



SWINDON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Role Profile

Job Title: Rent Income Officer	Role Profile Number: SBC_11654
Grade: M	Date Prepared: November 2022
Directorate/Group: Adults, Health & Housing	Reporting to: Tenancy Support Manager (Rents)
Structure Chart attached: No	

Job Purpose

- ❖ As a specialist rent arrears officer, you will be responsible for reducing arrears and monies owed to the Council. Your aim is to ensure that arrears are addressed from tenures to their benefit and the Council. Using your skills and knowledge to engage with current, prospective and former tenants, their representatives and officers, through multiple communication channels.
- ❖ A major contributor in respect of improving Housing's income collection performance, by sharing your knowledge and experience to ensure effective income collection.
- ❖ Lead on legal action, which may result in eviction, by recommending, preparing and presenting cases in court and at internal Tenancy Review Panels. Also attending eviction appeals and acting as lead officer at evictions for rent arrears.

Key Accountabilities

Income collection – individual case work

- Carry out rent arrears recovery in accordance with the Council's Rent Collection and Arrears Procedure Guide in order to meet your individual performance targets and maximise income.
- Planning work by prioritising cases that require urgent action.

- Support tenants to maximise their income with budgeting and benefits advice. Where appropriate assist tenants with applications for benefits, reviews or appeals. When identified refer tenants to specialist support, such as debt advice.
- When identified and appropriate make referrals to other colleagues and / or agencies, both voluntary and statutory.
- When identified, provide information to existing, former and new tenants on changes to benefits to ensure that they maximise their income. When appropriate request debt approval to enable a moves.
- Act on behalf of Housing and the Council when dealing with queries from the DWP (Department of Work and pensions) and Housing Benefit, including verification and submission of documents for claimants.
- Visit tenants at key stages in the arrears process. Ensure all visits are in line with the Council's policies and procedures, and meet the requirements of the court.
- In the absence of an officer, complete rent tasks, including but not limited to, reviewing failed direct debits and account amendments.
- Check benefit claims and provide tenants and officers with advice.
- Manage your own account's direct debits and assist other housing officers with theirs, such as assisting in the review of direct debits during the Year End process.
- Deal with tenants who have obtained Bankruptcy Orders, Debt Relief Orders (DRO's), and Individual Voluntary Arrangements (IVA's), and manage accounts where tenants have gone into a Debt Respite scheme (Breathing Space) in line with the Council's and The Insolvency Services guidelines.
- Assist in pre-tenancy and former tenancy arrears work, including recommendations for the write-off of debts where appropriate.
- Assist with all arrears of account management including moving money between accounts.

Income collection – legal action

- Liaise with the solicitors both internally and externally about cases or changes in law that effect working practices.
- Maintain a good working knowledge of best practice regarding income collection, Housing Law including the Pre-Action Protocol.
- Produce bespoke letters and witness statements ready for court.
- Initiate legal proceedings for arrears recovery by completing the necessary documentation, either online or on paper, accurately and as required by the Court.

- Represent the Council in court in possession claims and eviction appeals.
- Present arrears cases to senior managers at reviews.
- Recommend, attend and oversee evictions for rent arrears and ensuring that the appropriate agencies advised.
- Following an eviction, ensure inventories and a visual record of the property and any belongings left in the property are recorded and stored appropriately in accordance with Council policy.

Income collection – sharing knowledge and helping colleagues

- Review accounts in accordance with policies, procedures and practices. When identified provide feedback to officers and managers, including appropriate action and recommendations.
- Train officers in all aspects of income collection, including policies, procedures good practice and attending court.
- Assist the officers to manage their cases and carry out appropriate visits when needed.

IT

- Fully utilise IT packages, tools and functions available, including those in development, to enable you perform your role better.

Other support tasks

- Assist in housing management function; such as raising concerns about tenants, members of their household or a property, such as anti-social behavior, hoarding and absconds, repairs and disrepair, when you become aware of it and report accordingly.
- Use your knowledge and skills to assist in the identification of tenancy and benefit fraud and report accordingly.
- Assist in gaining access to properties such as, when gas and electrical checks are due, or urgent repairs are required.
- Attend meetings about tenants and / or members of their household, with professionals, such as Core Groups, Child Protection, when appropriate.
- Assist with dealing with email, direct messages (DM), phone calls and face to face enquiries for Tenancy Services.

Supplementary Accountabilities

- Participate in equality and diversity training, information briefings and events as and when required as part of continuous professional development.
- Promote equality and diversity best practice in all areas of work.
- Representing the Council's commitment to tenant participation through actively developing and sustaining links with representative groups.
- Maintaining awareness of tenant participation and, where required, assisting with the achievement of targets and commitments.
- Ensure that any identified personal training needs are discussed with the immediate supervisor including being appraised in accordance with the Council's development and appraisal scheme and to undertake a programme of continuous development.
- You must work in accordance with training or instructions given, make proper use of any personal protective equipment provided and inform your manager of any hazardous situations or risks of which you are aware.
- You must ensure you undertake responsibilities relating to your position as detailed within your Directorate Health and Safety Policy.
- Work within agreed confidentiality policies and protocols.
- At times, you will be required to work evenings and/or Saturday mornings.
- You will need to have the flexibility and ability to change, as the role entails working in a rapidly changing environment.
- Any other duty considered relevant to the grading level of the post.

NOTE:

This job description is intended as a general guide to the duties attached to the post and is not an inflexible specification. It may therefore be altered from time to time to reflect the changing needs of the department, always in conjunction with the post holder.

Housing is committed to working in a manner, which does not discriminate against any individual or group regardless of ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion or gender.

Knowledge & Experience

Candidates must have substantial knowledge and experience in the following areas of business and will be required to provide evidence of this:

- Extensive experience of rent recovery.

- Good working knowledge of current housing related benefits, in particular changes as a result of the Welfare Reform Act 2012.
- Up to date knowledge of Housing Law and tenancy management best practice.
- Considerable experience working with the public and for a social landlord.
- IT literate in Windows based systems.
- Good inter-personal skills and the ability to interact with clients from a wide range of backgrounds.
- The post-holder is required to travel throughout the Borough and this is an essential feature of the performance of the above duties.

Qualifications

- 2 GCSE’s or equivalent in Maths and English Language Grade C / 5 or above.
- HNC Level 4 in Housing or equivalent (preferred).

Decision Making

- Recommend possession action and eviction where appropriate.
- The post holder will have to make on the spot decisions in situations where there is no opportunity to refer to other officers such as during eviction appeals in Court

Creativity and Innovation

- Negotiate appropriate payment arrangements with tenants.

<p><u>Job Scope</u></p> <p>Number and types of jobs managed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swindon Borough Council currently has just over 10,000 tenants of which approximately 25% of whom have rent arrears • Approximately 60% of tenants are in receipt of full or partial housing benefit / universal credit. • On average approximately 100 cases are referred to court per annum. • Approximately 20 cases are referred for eviction per annum although only a quarter of these actually take place. 	<p>Budget Holder</p> <p>Responsibility</p> <p>Asset Responsibility:</p>	<p>No</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p>
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<p>Typical tasks supervised/allocated to others</p>		
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Contacts and Relationships

(how the role relates to the work of others i.e. officers, groups, committees, general public, members, partner organisations, internal and external contacts of the council)

- Written:., standard letters, writing reports, designing and completing forms
- Verbal: Giving specialist and general housing advice to tenants, from a wide range of backgrounds and circumstances and their representatives
- Ward Councillors, MPs, benefit agencies, welfare advice agencies, Children’s Services, Adult Social Care, Health, Police, HMP

Values and Behaviours

We strive to underpin our culture through strong management and authentic leadership, this means getting the management basics right, and ensuring what we commit to individually and collectively, we own and demonstrate accountability aiming to get things right first time. Building on this we also expect everyone at SBC to demonstrate and live our organisational values and behaviours , this means in our work we are:

Connected: We put Swindon and its people at the heart of everything we do.

We display a communication and behaviour style that promotes a positive Council identity in connecting with residents, customers, colleagues and other stakeholders ensuring a partnership approach to delivering our vision. Always asking, “is what I am doing in the best interests of Swindon and its people,”?

Resilient: We are forward thinking and work smart

We seek to identify where things can be improved, ensuring this learning is embedded, evaluated and built upon through a strong approach to continuous organisational development.

Brave: We respect and work together with our colleagues and customers to achieve success

We act in an emotionally intelligent way, setting positive examples around accountability, risk and governance. This will be delivered through developing ourselves and our teams to achieve the highest possible levels of productivity and performance.

Other Key Features of the role

(working environment / emotional / conditions i.e. regular outside work, unpleasant or hazardous conditions, practical demands such as standing, carrying or working in constrained positions, potential verbal abuse and aggression from people, or risk of injury)

- Role involves lone working, visiting tenants and properties. Some tenants are potentially aggressive and abusive.
- Ability to walk around estates, use stairs to visit properties on higher floors and use lifts where these are provided.
- Occasionally the post-holder will be expected to attend pre-arranged meetings in the evening or at the weekend.
- The post-holder should be able to travel throughout the Borough and a casual car user allowance is available.

Employee Signature:	Print Name:
Date:	
Line Managers Signature:	Print Name::
Date:	