

## LONDON BOROUGH OF REDBRIDGE

### ROLE DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

|                         |  |                       |                                     |
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| <b>Role Title:</b>      | Rent Recovery Support Officer  |                       |                                     |
| <b>Directorate:</b>     | Place  | <b>Grade:</b>         | 6                                   |
| <b>Department:</b>      | Housing  | <b>Hours/weeks:</b>   | 36 hours/52.14 weeks                |
| <b>Function:</b>        | Housing Resources  | <b>Post number:</b>   |                                     |
| <b>Team:</b>            | 1 <sup>st</sup> Stage Rent Recovery  | <b>Base/location:</b> | Lynton House/Orchard Housing Office |
| <b>Reports to:</b>      | 1 <sup>st</sup> Stage Rent Recovery Team Leader  |                       |                                     |
| <b>Responsible for:</b> | No direct line management but may be responsible for the supervision of workers, trainees and work placement staff on occasion |                       |                                     |

#### Role and Context

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| <b>Overall Role Purpose:</b> | <p>To maximise rent recovery from customers in Temporary Accommodation and in Council Housing in accordance with rent recovery procedures</p> <p>To contact tenants in a timely, systematic way to vigorously pursue their rent arrears and respond to any enquiries from contacts within the specified time. To carry out transactional and administrative tasks required to achieve this.</p> <p>To transfer customers to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Stage Rent Recovery team, Court Officers and the Complex Case Team in accordance with rent arrears policy</p> <p>To maintain accurate and up-to-date records of action taken to recover income and arrears and to monitor and record the impact of the actions taken.</p> <p>To help customers manage their arrears as they move between temporary accommodation solutions</p> <p>To work in conjunction with all other appropriate agencies to ensure maximisation of income for both residents and the organisation</p> |
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| <b>Role Context:</b> | <p>In recent years the Rent Recovery function has had to respond to the significant challenges of a changing environment and customer base. Welfare reform, in particular the introduction of the Benefit Cap in 2013, the Spare Room Subsidy and the roll out of Universal Credit in 2017 and the Benefit Cap of 2013, and the Spare Room Subsidy, have caused rent arrears to increase. This has been compounded by a lack of affordable housing within the housing market coupled with the acute problem in Redbridge which has the second lowest social housing stock of all London Local Authorities. In addition, the Redbridge customer base is presenting with greater vulnerabilities and complex needs. The 1<sup>st</sup> Stage Rent Recovery team functions within this context of high-volume rent arrears.</p> |
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| <b>Key Accountabilities and Result Areas</b>              |  |
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| <b>1. Strategy and Planning</b>                           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To maximise the recovery of rent and service charge arrears in accordance with Rent Recovery Procedures and team and individual performance targets.</li> <li>To plan contact with customers in a way that meets their needs and with a frequency that will drive the recovery of rent arrears</li> <li>To closely monitor arrears, taking appropriate action to ensure that income is maximised and that performance on income recovery meets relevant targets</li> </ul>  |
| <b>2. Operations and Support</b>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To contact tenants in a systematic way to vigorously pursue their rent arrears and respond to any enquiries from contacts within the specified time</li> <li>To offer advice and assistance to tenants regarding Housing Benefit and other welfare benefits.</li> <li>To prepare cases of substantial or persistent arrears for referrals to other teams within Rent Recovery</li> <li>To produce rent collection cards for distribution. To send out rent and charge statements as required. To carry out related administrative duties and related transactional tasks</li> <li>To carry out any other duties commensurate with the grade of the post as requested</li> </ul>   |
| <b>3. Systems and Process Development and Improvement</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To maintain customers electronic files on info@work providing a thorough audit trail of activity and key documents in line with agreed process</li> <li>To personally use the software packages provided (e.g. Northgate/ new Housing Rents System, TASYs, Information@Work, HOPE, Northgate Revenues &amp; Benefits System, Possession Claim On-Line; Pericles, Novalet; and Images)</li> <li>To capture all notes and resident engagement on Northgate (or relevant Housing system)</li> <li>To comply with all monitoring systems put in place in response to service issues and needs which support the provision of a high quality, legally compliant service</li> <li>To contribute to learning opportunities, training and service improvement exercises across Housing Resources related to learning and new requirements on cases.</li> <li>To assist in the training of new staff</li> <li>To participate in the implementation of initiatives to improve rent recovery performance.</li> <li>To maintain an up to date knowledge of relevant law, policies and procedures relating to rent recovery</li> </ul> |
| <b>4. Communication Partnership</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To liaise with Managing Agents, landlords, Revenues &amp; Benefits and other relevant teams within the Housing Service to resolve outstanding recovery issues.</li> <li>To increase awareness of the work of the service and promote good working relationships amongst internal and external contact agencies.</li> <li>External contacts: Debt Collection Agencies, Solicitors Welfare Benefit Agency, Other Local Authorities, Department for Work and Pensions, Citizens Advice Bureau</li> <li>Internal contacts: Housing Needs, Welfare Benefit Team, Payments &amp; Benefits, Social Services, Legal Services, Finance Team, Education Services, Housing Solutions Prevention Team</li> </ul>  |
| <b>5. Performance and Standards</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To maintain accurate and up-to-date records of action taken to recover rent and arrears and to monitor and record the impact of the actions taken</li> <li>To reconcile information on the requisite IT systems and case files to ensure that accurate records are maintained</li> <li>To ensure that casework is proactively managed and key deadlines - for the provision of actions on customers individual cases, as well as key process deadlines on casework management are adhered to</li> <li>To provide statistical information on performance as requested.</li> </ul>  |

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|                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To ensure the council's policy, in respect to 1<sup>st</sup> stage rent arrears, is carried out</li> <li>• Responsibility for accurate record keeping and use of systems to ensure comprehensive ability to report on 1<sup>st</sup> stage rent arrears</li> <li>• Contribute to the achievement of Housing and Housing Resources' service plan priorities and objectives and meet key targets.</li> <li>• To participate in staff appraisal system, individual supervision sessions and Team meetings.</li> <li>• To ensure that services are innovative and quality driven and: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are responsive to customer's needs and service requirements</li> <li>• Demonstrate clear departmental direction, vision and style</li> <li>• Achieve effectiveness and efficiency in operation</li> <li>• The Council's Equality and Diversity policy is adhered to</li> <li>• To carry out the duties and responsibilities of the post, in accordance with the Council's Health &amp; Safety Policy and relevant Health &amp; Safety legislation</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The post holder will be required to contribute to the development and implementation of the Council's corporate objectives including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and safety in the workplace</li> <li>• Performance management</li> <li>• Equality and Diversity policy</li> <li>• Customer service strategy</li> <li>• Corporate priorities and strategies</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Contributing to agreed performance outcomes and standards, which will be reviewed at least on an annual basis. Will be expected to be committed to the Council's "Customer Services Promise" and must demonstrate this commitment in the way they carry out their duties and responsibilities.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Key Performance Outcomes</b>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contribution to the reduction of rent arrears</li> <li>• Use of system automation is increased</li> <li>• Number of channels to communicate with customers are increased</li> <li>• Contribution to the reduction of Bad Debt</li> </ul>  |
| <b>6. Resource Management</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Manage a busy and varied caseload with competing demands</li> <li>• To submit expenditure requests to the Team Manager in line with budget management procedures.</li> <li>• To recommend amounts for refund and write off in accordance with the Rent Recovery Procedure.</li> <li>• The reconciliation of rent and charges to the rent accounts.</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Corporate Accountabilitys</b> | <p>All employees of the Council should undertake and conduct their work with due regard to the corporate accountabilities (available on the Redbridge Council website). These include responsibilities for outcomes regarding Equality, Conduct &amp; Behaviour, Health &amp; Safety, Data Protection, Safeguarding and Customer Care.</p>   |
| <b>Flexibility</b>               | <p>The key responsibilities and duties of the role are neither exclusive nor exhaustive. All workers are expected to operate flexibly to support delivery of services and from time to time will be required to undertake responsibilities outside the normal remit of role description as required by the line manager, which are broadly commensurate with the job level and scope of competence.</p>  |

| <b>Person Specification</b>                   |  |  |
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| <b>Knowledge &amp; Experience</b>             |  | <i>Method of candidate assessment: A = Application form I = Interview T = Test</i> |
| <b>Statutory or Mandatory qualifications:</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No Mandatory Qualification Required</li> </ul>  | A  |
| <b>Educational Ability</b>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Level 4: Specialist learning with ability to undertake detailed analysis of a high level of information and knowledge in an area of work or study. May be evidenced by: Certificates of higher education; NVQ level 4; HND; BTEC Professional; and equivalent qualifications, or evidence of demonstrable application in the course of experience.</li> </ul>   | A  |
| <b>Knowledge</b>                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge and awareness of Local Government operating processes and decision-making processes and the ability to operate in that environment.</li> <li>Knowledge of the Housing act 1996 Parts VI and VII (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) and related secondary legislation.</li> <li>Knowledge of the rights and obligations of landlords and occupants in the public and private sector</li> <li>Knowledge of Housing Benefit and regulations</li> <li>Knowledge of the Welfare Reform Act</li> <li>Knowledge of recent housing issues and government initiatives</li> </ul>  | AI<br>T  |
| <b>Experience</b>                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working in the public or social housing sector</li> <li>Working with income and rent accounts to increase income recovery</li> <li>Use of financial information systems, spreadsheets, databases</li> </ul>   | AI<br>T  |
| <b>Skills / Abilities</b>                     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Able to communicate effectively with customers to ensure that rent recovery priorities are clear</li> <li>Good numeracy literacy and IT skills</li> <li>Able to communicate effectively with Council officers at all levels and with a variety of external agencies</li> <li>Able to work to tight timescales and cope with pressures and deadlines.</li> <li>Maintain accurate record systems</li> <li>Able to provide clear advice to customers on income maximisation issues. Good interpersonal and communication skills to relate effectively to, and command the respect, trust and confidence of officers, council members, stakeholders and the whole community</li> <li>Good networking, partnership and negotiating skills that are influential with others</li> <li>Ability to prepare, collate, analyse and interpret specialist information and present the information in an appropriate manner</li> <li>Ability to prepare documents and reports</li> <li>Ability to manage time effectively, prioritise workload and work to deadlines</li> <li>Ability to plan and work well under pressure</li> <li>Ability to negotiate within a context of high political sensitivity and conflicting interests</li> <li>Ability to recognise the needs of all customers and take appropriate action to ensure that those needs are met</li> <li>Ability to work effectively with customers whose behaviour may be sometimes be challenging.</li> </ul> | AI<br>T  |

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| <b>Corporate Behaviours</b>                     | The Council has a set of behaviours that all employees are expected to deliver in the performance of their role. The behaviour framework can be found on the <a href="#">Councils internet page</a> , and these should be reflected in your application and the way you work. As part of an individual's personal development Redbridge expects employees of all levels to be continuously developing these core behaviours. | AI      |
| <b>Effective and Collaborative Team Working</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To take responsibility for personal development and actively participate in all learning and development.</li> <li>To participate in the ongoing development, implementation and monitoring of service plans.</li> <li>To support and contribute to value for money, service efficiency and improvement.</li> </ul>   | AI<br>T |
| <b>Working Pattern and travel</b>               | May require occasional evening work  | AI      |
| <b>Safeguarding and Disclosure</b>              | <b>DBS Disclosure Required?</b> Not required   | A<br>T  |
| <b>Special Factors or Constraints</b>           | N/A  |         |