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| <b>Job Title:</b><br>Rent Income Officer | <b>Role Profile Number:</b>                             |
| <b>Grade:</b> M<br><b>Salary:</b>        | <b>Date Prepared:</b> September 2019                    |
| <b>Directorate/Group:</b> Delivery       | <b>Reporting to:</b><br>Tenancy Support Manager (Rents) |
| <b>Structure Chart attached:</b>         | No  |

### Job Purpose

- As a specialist rent arrears officer, you will be responsible for reducing the number of existing and former tenants in arrears and the amount of monies owed to the Council. You will use your skills and knowledge to engage with tenants who have accumulated moderate to high rent arrears and work with them to ensure that the arrears are reduced and/or cleared to the benefit of the tenant and the Council.
- You are a major contributor in respect of your team's arrears performance, and will use your knowledge and experience to advise other team members to ensure effective arrears prevention.
- You will lead on taking legal action should it not be possible to help the tenant reduce and/or clear their arrears. This will include the effective presentation of court cases and Introductory Tenancy Review Panel cases, and attending evictions.

### Key Accountabilities

- Carry out rent arrears recovery in accordance with the Council's Rent Collection and Arrears Procedure Guide and procedures and meet your individual performance targets in order to maximise rent income.
- Sign post tenants to relevant support so that they can maximise their income through more specialist financial and benefits advice. Where appropriate request a review or an appeal, provide support during the process and assist with queries that arise.

- Be familiar with applicable IT packages. Train Housing Officers in rent recovery policy and procedures and good practice.
- Assist the Housing Officers to manage their individual rent cases and carry out appropriate visits.
- Review rent arrears accounts in accordance with policy, procedure and practices across the team and recommend appropriate action when required. Provide feedback to Officers, Lead Officers and Managers.
- Engage and provide existing, former and new tenants with information on welfare reform to ensure that tenant's residents are fully informed of the changes.
- As part of a team identify, contact, visit and work with residents affected by welfare reform and legislative changes to help reduce effects of changes and maximise income available.
- Liaise with other officers in Housing and make referrals to other agencies as appropriate and where agreed by the client, such as but not exclusive to Housing Benefit, Advice Agencies, Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).
- Initiate legal proceedings for arrears recovery by completing the necessary documentation accurately and as required by the Court. Make online and paper applications to the County Court. Effectively present cases at Court and in respect of appropriate review panels.
- Request and oversee evictions for rent arrears and ensure that the statutory agencies are advised accordingly where appropriate.
- Following an eviction, ensure inventories and photographs are taken and belongings are stored where appropriate in accordance with Council policy.
- Liaise with DWP and Housing Benefit in accordance with the service level agreement. Verify documents for HB claimants.
- Visit tenants at key stages in the arrears process. Ensure tenants are visited as part of the Councils arrears recovery policy and procedure.
- In the absence of individual Rent Income Officers / Housing Officers complete their Arrears Progression and issue rent 'Non-Payment Week' reminders and charges.
- Within the team be responsible for Housing Benefits checks and Housing Benefits cancellations reports including those cases being considered for legal action. Provide Housing Officers with insight into why a claim has stopped to ensure that maximum rent income is obtained.
- Your case management will begin at the Notice Seeking Possession stage. You will be required to serve the Notice Seeking Possession and use the four weeks' notice period to engage with the tenant so that the arrears can be cleared or reduce. You will be responsible for this case until the arrears have been cleared, are reduced to a pre-notice level, or the tenant(s) have surrendered their tenancy or have been evicted. You should be aware of other possible tenancy breaches and include other grounds if appropriate.

- You will be trained as a direct debit super user and manage your teams failed direct debits.
- You will assist with the duty arrangements within the team and be on hand to give advice on rent queries should the need arise. You will provide cover for the other Rent Income Officers when they are away from the office.
- Ensure full use of electronic automatic rent systems. E.g. arrangements and systems in development.
- Take part in pre-tenancy rent arrears prevention work
- Oversee the administration of the Rent Refund Process including making referrals to other Council Departments in accordance with the Council's Rent Refund Procedure.

### **Supplementary Accountabilities**

- To participate in equality and diversity training, information briefings and events as and when required as part of continuous professional development.
- To 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 the 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 that is 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:*

- Good knowledge of welfare benefits and the welfare reform changes.
- Considerable experience working with the public and for a social landlord.
- IT literate in windows-based systems.
- Extensive experience of rent recovery.
- 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 Math’s and English Language grade C / 5 or above.

**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.

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| <p><b><u>Job Scope</u></b></p> <p><b>Number and types of jobs managed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each of the three teams are responsible for over 3,000 tenancies, of which approximately 25% of whom have rent arrears</li> <li>• Approximately 60% of tenants are in receipt of full or partial housing benefit / universal credit.</li> <li>• On average approximately 100 cases are referred to court per annum.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Budget Holder</b></p> <p><b>Responsibility</b></p> <p><b>Asset Responsibility:</b></p> | <p>No</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>N/A</p> |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approximately 20 cases are referred for eviction per annum although only a quarter of these actually take place.</li> </ul> <p><b>Typical tasks supervised/allocated to others</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neighbourhood Housing Officers deal with low level arrears up to Notice Seeking Possession stage. Cases that are not resolved at this stage are passed to this post.</li> </ul> |  |  |
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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, locality lead, 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 is available.

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| <b>Employee Signature:</b>      | Print Name: |
| <b>Date:</b>                    |             |
| <b>Line Managers Signature:</b> | Print Name: |
| <b>Date:</b>                    |             |