

# Job specification



**Job title:** Customer Services Officer - Collections and Recovery  
**Service:** Customer Experience and Support  
**Grade:** G6  
**Reporting to:** Assistant Business Partner

## Your job

Your role is to enable and support the maximisation of all Customer Experience and Support Collection streams, predominately but not exclusively Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Rents. You will also play a part in Former Tenant Arrears and Housing Benefit Overpayments collection maximisation. The role also includes property inspections.

You will undertake key recovery tasks and exercises, contacting customers through a variety of communication methods, adopting appropriate and effective arrears interventions for different customer cohorts and negotiating repayment based on individual financial circumstances whilst explaining complex account matters.

You will engage with customers regarding their outstanding debt and accurately capture customer information to create affordable instalment plans and payment methods, reducing cash collection to cheaper methods, but following processes and procedures when taking them, holding asset based conversations regarding their financial circumstances and providing maximisation of benefits, discounts, exemptions and reliefs, advice and support.

You will signpost customers to any other additional support like digital and online courses, debt advice and Welfare Rights and Welfare Support within the Council or provided by partners and stakeholders to support digital inclusion, reduce social isolation and build self-reliance.

You will predominantly work Monday to Friday and hours will vary between 7:00 am and 19:00pm in line with the needs of the service. You will on occasions be required to work Saturdays and in such circumstances you will be allocated equivalent time off Monday to Friday. This will be assigned on a rota basis.

The Council is committed to complying with the European General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and meeting the requirements of the Information Commissioner's office (regulating data protection compliance in the UK). It is your responsibility to ensure that the work you undertake is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations.

## In this job you will

In the next 12 months, you will:

- Process, in line with same day same week processing, to ensure liabilities are accurate, ensuring right first time processing is established, reducing speed of processing, issuing accurate, timely bills to enable improvements in collection and keep our customers the focus of what we do

- Adopt a Direct Debit by Default collection culture when making payment arrangements and ensuring that data is used across all Collection and Recovery streams, when appropriate, to reduce costs to serve and collect
- Effectively consider all methods of Housing Benefit Overpayment Collection when transferring accounts back from Agresso including, but not exclusively, deductions from: ongoing Housing Benefits entitlement, Department for Work and Pensions benefits, other Local Authorities and blameless tenants
- Ensure a holistic approach to recovery by reviewing and refining customer details within digital systems including, but not exclusively, MyAccount, Northgate, Document Management Systems, Digital Platforms and Agresso to ensure liabilities and claims for customers are appropriately linked, coordinated and awarded right first time
- Actively assist in contributing to continual improvements in economy, efficiency, and effectiveness and of quality of service enabling the section to work effectively and efficiently
- Actively consider recovery paths that reduce cost allocation to accounts to better enable payments and reduce customer indebtedness, avoiding Internal and External Enforcement Agent action if practical or possible
- Assist with customers at County and Magistrates' Court hearings as required, responding to enquiries and undertaking the processing of any subsequent actions
- Identify and recommend cases for write offs for Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing Benefit Overpayments and Former Tenant Arrears and to assist with monitoring write offs made by Income Group in relation to Housing Benefit Overpayments
- Undertake targeted property inspections to establish the correct Council Tax or Business Rate and identify and report potential Rental Liability changes, streamlining billing processes and identifying new properties for registration at the earliest opportunity

On an ongoing basis you will:

- Support managers to deliver effective and efficient services to customers focusing on early intervention and prevention in recovery escalation procedures
- Utilise multiple digital and online systems to accurately follow processes and procedures to carry out the duties of the role in line with statutory legislation, regulations and council policies, procedures and strategies
- Contact customers through a variety of appropriate communication methods including surgeries across the borough, outbound telephony, home visits, email, traditional mail and bulk texting
- Accurately and efficiently update appropriate systems with results and consequential actions following recovery tasks and exercises, ensuring processes are effective and follow agreed processes and guidelines
- Data gather information and collate details earlier to enable the reduction of future action, streamlining processes improving collection opportunities through resource reduction in key high volume areas
- Work in partnership with stakeholders, partners, third party contractors, other teams within the council and any other body or group to maintain and improve service delivery and to gather relevant information, exploring and supporting Digital First and automated mechanisms

- Respond to customers and other organisations enquiries, emails, letters, telephone, requests, disputes, providing accurate, clear and informative advice and information and to engage customers and staff to interact digitally with the Council utilising the Digital Platform
- Contribute to the effective running and performance of the team by providing assistance and support to colleagues where needed and as directed by the Assistant Business Partner or to meet priorities and objectives determined by management
- Liaise with Internal Enforcement, Assessments, wider Customer Experience and Support teams and other Council services to ensure reputational, collection and welfare related outcomes for the service and our customers are met
- To actively assist in delivering key outcomes, strategies programmes of work, improvement agendas, identification of avoidance tactic cases, and cost reductions in line with agreed targets set by managers
- To actively participate in Customer Experience and Support changes to system processes and new processes and services to enhance the overall customer offer and experience
- Undertake any training required to work effectively in the Customer Services Officer Collection and Recovery role
- Work across Customer Experience and Support to provide the service at any location in line with business needs
- Ensure strict compliance with General Data Protection Regulations, The Data Protection Act and confidentiality with the collection, use and storage of personal data at all times
- Ensure you operate within GDPR guidelines by regularly reviewing data held and destroying information in line with retention schedules.

### In this job you will need

You must be able to demonstrate the following essential requirements:-

- 5 GCSE Grade C or above or Level 3 NVQ or equivalent suitable experience
- Experience of engaging with customers channelling their transactions to a digital contact method
- Experience of effectively working as a team and supporting team members as well as the ability to use your own initiative
- Excellent organisational and communication skills
- Excellent knowledge of IT systems and inputting and extracting data with an ability to utilise the functionality to improve service provision and enhance the customer experience
- Experience of working in a fast paced environment whilst maintaining quality and accuracy
- The ability to take accountability for day to day work load ensuring quantity and quality of work is in line with performance criteria
- Ability to work as part of a team and yet an ability to use one's own initiative
- The ability to identify problems, take ownership and actively seek and implement solutions
- Have an ability to work flexibly in line with the demands of the service
- The ability to adopt a self-reflective approach to aid continuous professional and personal development

- To be decisive and take accountability and action to deal effectively with escalated situations, in line with minimising the risk to the Council and service reputation

## Our culture

For us, it's not just about all we achieve as an organisation, but how we do it. Therefore, all employees are expected to display our **Team Wigan** behaviours.

**Be Positive... take pride in all that you do**

**Be Accountable... be responsible for making things better**

**Be Courageous... be open to doing things differently**

**Be Kind... be helpful, generous and thoughtful towards yourself and others**

**#TeamWiganDeal**

## Together we will

Deliver Deal 2030, working alongside our communities to make Wigan Borough an amazing and inclusive place to live and work, building a better future.

### We will



Genuinely care for you and your wellbeing.



Champion a culture that inspires you to thrive.



Listen and engage with you to bring your ideas to life.



Celebrate your contribution and support you to reach your goals and aspirations.

### I will



Look after my wellbeing and be kind to myself and others.



Work with others across #TeamWigan to be courageous, innovative and embrace technology.



Share my ideas and be accountable for making things happen.



Own my development and let my passion and positivity shine through.