Recruitment information

Job description and person specification

Your title	Income Maximisation and Recovery Officer
DBS check	This post requires a basic DBS check.
Post number	PRN000514
Your team	Housing Services
You would be based	Civic Centre, Esher
Your line manager	Team Leader (Private Rented Sector and Temporary Accommodation)

Elmbridge Borough Council
... bridging the communities ...

About the role

You will work within Housing Solutions which is responsible for the Councils Housing Register and nominations to social housing providers, the prevention of homelessness, provision of temporary accommodation and longer-term accommodation duties.

You will undertake all aspects of income recovery for Housing Solutions, liaising with all relevant applicants on how they can maximise their income, as well as taking action where rental obligations are not being met by the applicant toward the Council.

You will also provide support to the Private Rented Sector and Temporary Accommodation Team to enable the team to meet the legal obligations owed to homeless households across all forms of temporary accommodation and the Council's Rental Support Scheme, including the need to attend court should possession claims occur due to arrears.

The main purpose of the role:

To be the primary officer in maximising income for all homeless applicants owed a duty by the Local Authority, including liaising with the benefits team for private tenants threatened with homelessness in claiming DHP so that homelessness can be prevented through early intervention work.

To be the primary officer in monitoring rent accounts, recovering income and enforcement action in arrears cases for all homeless applicants in temporary accommodation.

You will liaise with Homeless Prevention and Advice Officers where applicants are affected by the benefit cap or have complex welfare benefit issues, to support them in their advice to applicants further assisting in the prevention and relief of homelessness.

To continue to be the liaison with the job centre, DWP and housing benefit for assistance to the Housing teams as part of homeless prevention work and recovery of rent for the Private Rented Sector and Temporary Accommodation team.

Specific duties and responsibilities

1. Ensure that all rent and service charge accounts are set up and terminated in a timely manner, especially those relating to accommodation provided by commercial housing suppliers, in order to assist prompt payment and avoid or limit any build-up of arrears.

2. Ensure that all residents of temporary accommodation have received written confirmation of the amount they need to pay in rent and service charges, how and where to make payments, and the name and contact details of their Income Recovery Officer.

3. Analyse temporary accommodation charges, comparing them to the charge entry transactions, in order to identify and resolve any discrepancies, such as incidents of under or overcharging applicants.

4. Monitor rent accounts of residents in temporary accommodation, ensuring that appropriate and timely action is taken to address the reasons for non-payment and late payment (including understanding their Housing Benefit claim, residents' unmet support needs and changes in residents' personal and financial circumstances) and that an accurate record is made of residents' circumstances and payment undertakings, and the service user is kept fully informed of developments.

5. Work collaboratively with a wide range of external partners, including the Department for Work and Pensions and advice and support providers, in order to maximise the collection of rent and service charges and minimise service users' arrears.

6. Help residents of temporary accommodation to apply for Housing Benefit and provide them with advice and information on all aspects of the rent and service charge collections process, in order to maximise the payment of Housing Benefit, minimise rent arrears and prevent repeat homelessness.

7. Analyse complex financial information, interpret regulations, negotiate repayment arrangements with residents who are in arrears, and prepare proposals for Court.

8. Work proactively with stakeholders to support and promote a comprehensive, well co-ordinated advice and support service for residents of temporary accommodation in order to maximise residents' income, encourage and enable residents to access training and employment, intervene early to prevent the build-up of arrears and help sustain tenancies.

9. Contribute to the development and updating of the Council's policies and procedures relating to the management of rent collection and arrears in temporary accommodation, ensuring that they are robust and fit for purpose, compatible with the work of other services and partners, fully compliant with the relevant legislation and regulations, and do not leave the Council vulnerable to legal challenge.

10. Recommend legal action in cases of rent arrears through liaising with your Team Leader to instruct Legal Services in order to commence possession proceedings of temporary accommodation.

11. Highlight uncollected rent and service charges for consideration of the Team Leader and Housing Solutions Manager where it may be written off.

12. Update records promptly, ensuring that an accurate, comprehensive record is kept of all interviews, home visits, telephone calls and follow-up action taken (ensuring that all files are maintained to a high standard) in order to assist monitoring, decision-making and effective case management.

13. Contribute positively to the development of new working practices and initiatives that tackle and prevent homelessness, reduces arrears, maximises income collection and reduces the Council's use of temporary accommodation.

14. Maintain an up-to-date knowledge of the Housing Benefit and welfare regulations together with the homelessness legislation and the way in which the Council's temporary accommodation is let and managed.

15. To support and work collaboratively with the Homelessness Prevention and Advice (HPA) team and/or PRSTA team to provide guidance on all income related matters for all homelessness applicants as part of tenancy sustainment and prevention of homelessness activities.

16. To undertake welfare take-up check and explore whether there are relevant medical and or mental health reasons which may result in exclusion from the Benefit Cap and prevent a homeless trigger and to signpost claimants to relevant specialist support to claim any specialist benefits and proactively follow up to monitor outcomes.

17. To undertake any related activities as considered necessary and directed by the PRSTA Team leader.

18. To promote and contribute to effective teamworking by communicating effectively with colleagues within Housing Solutions as appropriate in a timely fashion.

19. To attend and contribute to team meetings, one to one and casework supervision with the Team Leader Private Rented and Temporary Accommodation Team.

What's missing?

Our job descriptions cover as much of the role as we can possibly get down in writing, but issues will arise, and we hope and expect that you will understand that and take on-board other tasks from time-to-time, in keeping with your role of course.

Your conduct

We expect the highest standards of conduct from our employees and at all time you must carry out your duties with integrity and in accordance with the Code of Conduct for employees.

Equal opportunities

We have a strong commitment to achieving equality of opportunity and expect all employees to implement and promote our policy in their own work.

Health and safety

We are committed to a healthy and safe working environment and expect all employees to implement and promote its policy in all aspects of their work.

Personal and sensitive data

You will have regard for the duty of care owed to personal data and sensitive personal data and any other confidential or sensitive information which you access in the course of your employment ensuring adherence to the Data Protection Act and the Council's Information Security Policy and related guidance.

Talent development

We have a talent development programme that includes regular one-to-ones, mid-year reviews, end of year performance reviews and a strong and varied learning and development programme.

You will be expected to get involved in this talent programme to ensure you are performing at the highest level.

Confidentiality

We are committed to maintaining privacy of all staff and customers. We expect all staff to handle all individuals' personal information in a sensitive and professional manner. All staff are under an obligation not to gain access or attempt to gain access to information they are not authorised to have.

Person specification

Please read the details on this form carefully before you complete your Application Form. This form lists the essential requirements needed in order to do the job.

Your written application will be considered in relation to the essential knowledge, skills, abilities, education and experience required for the job and candidates will therefore be selected for interview on this basis.

Elmbridge Borough Council is committed to providing the best possible services and ensuring they are accessible to all who need them irrespective of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious or political belief, Trade Union activity, age, disability, being male or female, married or unmarried, sexuality.

What you need to tell us on your application form:

- You will need to tell us throughout your application form and at interview how you can contribute to providing good quality services for all.
- For each of the requirements listed overleaf, you will need to explain how your skills, abilities, knowledge, education and experience make you suitable for this post.
- These may have been gained through previous employment, voluntary/community work, spare time activities, home responsibilities, training or languages spoken.
- You should also include anything else relevant to the job which you think we should know about.

We regret that we can only consider applicants who are already eligible to work in the United Kingdom

Income Maximisation and Recovery Officer
Post no: PRN000514

Team: Housing Solutions
Salary: SO2 (scp 32-34) £43,571 - £45,655

Hours: 36
Car allowance: C3
(Casual - Frequent)

Qualifications and education

No.	Key requirements	Desirable/ essential	To be tested by: Application1 (A) Test (T) Interview (I)
1	GCSE or equivalent	E	A
2	Literate and highly numerate	E	A

Experience

No	Key requirements	Desirable/ essential	To be tested by: Application1 (A) Test (T) Interview (I)
3	Experience of providing advice on housing, welfare benefits and/or rent arrears.	E	A, I, T
4	Experience of using IT applications, including word processing, spreadsheets and databases.	E	A I
5	Experience of effective joint working and delivering good quality services.	E	A, I
6	Experience of interpreting and explaining legislation and guidance.	E	A, I
7	Experience of using software applications relating to rent collection or Housing Benefit.	D	A, I
8	Experience of successfully managing the collection of rent, service charges and arrears.	D	A, I

Knowledge, skills and abilities

No.	Key requirements	Desirable/ essential	To be tested by: Application1 (A) Test (T) Interview (I)
9	Knowledge of rent arrears issues.	E	A, I, T
10	Awareness of the eligibility criteria and regulations relating to Housing Benefit, tax credits and welfare benefits.	E	A, I
11	Knowledge of IT applications, including word processing, spreadsheets and databases.	E	A, I, T
12	Knowledge of the techniques and processes relating to the successful collection of rent, service charges and arrears.	D	A, I
13	Knowledge of housing management and the homelessness legislation, and their impact on the collection of rent and service charges.	D	A, I
14	An effective team player with the ability to motivate and support members of the team.	E	A, I
15	Excellent communication skills (verbal and written) and the ability to influence a variety of audiences, including the Council's partners.	E	A, I
16	An effective problem-solver with an organised and imaginative approach to work and the ability to manage difficult situations.	E	A, I
17	Ability to work effectively under pressure, to prioritise own work and achieve targets.	E	A, I
18	Track record of meeting tight deadlines.	E	A, I
19	Ability to analyse, manage and interpret information and data.	E	A, I

Special requirements

No.	Key requirements	Desirable/ essential	To be tested by: Application1 (A) Test (T) Interview (I)
20	Must be able to commence work at 8.45am as necessary/on rota in office or remotely .	E	A, I
21	Need to have a valid UK driving licence access	E	A, I
22	Must be able to pass a basic DBS check	E	A, I