

Job specification



Job title: Customer Services Support Officer – Collections and Recovery

Service: Customer Services

Grade: G5

Reporting to: Assistant Business Partner

Your job

You will enable and support the maximisation of all Customer Services Collection streams, including, but not exclusively Council Tax, Housing Rents, Former Tenant Arrears, Garage Arrears, Business Rates and Housing Benefit Overpayments.

Your role will be to monitor billing processes and exception reports including, but not exclusively, Direct Debits, Payment and Arrangements, Valuation Office schedules, Information Requests and potential growth areas, using information from a variety of sources.

You will also monitor and update internal and external systems in support of Collection functions including, but not exclusively data for and received from DWP UC Landlord Portal, Her Majesty's Court Service, Valuation Office Agency and the Single View of Business Portal.

You will 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.

To work in collaboration and liaise with Internal Audit Team linked to Council Tax, Business Rates and Rents where it has been identified there is potential fraud and to provide information in connection with investigations.

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

Mandatory statement

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:

- Accurately update and record all aspects of Council Tax, Rents, Former Tenant Arrears, Business Rates and any future business records when creating and amending recovery stages household, tenancy and property liability records using data multiple times across systems where appropriate
- Monitor and maintain Charging Orders, IVA, Bankruptcy and Insolvency cases ensuring evidence and documentation is provided and that appropriate updates are applied

- Create affordable instalment plans and payment methods, with a Direct Debit by Default focus, issuing accurate and timely bills and statements to maximise collection using information from a variety of sources, maximising the use of digital options to gather information to support processing and improve outcomes
- Ensure a holistic approach to collection and recovery by reviewing and refining customer details within digital systems including, but not exclusively, MyAccount, Northgate, Document Management Systems, Digital Platforms, DWP UC Landlord Portal, Single View of Business Portal and Agresso to ensure liabilities and claims for customers are appropriately linked, coordinated and awarded right first time
- Monitor and progress accounts through the relevant court and recovery taking appropriate action to collect arrears through early intervention and prevention strategies ensuring income streams are effective
- Carry out timely trace and search procedures taking appropriate recovery action which may include litigation, write off or referral to a Collection Agency or Enforcement Agents as part of recovery procedures moving cases to an appropriate stages
- Ensure that accounts for passing to External Enforcement have had appropriate checks and recovery pathways to prevent or help mitigate this action have been undertaken
- Identify and recommend cases for write offs for Rents, Council Tax, Business Rates and Housing Benefit Overpayments and to assist with monitoring write offs
- Undertaken all aspects of refunds to customers accurately and in a timely fashion following agreed procedures and transferring to alternate accounts as appropriate
- Monitoring manual adjustments, payment transfers and suspense accounts to process unallocated or inaccurate payments, including but not exclusively, from customers, Department for Work and Pensions and Employers liaising when required
- Undertake Home Contents Insurance processes in accordance with policies, maintaining accurate records relating to policies, claims and sanctions, ensuring violent incident warnings are monitored and verified

On an ongoing basis you will:

- Support Collection officers and managers to deliver effective and efficient services to customers focusing on early intervention and prevention in recovery escalation procedures
- Support key recovery tasks and exercises involving contacting customers through a variety of appropriate communication methods
- Liaise with External and Internal Enforcement, Assessments and other Council Services and partners where appropriate to ensure best reputational and welfare related outcomes for Customer Services and the customer
- 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
- 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 and 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

- Actively assist in delivering key outcomes, improvement agendas and cost reductions in line with agreed targets set by managers
- Be decisive and take accountability and action to deal effectively with escalated situations, like avoidance tactics minimising the risk to the Council and service reputation
- Actively participate in customer service changes to system processes and new services to enhance the overall customer offer and experience
- Undertake any training required to work effectively in the Customer Services Support Officer Collections and Recovery role
- Work across Customer Services to provide the service at any location in line with business needs
- 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 equivalent, or demonstrable experience
- Evidence of continuous personal development
- An ability to engage with customers utilising an asset based approach, channelling their transactions to relevant access channels e.g digital
- Experience of effectively working as a team whilst having an ability to use your own initiative
- Experience of inputting, verifying and extracting data from IT systems
- Knowledge and understanding of the values of the Council and how you can apply them in your day to day work
- Knowledge on the impact of poor customer service delivery and the link to the reputation of the Council
- Able to take accountability for day to day work load ensuring quantity of work is in line with performance criteria whilst focusing of the quality of the work
- Competency to raise issues, taking ownership of problems and actively seek a solution
- The ability to gain rapport with customers to understand their circumstances and work with them to achieve resolution at the 1st point of contact
- An ability to work flexibly in line with the demands of the service

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 **Be 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

Individuals with line management responsibilities are also expected to ...

Inspire... lead by example and help others to see the big picture

Care... show genuine concern for people as individuals and value their contributions

Engage... I connect with others both within and beyond the organisation

Staff Deal

Our Staff Deal is an informal agreement with all staff. It outlines what you can expect from us, and in return what we expect from you

Our part

- Provide strong, honest and visible leadership
- Reward your commitment and hard work
- Care for your health and well being
- Listen to you and put your ideas into action
- Support you to give something back
- Offer opportunities to learn and grow
- Be one team, one council
- Believe in you

Your part

- Listen, be open, honest and friendly
- Be efficient, flexible and professional
- Care for your health and stay active
- Tell us how we can improve
- Give something back whenever you can
- Take opportunities to learn and grow
- Be one team, one council
- Believe in yourself and our borough