**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL 4084**

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Job Title: Housing Income Officer**

**Reports to: Income Services Manager**

**Department: Neighbourhoods, Communities & Housing**

**Section: Income, Involvement & Improvement**

**Purpose of the Job**

To manage a caseload of current and former accounts and implement a cost effective income recovery strategy in order to maximise income to the Housing Revenue Account, the General Fund.

To be responsible for promoting financial inclusion and reducing social inequality by employing a range of proactive, preventative strategies and working collaboratively with a wide range of internal and external agencies.

**Principal Accountabilities**

* Prevent and limit debt to the Local Authority by proactively managing accounts, early intervention and providing tailored, intensive support to marginalised sections of the community. .
* To identify vulnerable customers and assess their needs in order to make recommendations to resolve the issues that are causing indebtedness and reduce poverty and social exclusion by informing and educating customers about financial inclusion initiatives and provide accurate advice about claiming benefits, grants and other allowances.
* Responsible for identifying and managing desperate and suicidal customers at any stage of the income collection process in order to make appropriate referrals for timely support.
* To monitor and manage rent and sub accounts taking action to recover unpaid debts to the council and meet performance targets using a customer focused approach.
* To negotiate realistic and affordable repayment agreements, taking into account financial circumstances and ensuring customers understand the consequences of non-payment, identifying cases for referral to appropriate support agencies where necessary.
* To prepare and serve statutory notices, initiate legal action in accordance with the Rent Arrears Pre-Action Protocol and prepare accurate documents for County Court hearings. This will include evidencing alternative dispute resolution actions.
* To litigate on behalf of the council at County Court hearings, balancing the needs and rights of customers against organisational objectives while ensuring that the council’s reputation with the Judiciary is maintained.
* To prepare for, attend and carry out evictions, completing the necessary follow up work in line with procedures.
* To manage the tenancy relationship and bring about behaviour change by promoting a payment culture, budget management and money advice services to customers and staff.
* To establish, develop and sustain effective working relationships with internal and external team, statutory and third sector organisations working collaboratively to increase the council’s income streams and achieve positive outcomes for customers.
* To manage former and deceased tenant accounts in line with procedures.
* To provide training, support and guidance to other colleagues ensuring organisational learning and continuous improvement in your service area.
* To prepare write off recommendations in line with procedures.
* To reconcile rent account adjustments and corrections recommendations.

**General Accountabilities**

* To carry out duties in accordance with the council’s Equalities, Health & Safety, GDPR and Safeguarding policies.
* To undertake such other duties appropriate to the grade and character of the work as may reasonably be required of you.
* Your duties will be as set out in the above job description, but please note the council reserves the right to update your job description from time to time to reflect changes in or to your job. You will be consulted about any proposed changes.
* The list of duties in the job descripton should not be regarded as exclusive or exhaustive.

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| **CRITERIA** | **ESSENTIAL CRITERIA** |
| **Job Related Education, Qualifications and Knowledge** | * Educated to minimum NQF Level 4 or equivalent experience.
* A clear understanding of the legislation governing the collection of social housing debt and other legislation including Pre-Action Protocol for Possession Claims by Social Landlords, Information Governance and Data Protection legislation, Health & Safety, Equalities Act, Care Act and the Safeguarding Adults at Risk and Sussex Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.
* A clear and extensive understanding of Welfare Reform, welfare benefits and financial inclusion.
* An excellent knowledge and understanding of the issues and barriers for vulnerable people with a wide range of complex needs and/or disabilities.
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| **Experience** | * Experience of working within a high pressure, customer focused environment and dealing with customers with specialised needs and people in crisis.
* Experience of dealing with income recovery through to court and eviction stages.
* Experience of evaluating situations and making decisions in a challenging environment while dealing with customers sensitively and responding appropriately to their needs.
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| **Skills/Abilities** | * Enhanced negotiation, problem solving and interviewing skills with experience of influencing behaviour to bring about positive change.
* Excellent organisational skills, attention to detail and high level of accuracy and able to plan, prioritise and monitor own workload, working well in a team environment.
* Ability to remain focused, resilient, patient and assertive and use balanced judgement to make reasonable decisions to achieve positive outcomes with concern for the impact on others.
* Ability to build and maintain positive relationships with customers, colleagues and other service providers.
* Ability to litigate for the council in the County Court to achieve appropriate court orders while upholding the reputation of the council.
* Strong analytical skills to enable an understanding of entitlement to benefits.
* Ability to work with confidential information and liaise sensitively with individuals and organisations.
* Provide support and training to other colleagues ensuring organisational learning and continuous improvement.
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| **Equalities** | * To be able to demonstrate a commitment to the principles of Equalities and to be able to carry out duties in accordance with the council’s Equality & Inclusion Policy.
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