officer relating to collection of debt and at possession hearings. Pursue current and former rent arrears for temporary accommodation and liaises with various agencies, as appropriate, helping to resolve problems in relation to benefits. . Recording and confirming all agreed actions to ensure that decisions are reasonable and defensible in Court. Where debt recovery on former tenants' arrears has proved unsuccessful, implementation of Former Tenants Arrears in line with council procedures.
7. Working within the legal process of evicting and terminating tenancies for temporary accommodation, preparing and arranging service of valid Notice to

Quit in line with current procedures for those who have failed to pay. Ensure that work around vulnerable clients have been assessed and Equality Impact Assessments completed. Preparing and maintaining accurate records for referrals to Legal Services along with attending possession hearings in County Court to give verbal evidence and provide the case history. Agrees within guidelines, on behalf of the Council, terms and method of payment of arrears following to Court judgements and liaising with relevant departments where discharged homelessness duties.

8. To participate in duty rotas, generally and within the Customer Service Centre across both boroughs. Frequently assists clients by telephone or via personal interview to complete a Housing Benefit form and maintains a close liaison with the Housing Benefit Section, ensuring temporary accommodation payments are maximised. Explains to clients their own responsibilities for payments, as appropriate, advising and assisting on the accessing of appropriate welfare benefits available to the client and offers support in maximizing income.
9. Ensure that appropriate performance and accurate budgetary information is maintained, acts as a verification officer, in line with applicable guidance from the Director of Finance and/or Head of Audit, for the purposes of confirming the authenticity of documents provided in support of claims for Housing Benefit.
10. Regular monitoring and management of any former tenant rent arrears, adhering to the Councils procedure to ensure maximum collection of former tenant arrears, including applying for attachment of earnings. Where applicable prepare detailed analysis and case review for Senior Management for accounts to be consider to be written off.
11. Regularly monitors and resolves all account discrepancies, including housing benefit, promptly. Establishes any tenant overpayments on account with a credit and produces a financial breakdown, recommending tenants reimbursements to housing benefit or other services. Prepares and submits accounting journals as directed and arranges any refund of credit due to the tenant.
12. Implement solutions and opportunities to assist tenants to improve their financial situation, by regularly arranging and participate in any welfare benefits take up campaigns or surgeries as required.
13. To manage clients' accounts for removal and storage services as applicable and ensure that payments to accounts are maintained.
14. Drafts replies to Members' enquiries and complaints for the approval of line management.

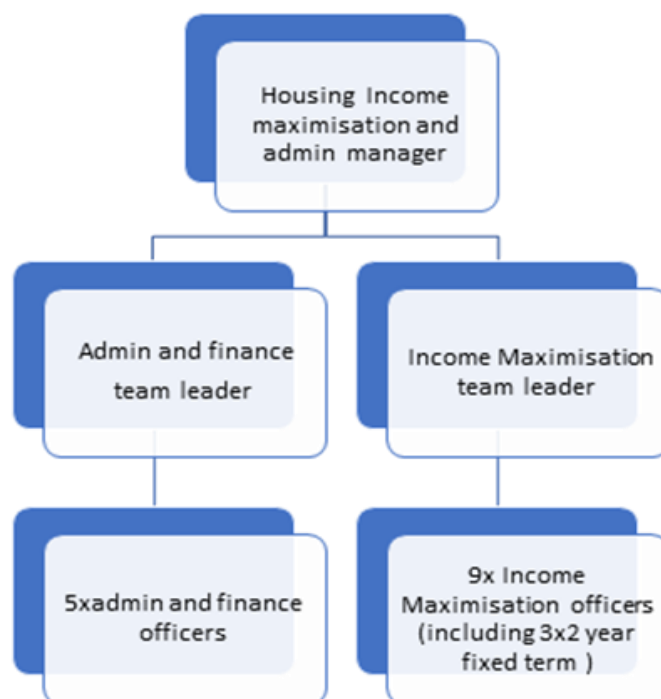
Generic Duties and Responsibilities

- To contribute to the continuous improvement of the services of the Boroughs of Wandsworth and Richmond.
- To comply with relevant Codes of Practice, including the Code of Conduct and policies concerning data protection and health and safety.
- To adhere to security controls and requirements as mandated by the SSA's policies, procedures and local risk assessments to maintain confidentiality, integrity, availability and legal compliance of information and systems
- To promote equality, diversity, and inclusion, maintaining an awareness of the equality and diversity protocol/policy and working to create and maintain a safe, supportive and welcoming environment where all people are treated with dignity and their identity and culture are valued and respected.
- To understand both Councils' duties and responsibilities for safeguarding children, young people and adults as they apply to the role within the council.
- The Shared Staffing Arrangement will keep its structures under continual review and as a result the post holder should expect to carry out any other reasonable duties within the overall function, commensurate with the level of the post.
- To maintain a good knowledge and understanding of the Welfare Reform Act 2012, with key focus on maximising tenants income and improving their financial situations.
- Proactively explore new ways of engaging and supporting tenants for both boroughs to improve income collection and accessing support from partner agencies.

Additional Information

- Identify service improvements and enhancements to ensure that the team continuously improve.
- To attend statutorily convened or otherwise multi-disciplinary meetings/forums
- Must have use of motorised transport and be able to carry out visits and/or be able to carry out visits using public transport
- To be able to work with vulnerable tenants
- To work outside of normal working hours to cover emergencies

Team structure



Person Specification

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Our Values and Behaviours

The values and behaviours we seek from our staff draw on the high standards of the two boroughs, and we prize these qualities in particular:

Being open. This means we share our views openly, honestly and in a thoughtful way. We encourage new ideas and ways of doing things. We appreciate and listen to feedback from each other.

Being supportive. This means we drive the success of the organisation by making sure that our colleagues are successful. We encourage others and take account of the challenges they face. We help each other to do our jobs.

Being positive. Being positive and helpful means we keep our goals in mind and look for ways to achieve them. We listen constructively and help others see opportunities and the way forward. We have a 'can do' attitude and are continuously looking for ways to help each other improve.

Person Specification Requirements			Assessed by A/I/T/C (see below for explanation)
Knowledge	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
Knowledge of good practice around arrears management and debt collection, including possession procedures	x		A/I
Demonstrate an understanding of all welfare based benefits in context of this role and able to give advice to clients regarding entitlement	X		A/I

Homeless legislation, Codes of Guidance and statutory framework regarding suitability of accommodation around affordability		X	A/I
Experience	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
Experience of working within a team in a busy environment with multiple priorities		x	A/I
Experience of working with the public and ability to give advice regarding debt management and income maximisation	x		A/I
Ability to apply experience of giving advice and resolving complex cases.	x		A/I
Skills	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
The ability to use information technology to a high standard.	X		A
The ability to undertake a wide range of financial tasks, including carrying out affordability assessments.	x		A/I
Ability to deal with vulnerable clients		x	A/I
The ability to manage a varying case load and find creative solutions	x		A/I
The ability to respond effectively to staff, outside agencies, suppliers and case manage with multiple agencies	x		A/I
Proven literacy, numeracy and communication skills.	X		A/I
A calm and empathetic approach when working with the public and dealing with complaints and problems		X	A/I
A good attention to detail	X		A/I
Able to work under pressure	X		A/I
The ability to use public transport to visit clients at their placement	X		A/I
Arrange events and surgeries to provide benefit and debt advice		X	A/I
Qualifications	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
Maths and English GCSE grade C and above or equivalent.	x		A/C

A – Application form / CV

I – Interview

T – Test

C - Certificate