

Senior Rent Accounts Officer

Job Description

Position Pay Level: 6

Position Pay SCP: 24 – 29

Salary: £37,711 - £42,307 (Inclusive of Local Weighting Allowance of £1,130 per annum)

DBS requirement: Basic

Reports to: Housing Recovery Manager

Financial Responsibilities: Rent account administration of c. £60m income

Main purpose of Job:

To be responsible for co-ordinating and maintaining the provision of an efficient and effective administration and monitoring system for Slough Borough Council, updating the Rent Account System (NEC) with all tenancy changes for both Council homes and garages (to include responsibility for all system amendments, for example, rent waivers, court costs, dispatch of the weekly swipe card file, cash transfers, lettings, voids and setting up of use & occupation account charges.

To liaise with both internal and external customers, and to provide timely and accurate information and technical analysis accordingly.

Main Accountabilities:

General

- To manage Slough Borough Council Rent Accounts on NEC Housing Management IT system, including HRA, Temporary Accommodation, DISH and JEH (James Elliman Homes) Rent Accounts.

Partners and stakeholders

- To build constructive relationships with housing, partners, colleagues across all service areas and contribute to developing and protecting the reputation of the council.
- Promote a culture of partnership working and stakeholder involvement and look for opportunities for joint working with partners and other service areas.

Business change

- To suggest processes that will continually improve performance.
- The post holder will be expected to proactively embrace the council's channel shift agenda, promoting the transition of services to digital platforms wherever possible. This will involve identifying opportunities to move customer engagement and transactional processes online, reducing reliance on more traditional contact methods, and supporting residents to access services digitally.

Compliance

- To be responsible for the correct administration of rent accounts, ensuring prescribed timescales are adhered to.

Equality and diversity

- Uphold and promote the aims of the council's equality and diversity policies to ensure non-discriminatory practices in all aspects of work, and that diversity is embedded in everything, from workforce planning and policy development to service delivery

Specific responsibilities

- Manage all incoming and outgoing correspondence and inquiries with a focus on efficiency, customer service and adherence to data protection protocols.
- To maintain the integrity and accuracy of the rent accounting database by coordinating data updates and system changes in collaboration with the Housing Management, Allocations and IT Departments.
- To ensure the timely generation and distribution of tenant rent statements on a quarterly and ad-hoc basis, including coordination with external vendors for secure and accurate dispatch.
- To supervise junior staff on the team, including NVQ apprentices, on a daily basis, and to be responsible for providing I.T. support and training to other staff on the operating systems for rent accounting.
- To develop, manage and deliver comprehensive technical reconciliation reports on a weekly/monthly basis to ensure synchronisation between the Housing Management System and the core financial accounting platform.
- Deliver expert technical support and system advisory services to internal stakeholders and clients, particularly in areas requiring system diagnostics, root cause analysis and resolution implementation.
- To liaise with I.T. regarding system issues (e.g. upgrades, testing, reports).

- To play a key role in ensuring the year end process runs smoothly by being responsible for critical financial tasks, including detailed rent charge reconciliations which require accuracy and attention to detail for the setting of rents (including Service Charges), in accordance with government guidelines.
- Administer the end-to-end Direct Debit (DD) process for BACS payments and AUDDIS for Rent, NNDR & the Leasehold Service Charge, including BACS/AUDDIS file generation system uploads, setting up new DD's, DD recalculations, daily reconciliations of DD rejections and exception handling whilst maintaining accurate tenant payment records.
- To administer the input and validation of rent charges for SBC Council dwellings, Garages and Temporary Accommodation within the housing management system and in accordance with policy and tenancy/license agreements.
- Manage the end-to-end processing and reconciliation of refund transactions and Former Tenant Credits, ensuring accurate data retrieval from the Housing Benefits system and full compliance with internal audit and financial control procedures.
- To be responsible for maintaining and updating comprehensive procedural documentation for the Rent Accounts section, ensuring alignment with current legislation, system processes and internal audit requirements.
- Provide information requested by customers and interested bodies under the Freedom of Information Act.
- To attend regular training sessions to keep abreast of all legislation in order to provide accurate advice and services in specialist areas.
- To undertake the duties commensurate to the grade, or of a comparable nature elsewhere in the organisation, as may be required to facilitate development and service flexibility.
- To always deal with colleagues openly and fairly and support mutual respect within teams.

Person Specification: Senior Rent Accounts Officer

Area	Description	Essential/ Desirable	Method: Application (A) Interview (I) Test (T)
Experience	Experience, 3 years of working in a Housing/Financial environment. Must be able to deal with all aspects of work, with only the complex matters of policy being referred to the line manager.	E	A
	Extensive experience in the use of a Housing Management system, preferably NEC Housing (Northgate).	E	A
	Extensive experience in a customer facing housing services environment i.e. social housing landlord or housing related field resolving complex issues.	E	A
	High level of understanding of technical system requirements, i.e. direct debit administration	E	I
	Experience of supervision, coaching and monitoring of staff performance.	E	I
	Experience of handling customer complaints and resolving complex issues.	E	A
	Previous experience in a Local Government or similar environment.	E	A
	Experience of accountancy work and, particularly, knowledge of undertaking detailed reconciliations	E	A
	Experience of dealing with difficult customers via telephone; letter; email, and face-to-face.	E	I
Skills and abilities	Proactively identifies opportunities to support others through the use of own strengths	E	I
	Ability to work within policy, regulatory and legislative frameworks	E	I
	Knows and follows SBC's corporate values, role models these and holds others to account for following them	E	I
	Ability to work on own initiative and without close day to day supervision	E	I

	Ability to liaise and negotiate with a wide range of stakeholders, including senior leaders, providers, tenants, and members of the public	E	I
	Ability to consult and/or communicate with vulnerable individuals and families.	E	I
	Proactively identifies and sees issues through to resolution. Takes collaborative approach to problem solving, involving relevant stakeholders and maintaining a positive outlook	E	I
	Proactively manages workload and time effectively under pressure, using flexibility to prioritise the urgent and important and communicating priorities transparently and effectively	E	I
	Highly motivated and committed to the values and priorities of the Council and to working within a political organisation with associated governance frameworks and accountabilities.	E	I
	Excellent verbal communication skills	E	I
	Analytical and problem-solving skills, and attention to detail	E	I
	Excellent written communication skills	E	A
	Strong analytical abilities to interpret system issues	E	I
	Able to gather and use data and insight to develop a deeper understanding of our customers and communicates findings to the team.	E	I
	Able to confidently communicate information to colleagues and stakeholders, ensuring that information is presented clearly and in a way that is understandable to varied audiences	E	I
	Understands how the work and decisions made within the service impacts the work of all other service areas within the organisation	E	I
	Identifies opportunities to improve the way services are delivered and supports ideas made by others to improve services. Ensures resources are used appropriately by self and others	E	I
	Min. 3 years knowledge of Income Collection and Housing issues, policy and best practice	E	I

Knowledge and understanding	Min. 3 years comprehensive and practical knowledge of Housing system technical processes to carrying out testing on system upgrades and new releases	E	I
	Up to date knowledge of legislation, policy and best practice relating to rent recovery, including Housing Act 1985, 1988, 1996, Localism Act	E	I
	Excellent understanding of Housing / Welfare Benefits	E	A
	Understanding, knowledge and ability to follow guidelines that ensures compliance with Health and Safety at Work, Data, Protection, and other statutory requirements.	E	A
	An understanding and commitment to promoting and implementing the council's Equal Opportunities policies.	E	I
	Understanding of local government services.	E	I
Qualifications	Educated to Degree Level standard, or above, or equivalent competence level through knowledge and experience.	E	A
	Chartered Institute of Housing or level 4 Chartered Institute of Credit Management qualification, or relevant experience	E	I
	Continuous commitment to professional training and development	E	A