
Job Title: Income Officer

Department: Housing

Location: Hackney, London

Reporting to: Housing Services Manager

INTRODUCTION

PBHA is a housing association with charitable aims that creates positive change in people's lives. As well as homes and support, we empower people to learn, access work and discover their creative talents. Based mainly in Hackney and Islington, we work with people who are homeless, have mental ill health, learning difficulties and multiple needs. Our work enables people to move on and lead independent lives.

We are committed to mutual support, participation and personal development for both staff and service users.

Putting the role in context

The Income Officer works within the housing management team to deliver a high quality service to tenants of PBHA, across supported, general needs and enhanced housing management tenancies.

Aims of the Post

- To lead on rent and service charge management, providing support to tenants to help prevent and recover arrears.
- To deliver a high quality rent collection and arrears recovery service in full accordance with PBHA's policies and procedures.
- To provide an accurate, sensitive and responsive rent account enquiry and information service.
- To prepare and present evidence in court for legal proceedings.
- To ensure that income is maximised and arrears of rent and other charges are kept to a minimum.
- To contribute to a high quality housing management service direct to PBHA's tenants.

Specific Responsibilities

Rent and Arrears Control

- Set up and maintain multiple means of payment for tenants
- Deal with account queries from residents regarding payment and account balance including advice on how they can maximize their income and minimize outgoings, whilst clearing outstanding arrears
- Use PBHA's housing management system to cover all aspects of arrears recovery for current and former tenants on a range of tenures, including the use of bailiff's

- action; notices of seeking possession; DIY possessions, attendance at court;
- attendance at evictions
- Liaise with other housing staff where tenancy enforcement action is being taken on multiple grounds, maintaining a caseload where indicated.
- Have a working knowledge of service charge calculations.
- Liaise with housing benefit teams to ensure prompt payment of applications, challenging decisions where necessary.
- Liaise closely with other housing officers regarding complex tenancy sustainment issues.
- Represent PBHA at Fair Rent assessments and first tier tribunals
- Support and assist other housing service and support staff on rent issues where needed.
- Refer former debts to recovery agents and completing write off requests.
- Ensure relevant documentation is provided for rent payment administration.
- Liaise with Finance department to rectify errors and recover payments held in suspense accounts.
- Provide information to assist in the production of arrears statistics

Lettings

- Provide a post move in welcome visit to all tenants and offer a financial inclusion assessment where needed to tenants to ensure future rent payment obligations can be met.
- Contribute to allocation decisions on supported and enhanced housing lettings.
- Advise colleagues on any potential debt and affordability issues that could affect new tenants' ability to pay.
- In absence of housing management colleagues, make all the necessary arrangements for general needs applicants to take up the tenancy, including signing the appropriate tenancy agreement, arrears policy ,HB application, and other relevant documents, explaining the terms and conditions of tenancy, and arranging for them to move in.

Voids Control

- Following notice of end of tenancy, follow procedures to ensure other staff are informed as appropriate.
- Ensure the outgoing tenant is aware of their responsibilities, following up as appropriate, including recharging where necessary.
- General Tenant Advice and Liaison
- Ensure that all conditions of tenancy are upheld by both tenants and the Association, investigating and assisting to resolve any breaches.
- Contribute to a weekly tenancy sustainment drop in.
- Take pride in PBHA's property and assets, and encourage tenants to do so.
- Enforce the conditions of tenancy that enable PBHA to undertake urgent works such as gas servicing.
- For general needs stock, carry out buildings, H&S and fire checks and assessment, liaising closely with others to ensure that follow up actions are completed.
- Give general advice and information to tenants on welfare benefits and their rights, as tenants, on matters such as relationship breakdown, succession, joint tenancies, subletting, improvements, ethnic monitoring etc., liaising with the support teams, and specialist agencies as appropriate.

- Have regard to the special needs of vulnerable tenants such as the elderly, people with disabilities, and people with mental health or alcohol/drug dependency problems, liaising with the Support Team and specialist agencies as appropriate.
- Make safeguarding referrals where necessary.
- Liaise with partner housing associations and local authorities whose property PBHA manages and keep management agreements under review.
- Represent PBHA at external meetings to do with housing issues, e.g. local agency forums

Others

Customer Focused Services

General Responsibilities

- Ensure adherence to PBHA policies and procedures
- Participate in key meetings
- Contribute to policy development, income generation, strategic and annual planning, corporate and cross-team activities, external partnerships and promotional activities as required
- Promote, develop and support PBHA's ethos, values and impact
- Provide cover for other team leaders and other workers

All staff are expected to:

- Work co-operatively as part of a team and with other teams
- Be involved in the selection and training of new workers and volunteers
- Participate in staff training and development activities, staff supervisions, appraisals and all relevant meetings
- Ensure the observation of all PBHA's policies and practices, including those relating to equality and diversity, confidentiality, health and safety, financial control, standing orders, recruitment, supervision, appraisals, sickness and disciplinary
- Plan and organise own work with a minimum of day to day supervision
- Undertake all other reasonable duties

General Information

Please note that:

- Post holder must recognise the needs of the organisation to change role as is necessary for development.
- All PBHA work premises are non-smoking.

Access Information

The Kingsland Hub site has one level and is accessible to wheelchair users.

Accountability

The post holder is accountable to the Housing Services Manager

Main Conditions of Service

This is a full time position. The post is for 37.5 hours per week, 5 days per week, Monday – Friday, 7.5 hours per day. Duties will occasionally be carried out over evenings and some public holidays. Overtime is not paid but time off in lieu is given.

Annual leave entitlement is 26 days per year plus normal bank holidays pro rata (inclusive of bank holidays). This will rise after each completed year of service to a maximum of 30 days.

Salaries and expenses are guided, but not bound, by the Local Authority NJC scales and are revised each year. The salary for this post will be in the range of £29,010 - £31,764 points 28 to 31 and the starting salary is £29,010 point 28.

Post holders will be eligible for membership of the organisation's contributory pension scheme.

In common with all posts at PBHA, confirmation of appointment is subject to a probationary period (6 months).

PBHA is committed to equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice.

ROLE REQUIREMENTS

Although we are keeping direct experience/knowledge requirements to a minimum, we do need you to use the application form or covering letter to demonstrate your capabilities, in relation to each point listed under essential requirements in the role requirements. Where relevant use your answers to illustrate how your competences have helped you achieve positive results.

The minimum experience required for the post is:

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- Knowledge of housing and welfare rights legislation and ability to keep abreast of new legislation and case law, and assess relevance and implications for PBHA and our tenants; be open to innovation
- Significant experience in housing management, including rent and service charge collection.

The competencies required for the post are the ability to:

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- Knowledge of current housing management good practice
- Significant Knowledge of landlord and tenant law
- Clear understanding of income recovery legislation, welfare benefits, and debt management.
- Understanding and knowledge of the welfare reform agenda and its implications for income recovery work.
- Able to professionally handle and resolve enquiries from customers in a variety of media.
- Willing to learn and continuously develop.
- Able to demonstrate high level standards of customer service and professional relationships with internal and external customers.
- Good level of numeracy – able to carry out calculation of rent and arrears payments due over different time periods

- To have a working knowledge of rents and rent accounting systems.
Demonstrable commitment to tenant involvement and consultation
- Negotiation skills- capable of shaping situations to become win-win
Able to work collaboratively with colleagues to achieve common goals
- The capacity to apply the organisation's policies and procedures to real situations.
- The capacity to communicate clearly and effectively with colleagues, tenants professionals and others in outside agencies. Communication skills need to be both written and oral.
Able to work with a range of people, often under pressure.
- To analyse information logically and make objective decisions
- Organised and able to maintain focus while responding to changing priorities and deadlines
- Good problem-solving/analytical skills.
- Able to complete administration processes to quality standards and in a timely manner
- Able to convey information to others clearly and accurately
- Able to use Microsoft Office and rent accounting software effectively to carry out the administrative and organisational tasks related to the job.
- Able to enter data into a computerised Housing management system, with the required accuracy and attention to detail to use the system to look up information and produce reports related to the job.
- The capacity to prioritise work effectively, working on your own initiative while balancing the competing demands of the job.
- The capacity to take instruction and work within guidelines.
- Evidence of a commitment to continuing professional development.

It is desirable that the candidate will have:

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- An understanding of psychologically informed environments

The successful candidate will need to be committed to:

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- Psychologically informed practice.
 - Involving other people (tenants and workers) in planning and decision making processes.
 - PBHA's Equality and Diversity policy
 - Co-operative team working.
 - Have the flexibility to accommodate work responsibilities that occasionally extend beyond normal working hours at short notice.
- A

Assessed by*

A Assessed through Application Form

I Assessed through Interview

T Assessed through Assessment