Income Project Officer

Reports to:	Income Maximisation manager		
Department:	Housing Management	**Grade:**	SO2
DBS Status:	Basic DBS	**Politically restricted:**	No

Job Purpose:

- To maximise income for Housing Management through robust rent collection and arrears management across varied portfolios and tenures.
- Provide a legislatively compliant collection service.
- Work with the Income Project Manager and Income Maximisation Service Manager to deliver outcomes on individual projects to maximise income in struggling areas.

Values

Collaborate proactively.
Lead inclusively.
Embrace change.
Be bold and curious.
Celebrate and share our success.

Job specific roles and responsibilities

1. Provide high level customer service with emphasis on getting things right the first time, keeping promises and taking ownership for the customer demands and requests. Promote self-sufficiency in our services while offering support to those that need extra help.
2. To keep up to date on welfare benefit entitlements, particularly housing related benefits and all changes due to Welfare Reform.
3. To advise and assist clients across tenures on welfare benefits – to offer advice and encourage debt counselling and refer tenants to specialist advice.
4. To work with staff across Housing Needs, Housing Management and Adult Social Care to provide a seamless service that is person centred and maximises income while ensuring that the holistic needs of a client are met.
5. Achieve targets on Key Performance Indicators as set by the Income Maximisation Service Manager.

6. Work flexibly on varied projects relating to Income Maximisation and across portfolios with particular emphasis on New and Independent Living, Brent Direct Leasing, Temporary Accommodation and Supported Accommodation.

7. Ensure rent is paid and arrears are reducing on a continuing basis through the effective enforcement of the rent arrears policy, procedure and systems.

8. Provide detailed in person engagement and support to tenants and clients in arrears, carrying out home visits and working from sites as required.

9. Be a part of the letting and sign-up process to ensure rent is received from day one.

10. Responsible for preparing timely and accurate reports on arrears cases.

11. Ensure that closed accounts are reconciled, and HB has been correctly allocated to the accounts. To ensure HB Overpayments are cleared and any customer credits refunded in line with the Council's policy. Refer and monitor former customer arrears to external debt collectors and to recommend write off of unrecoverable debt.

12. Implement appropriate procedures to ensure effective fraud prevention and refer suspected cases of fraud or misrepresentation to the Council's Audit and Investigation Unit to comply with statutory requirements and protect the Council's interest ensuring all relevant stakeholders are appropriately notified.

13. Maintain appropriate and accurate records to comply with statutory and service wide reporting requirements on performance issues. Proactively monitoring and reporting to the Manager in respect of service delivery, performance indicators and target.

14. Develop understanding of the wider context and through flow of the portfolios, working with teams such as Rent Accounting, Housing Resolutions, Emergency Housing Team and Social Workers, to make sure that clients and tenants are set up to succeed from day 1.

15. Attend and present at court cases and evictions; ensure the Council's interests are protected.

16. Support the Council's channel shifting ambition, by promoting online transactions.

17. Promote and set up Direct Debits wherever possible and at every opportunity.

18. Work holistically with a commercial mindset for the Council, checking that clients and tenants have Council Tax and rent in payment and they, their advocates, appointees and officers of the council are actively involved with cases.

19. Escalate risk in an appropriate and proportionate way to management.

20. Offer proactive resolution of customers' complaints and members' enquiries regarding the service ensuring all issues are remedied and a formal response is provided concluding the case within the legislative framework.

21. Offer proactive resolution to enquiries that arise from engagement with tenants and clients, taking ownership and accountability, limiting hand offs and having a solution focussed, one team attitude across services.

22. Engage in resident engagement activities as required.

23. Maintain accurate customer records in all required systems both in the office and out on-site including logging of customer feedback and engagement activities in real time.

24. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all employees are required to act in such a way that always safeguards the health and well-being of children and vulnerable adults.

25. Carry out duties with due regard to the Council's Customer Care, Equal Opportunities, Information Governance, Data Protection, Health and Safety and Emergency Planning & Awareness (including to provide assistance where available) policies and procedures.

26. Employees should embed environmental sustainability into their work, actively contributing to Brent becoming a carbon-neutral borough in 2030.

27. Undertake any other duties commensurate with the general level of responsibility of this post.

28. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all employees are required to act in such a way that always safeguards the health and well-being of children and vulnerable adults.

29. Undertake any other duties commensurate with the general level of responsibility of this post.

Essential Requirements (key skills & qualifications)

Knowledge and Qualifications

1. Knowledge and understanding of local authority statutory and support services related to benefits and rent.
2. Knowledge of welfare benefits and related issues, including Universal Credit.
3. Knowledge of equality and diversity issues affecting social housing tenants such as stigma.
4. Good knowledge and understanding of standard IT software packages including Microsoft Office and Teams.

Experience

1. Relevant experience of working in a partnership/multi-agency setting and multi-disciplinary team.
2. Understanding of Housing Benefit regulations and rent arrears pre-actions protocols.
3. Experience of working largely autonomously to manage own workload and prioritise tasks both on-site and in the office.
4. Experience of working with customers and championing their views and feedback.

Skills and Abilities

1. Ability to understanding and implement Housing Benefit regulations and rent arrears pre-actions protocols.
2. Ability to effectively interview customers and achieve outcomes through active listening and negotiation skills.
3. Able to manage systems to aid work, keeping detailed accurate records and interpreting data.
4. Able to learn best practice in management of income recovery, debt counselling & debt collection.

5. Ability to take responsibility for decision making within the remit of the job.
6. Ability to build positive working relationships with multiple teams.
7. Ability to manage numerous workstreams and work flexibly on changing projects.
8. Ability to actively look for ways of improving services and delivering results which go beyond what is expected wherever possible.
9. Highly organized with excellent attention to detail and ability to self-check and review work outputs to ensure accuracy of records.
10. Ability to communicate clearly and concisely, orally and in writing with a wide range of people, including Councilors.
11. Demonstrate the ability to be purposeful, taking responsibility and taking action to promote great customer service, with a ‘Can Do’ attitude.
12. Demonstrate the ability to motivate a team towards common goals, creating

a sense of team spirit.

13. Highly self-motivated with the ability to plan work effectively without elevated levels of supervision.
14. Problem solving and decision-making skills with the ability to deal with potentially complex situations within a busy workload, mitigate risks to customer and organization, and achieve positive outcomes.

Overall Headcount - None

Within reason these key deliverables may evolve to meet service need and it is expected that the postholder will be flexible and adaptable in their delivery to meet both service and council wide needs