

Welfare Benefit & Debt Advice Officer



Role Overview

Provide a Welfare Benefit & Debt Advice Service across Your Housing Group to assist maximisation of the Group's revenue through enabling customers to meet their charge obligations.

Subject to Enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Check.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provision of a comprehensive Welfare benefit and debt advice service for customers, including advice on budgeting, income maximisation, debt negotiation, appeals and represent applicants at tribunal, if necessary, to maximise residents benefit related income.
- Support the Lettings Team with the assessment and advice of pre-tenancy affordability, when required.
- Manage a varied workload with effective prioritisation of vulnerable tenants, managing a caseload of tenant welfare benefit and debt queries providing home visits, telephone and email appointments on a 1:1 basis with YHG customers.
- Liaise effectively and develop strong working relationships with a variety of statutory, voluntary and private organisations including local authorities, Housing Benefit Departments, Courts, Welfare Rights Services, Benefits Agency, Charities and Debt Management Services, to signpost YHG customers to external agencies.
- Work closely with Income Officers & Income Legal Officers, to monitor the progress of arrears cases where there has been an intervention, effectively communicating advice given and benefit claims made, preventing legal action & repossession, where possible.
- Providing welfare benefit support and training to the Income Team and other Group staff.

Our values



- Liaise with other local service providers and partner organisations to provide the best possible outcomes for a broad range of financial and benefit issues facing residents.
- Work closely to support new tenancies which are deemed at risk of arrears/tenancy failure by ensuring that residents are fully equipped with the support to ensure income is maximised and debt issues are effectively addressed.
- Assist customers in maintaining their relationship with the DWP (Department of Work & Pensions) in support of benefit claims.
- Provide expert advice and training across the business on benefit changes & ensure high levels of personal knowledge are maintained and kept up to date.
- Maintain accurate and up-to-date records and case files to comply with internal and external audit requirements.
- Undertake additional duties appropriate to the role and/or grade.

STRENGTHS

- ✓ Well-developed questioning, listening, influencing & negotiating skills
- ✓ Able to work to targets, whilst under pressure
- ✓ Clear and articulate communication skills, both written & verbal
- ✓ Good administrative, organisational and planning skills with an ability to acquire knowledge and grasp new concepts quickly
- ✓ A strong communicator with a high level of attention to detail working as part of a fast-paced income collection team
- ✓ Ability to build and maintain relationships with internal & external partners/customers

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

- ✓ Knowledge of the welfare benefits system at advisor level
- ✓ GCSE Maths and English (or equivalent)
- ✓ Experience in dealing with difficult demanding, vulnerable customers

BENEFICIAL TO THE ROLE

- ✓ Full UK Driving License and use of own vehicle
- ✓ Money Advice Qualification
- ✓ Working knowledge of the arrears recovery process from beginning to end across a range of tenures, with experience of working in a demanding customer service environment