

Job Description

Housing Officer (Rents)

Final

Date: December 2016



POST: Housing Officer (Rents)
SERVICE: Housing
SECTION: Rents
BAND: 5
REPORTS TO: Senior Housing Officer (Rents)
RESPONSIBLE FOR: N/A
TYPE: 1a) Hot desking in Basildon Centre

All Council posts are subject to National Joint Council (NJC) conditions of service.

Basildon Borough Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults, and expects all employees, contractors and volunteers to share its commitment to prevent abuse, harm or exploitation.

Please note that the Council applies a robust recruitment vetting process.

Please note that this post is subject to Department of Works and Pensions (DWP), Protection of National Infrastructure conditions, which means that the post holder will be required to undergo further vetting processes to ensure compliance.

Please note that this post will require a standard Disclosure and Barring Certificate.

Please note that this post has been classified by Basildon Council as a Regulated Post as it has contact with vulnerable groups so will require an enhanced Disclosure and Barring {DBS} certificate.

MAIN PURPOSE

The main purposes is to undertake the collection and enforcement processes of all Rent debt types within the Housing Team. The post holder implements the various remedies for debt collection and enforcement that are authorised by legislation including undertaking direct negotiation with debtors, enforcement agents and other agencies as well as identifying irrecoverable debts. The post holder will be required to represent the council at court hearings in proceedings for non-payment of Housing Rent Debts.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The post holder will ensure that decisions on the collection and recovery of Housing Revenue are made in accordance with law and policy guidelines in order to maximise income to the authority. In addition to provide a high level income collection service across the Basildon Borough to deliver against the strategic aims of achieving excellent neighbourhoods, performance, partnerships and people.

All staff must be mindful of potential fraud and that suspected irregularities are referred for investigation in all cases.

A common factor in Housing Services is that any member of staff may be called upon to act as a witness in proceedings in courts or tribunals to give factual evidence.

DUTIES

1. To collect against all Housing Rent Account Income and Debt Recovery processes within a defined area or caseload.
2. Make decisions and take in accordance with action to recover arrears in accordance with current law and policy guidelines, referring any matters of doubt to the Senior Housing Officer (Rents).
3. To progress all Housing Management System recommendations for arrears recovery taking necessary actions as required.
4. To negotiate debt payment arrangements based upon the tenant's income and expenditure commitments.
5. To ensure that maximum income is collected making best use of tenants and other customers preferred options to pay.
6. To provide accurate information and debt advice to all tenants and ensure that take up of housing and other benefits is maximised to prevent increases in outstanding debts.
7. To refer tenants to local Welfare Benefits and debt counselling groups such as Citizens Advice Bureau, Family Mosaic and Housing Advice.
8. To liaise with and maintain effective working relationships with internal and external agencies and other service providers.
9. To prepare and serve various legal notices and invoices for all debt types, implementing payment agreements and take appropriate action for collection and recovery in accordance with guidelines, taking ownership of monitoring accounts and payment arrangements.
10. To recommend cases for Court Action where payments are not being made or in accordance with arrangement and prepare all necessary reports for the Legal section to commence possession proceedings.

11. To present cases at Court for possession and appeal hearings and act as a witness for the Council
12. To co-ordinate, support and ensure evictions are carried out as and when required.
13. To ensure appropriate support is provided to vulnerable clients and ensure that any cases relating to such clients are dealt with sensitively.
14. To ensure that the local targets set for rent arrears both current and former tenants and the Governments set KPI's are being met
15. To respond to account enquires promptly to avoid non-payment and misunderstanding.
16. To adhere to the Council's Safeguarding Children and Protection of Vulnerable Adults policies, ensuring any concerns are reported to the relevant agency.
17. To attend interviews and home visits including on some occasions those outside of normal hours as necessary, including any promotional functions/evening meetings.
18. Ensure that use of Local Authority and Government systems and communications with DWP through the Customer Information System (CIS) or its equivalent are properly implemented and undertaken by the relevant staff in accordance with agreed procedures.
19. Undertake all the duties within the framework of Equal Opportunities.
20. Any other duties appropriate to the post: These other duties must be equivalent to or below the salary and status of the role and, where appropriate, under the Equality Act 2010, due consideration must be given to any employees with a "protected characteristic".
21. You must cooperate in all matters relating to Health and Safety and implement all procedures for your job role. The identification of Health and Safety related risks within the working environment must be highlighted to your management.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Position Title:	Housing Officer (Rents)	Date Prepared:	December 2016
Department:	Housing	Band:	5

AF= Application Form	I = Interview	T= Test
-----------------------------	----------------------	----------------

	REQUIREMENTS	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
1.	EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE			
1.1	Demonstrable experience of working in a busy housing/revenues and benefit section or in a similar environment	✓		AF/I
1.2	A good working knowledge of relevant legislation		✓	AF/I
1.3	Experience of customer service, demonstrating good communication and interpersonal skills	✓		AF/I
1.4	Experience of using office information system	✓		AF/I
1.5	Experience of presenting evidence at Magistrates Courts and Tribunals	✓		AF/I
2.	COMPETENCIES			
	WORKING WITH PEOPLE			
2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Demonstrates an interest in and understanding of others b) Adapts to the team and builds team spirit c) Recognises and rewards the contribution of others d) Listens, consults others and communicates proactively e) Supports and cares for others f) Develops and openly communicates self-insight such as an awareness of own strengths and weaknesses 	✓		AF/I
	LEARNING AND RESEARCHING			
5.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Rapidly learns new tasks and quickly commits information to memory b) Gathers comprehensive information to support decision making 	✓		AF/I

	REQUIREMENTS	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> c) Demonstrates a rapid understanding of newly presented information d) Encourages an organisational learning approach (i.e. learns from successes and failures and seeks staff and customer feedback) e) Manages knowledge (collects, classifies and disseminates knowledge of use to the organisation) 			
6.2	<p>DELIVERY RESULTS AND MEETING CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Focuses on customer needs and satisfaction b) Sets high standards for quality and quantity c) Monitors and maintains quality and productivity d) Works in a systematic, methodical and orderly way e) Consistently achieves project goals 	✓		AF/I
6.3	<p>FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS AND PROCEDURES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Appropriately follows instructions from others without unnecessarily challenging authority b) Follows procedures and policies c) Keeps to schedules d) Arrives punctually for work and meetings e) Demonstrates commitment to the organisation f) Complies with legal obligations and safety requirement of the role 	✓		AF/I
7.1	<p>ADAPTING AND RESPONDING TO CHANGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Adapts to changing circumstances b) Accepts new ideas and change initiatives c) Adapts interpersonal style to suit different people or situations d) Shows respect and sensitivity towards cultural and religious differences e) Deals with ambiguity, making positive use of the opportunities it presents 	✓		AF/I
7.2	<p>COPING WITH PRESSURES AND SETBACKS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Works productively in a high pressure environment b) Keeps emotions under control during difficult situations c) Balances the demands of work life and personal life d) Maintains a positive outlook at work 	✓		AF/I

	REQUIREMENTS	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
	e) Handles criticism well and learns from it			
	EDUCATION AND TRAINING			
3.1	Professionally qualified - Relevant professional qualification e.g. CIOH or similar, or relevant experience		✓	AF/I
3.2	Educated to GCSE level or equivalent, indicating an aptitude for mathematics and English language	✓		AF/I
	If DBS is needed – A satisfactory DBS certificate will be required	✓		AF/I