



Role Profile

Job Title: Accommodation Officer	Grade/ Level: Level 7	Post Number: SBC_10591
Directorate: Adult Services	Job Family: Housing and Communities and Health	Date Prepared: September 2023

Role reports to : Accommodation Manager

Job Purpose:

- To provide a flexible, effective and pro-active housing management service which will include maximising rental income and other tenancy management functions.
- Manage Private Sector Lease properties let to residents who are owed a homeless duty by Swindon Borough Council.
- Support tenants, often with complex high needs to make a success of their tenancy and move on to longer term accommodation.
- Work with private landlords to ensure our leased properties are of a good standard and are safe and suitable homes for our residents.
- Ensure tenancy agreements are adhered to and take the necessary legal steps if any breaches take place.

Key Accountabilities:

1. Be responsible for housing management and establish a sound and friendly relationship between tenant and the Council.
2. Deal with tenants, often with complex and high needs such as mental health issues, substance misuse, alcohol dependence, offending and violent behaviour
3. Support tenant to settle into temporary accommodation by sourcing any necessary furniture, apply for Swindon Emergency Fund, set up utility accounts and ensure Housing Benefit/Universal Credit in payment.
4. Provide support to those who have lived precariously housed lifestyle to enable them to regain stable and sustainable accommodation
5. Ensure all tenants have an effective plan to move them on to long term accommodation.
6. Carry out rent arrears recovery in accordance with the councils rent arrears recovery policy and procedures and meet your individual performance targets in order to maximise rent income. This may form the substantive part of the role at the discretion of the Temporary Accommodation manager.
7. Monitor all rent accounts regularly using the computerised records and decide on the appropriate recovery action. Pursue and interview tenants regarding their rent arrears preferably through personal contact such as telephone and home visits.
8. Serve the legal notices on tenancies as necessary. Recommend, prepare and refer all documentation to the Legal Dept for Possession Proceedings in the county court.

9. Assist tenants to sustain their tenancies by giving advice, signposting those who are affected by benefit changes such as Universal Credit, Benefit Cap now and in the future and support tenants to apply for entitled benefits including Universal Credit and Housing Benefit.
10. Promote the payment of rent via the Council's payment methods e.g. direct debits, to ensure rent accounts are kept clear of arrears. Take rent payments. Assist with year-end activities as requested.
11. Deal with breaches of tenancy conditions including investigating cases of anti-social behaviour, neighbour nuisance, tenancy fraud, racial harassment, any other form of harassment, domestic abuse, squatting, illegal subletting and abandoned properties. Attend Court on behalf of the Council if necessary.
12. Recommend cases for Court Action where a breach of tenancy has occurred in accordance with policies and procedures.
13. Support tenants if difficulties arise with their landlord or if they breach tenancy agreements or do not keep the property in good condition.
14. Carry out tenancy audits/inspections of Private Sector Leased properties, communal areas and Housing owned public open spaces to ensure that they are maintained and kept to a reasonable standard.
15. Carry out inspections of Private Sector Leased properties prior to letting and during tenancy for defects and repairs, order works, evaluate standards of workmanship and liaise with private Landlords. Inspect improvements and alterations requested by tenants to ensure the proposed works are carried out to a satisfactory standard of workmanship.
16. Liaise with the Landlord to report repairs in Private Sector Leased properties, resolve any tenancy disputes and get the property ready for let as quickly as possible.
17. Achieve performance targets and service standards for your areas of responsibility.
18. Respond to tenants queries, which may require home visits.
19. Liaise with other agencies on issues relating to housing management and household issues including Mental Health Services, Social Services, Citizen Advice, Debt Management agency, Police, Probation Services and Healthy Neighbourhood.
20. Offer tailored support to each individual tenant to help sustain tenancies by ensuring the support is in place by working with other departments in the Council as well as external partners such as Social Services, the Police, Mental Health Services, Citizen Advice and Wiltshire Law Centre.
21. Ensure the Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults is identified and make referrals in line with Safeguarding policies and procedures for housing and tenancy support.
22. Represent the Council at Child Protection meeting and Professionals meeting
23. Attend evictions where necessary and arrange and deal with the clearance and storage of belongings.
24. Carry out pre-tenancy work which includes complete new tenancy sign-up and where necessary add Additional Tenancy Clause.
25. Have a thorough understanding of and keep up to date with housing and other related legislation including homelessness, allocations, landlord and tenant legislation, welfare benefits and other matters of a similar nature.
26. Ensure all property safety paperwork is kept up to date, including Gas Safety Certificates, Electrical Safety Certificate, Energy Performance Certificates and Building Insurance.
27. Process Deposit Guarantee Scheme claims
28. Ensure the recovery of all debts incurred for those clients previously provided with temporary accommodation
29. Raise invoices and liaise with Credit Control and outside collection agencies regarding the recovery of money owed to Swindon Borough Council
30. Respond to general correspondence as per policy and procedures, and assist in dealing with, and replying to, Councillors, Residents and MP's enquiries.
31. Ensure lone working and policies and procedures are followed at all times

32. Identify suitable properties for the need of the prospective tenant and manage portfolio of temporary accommodation.
33. Be aware and report potentially dangerous or detrimental defects within your working environment.
34. Undertaking any other duties as allocated by the Temporary Accommodation Manager appropriate to the grading level of the post.

Supplementary Accountabilities:

1. Participate in equality and diversity training, information briefings and events as and when required as part of continuous professional development.
2. Promote equality and diversity best practice in all areas of work.
3. 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.

4. In accordance with the provisions of the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 you must take reasonable care so as not to endanger yourself or other persons whilst at work. You must also co-operate with the Council to enable it to comply with its statutory duties for health and safety.
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.
5. You must ensure you undertake responsibilities relating to your position as detailed within your Directorate Health and Safety Policy.
6. Work within agreed confidentiality policies and protocols.
7. You will need to have the flexibility and ability to change, as the role entails working rapidly changing environment.

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.

Job Scope:
No & type of jobs Managed:
Not applicable.

Typical tasks supervised/allocated to others:

Job Scope: Arrears recovery/tenancy management.

Budget: None

Assets: None

Knowledge & Experience:

Minimum

- GCSE Grade A-C, or equivalent in English and Math
- Dealing with the public, including handling own caseload.
- Ability to understand financial information including budgeting
- Excellent communication skills
- Excellent negotiation skills
- Full current driving licence and access to a vehicle to visit tenants and landlord throughout the borough
- Must be fluent in the English language (as requirement of Part 7 of the Immigration Act – for the effective performance of a customer-facing role)

Preferred

- Knowledge of homeless legislations, Welfare Benefits, Landlord & Tenant Law and Environmental Health implications for Housing
- NVQ Level 4 or HNC in Housing or related fields or studying for related qualification.
- Good IT and administrative skills
- Detailed knowledge or experience of diagnosing repairs
- Experience of working with tenants
- Experience of working with vulnerable individuals
- Knowledge of the Allocation Scheme

Decision Making:

Postholder will decide:

- Make financial arrangements on a regular basis with tenants to clear arrears, recommend cases for legal action, deposit claims.
- Recognise and advise tenants about entitlement to benefits
- Will need advise on complex ASB cases and other tenancy matters,
- Decision made can have financial consequences.

Contacts and Relationships:

Internal 30%. External 70%

Internal - Housing Officers, Environmental Services, Housing Benefit, Council Tax, Credit Control, Children and Social Services.

External – Tenants, Landlord, Contractors, Councillors, Mental Health Services, Police, Probation, Emergency Services, Debt and other advice agencies.

Produce standard letters but also create ad-hoc letters to deal with complex cases. Complete forms for self and tenants where appropriate. Carry out interviews with tenants and investigate a variety of matters e.g. negotiating payment arrangements, neighbour nuisance and deposit claims.

Creativity & Innovation:

- Continually amend team procedures with other colleagues to ensure that they work to their maximum efficiency.
- Finding solutions to complicated tenancy issues needs officers to think outside normal procedures and tools available.

Job Specific Competencies:

Postholder must have the capacity to work under pressure, without close supervision

The position may expose the postholder to difficult working conditions and situations that may render personal hazards through dealing with difficult clients and situations.

Problem-solver; self-motivated; good communicator.

Data Protection:

In accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998, jobholders should take reasonable care to ensure that personal data is not disclosed outside the Council procedures, or use personal data held on others for their own purposes. In accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, ensure requests for non-personal information are dealt with in accordance with the Council's written procedures.