



HILLINGDON

LONDON

Job Profile

JOB TITLE: Corporate Collections Officer

GRADE: Scale 5/6

POST NO: Various

JOB TIER: 5 (non-management)

DBS CHECK: Standard

GROUP: Finance

SERVICE: Exchequer Services

REPORTING STRUCTURE

Reports to: Principal Corporate Collections Officer

Direct Reports: None

Indirect Reports: None

ROLE PURPOSE:

- To provide an effective, efficient and quality service to maximise collection and recovery of all invoices/recovery notices issued.
- To determine appropriate recovery action required on invoices/recovery notices, including referring to Legal services, bailiffs, recovery agents, DWP, third parties and liaising with these organisations to settle queries.
- To process credit notes, refunds, write-offs, statements, standing orders and ensuring collection of direct debits and rejected direct debits are carried out within direct debit regulations.

- Responsible for maintaining system controls to ensure the correct and timely issuing and collection of daily/periodic invoices.

A. Job Description

1. Resident & Community Contribution

- Respond to enquiries from members of the public and organisations by telephone, letter, email or in person in the most appropriate manner and within the councils customer care standards
- To demonstrate understanding of the Council's *Customer Care Standards* and ensure that these standards are met in order to deliver the Council vision of 'putting our residents first'.

2. People Management

- No direct supervisory responsibility however may be requirement to assist in induction and training of peers and new employees.
- Give training to ensure that all Council staff using the invoicing system are properly instructed in its use.

3. Operational Service Delivery

- Work in an organised way to ensure no allocated debt recovery case is overlooked.
- Organise and manage a varied workload in order to meet deadlines and set targets, and deal with changes in priorities and regularly keep Senior Officers briefed.
- Ensure all income is correctly allocated to relevant accounts and work with the Income Control Team to reconcile queries.
- Maintain and balance all debit controls, obtain all required monthly computer reports, having regard to the position, of the database and run monthly computer programmes, keeping all other system users fully informed.
- Prepare and create Bacs files for the collection of income in line with direct debit regulations, producing reports to verify collection amounts.
- Check all invoices for quality, accuracy of data, description, debtor details and VAT; flag cases to be returned for manual invoices to be issued if required.

- Generate reminders and final demands from the system and despatch them having checked the latest payment position.
- Prepare statistics and maintain accurate customer information and notes.
- Assist with monthly balancing and the preparation of reports to departments.
- Report and monitor those accounts that have passed the automated reminders.
- Maintain knowledge and understand computerised debtors system and be responsible for appropriate input to and use of data held.
- Assist with all aspects of the invoicing system to meet deadlines and maintain the service to avoid reduction in cash flow.
- Action credit note requests promptly, checking that they are valid and coded correctly and authorised. Raise any refunds required and pass to Principal Collections Officer for checking. Despatch credit notes attaching relevant information.
- Maintain safe retention of copy invoices/credit notes and write-off documentation.
- Record all sums paid in the Corporate Debtors, Housing benefit and mortgage systems ensuring the correct personal accounts are credited and noting any variation to the sums due. Investigate unallocated items and ensure allocated correctly.
- Undertake recovery work through, writing, telephoning, interviewing customers and making arrangements for the clearance of debts having regard to the circumstances and the council's anti poverty policy. Negotiate and determine arrears repayment terms and generally apply innovative credit control skills.
- Refer cases for litigation, weighing up the consequences for the Council and the debtor, the cost and the likelihood of success.
- Monitor and report on recovery problems to client departments, insisting on a prompt response and suggesting recovery avenues open to them. In the event of lack of progress on debts report cases to the various department managers, warning of consequences and suggest solutions.
- Have up to date knowledge of the Data Protection Act and ensure confidentiality.
- Gain knowledge of relative legislation such as The Care Act 2014, in order to deal with queries in a confident manner.

4. Service Planning & Development

- Maintain knowledge of the current Team Plan and understanding of own contribution in order to ensure delivery of this plan.

5. Financial & Resource Management

- To ensure a consistent, cost effective approach throughout the authority to the billing and recovery of sundry debts thus ensuring best practice is applied, debts minimised and cash flow maximised.
- To demonstrate cost-consciousness and identify any cost effective changes to own way of working.

6. Service Improvement

- To identify and suggest any improvements to current ways of working in order to deliver a more efficient and effective service for customers.
- Take an active role in the development and improvement of recovery systems and working arrangements with departments.
- Participate in the development of work procedures, guidance and training notes.

7. Contacts

- **Internal:** All staff to Team Manager level
- **External:** Members of the public, Council's bankers and Benefits Agency, District Audit, other Local Authorities and organisations

8. Additional Responsibilities

- Complete other reasonable tasks in order to fulfil role purpose, or as required by management.

Duties to be performed to progress to Scale 5

- Manage customer accounts ensuring records are updated, due dates monitored and invoices raised in line with timetable for that service area.
- Training users of the Corporate AR operating units to ensure they are instructed correctly in the use of the system.

- Undertake the monthly BACS run in accordance to direct debit collections dates, dealing with associated adjustments, bank cancellations, indemnity claims and refunds.
- Monitor and pass relevant cases to bailiffs. Dealing with the queries that result and liaising with issuing sections to ensure these are resolved promptly.
- Supervise, train and motivate new staff and those in service areas in ensuring high standards are maintained and deadlines met.
- Carry out reconciliation of accounts, enabling accurate statements to be issued.
- Monthly reconciliation of allocated ledgers, deposits and suspense ensuring this is carried out promptly and accurately to enable the Principal Income Officer to sign off figures with Accountancy.

Duties to be performed to progress to Scale 6

- Responsible for the identification of accounts presenting risk of bad debts and taking suitable follow-up action.
- Responsible for determining the appropriate level of follow-up, taking into account the circumstances of each individual case.
- Responsible for the recovery of unpaid debt in accordance with debt recovery procedures and prepare files for the pursuance of debt through the courts or through other means as directed.
- Produce management information on the debt position identifying the level of risk on the overall level of debt.
- To have a full and detailed knowledge of systems and the diverse areas carried out by the Corporate Team and be responsible for resolving any queries regarding financial details, maintaining controls detailing any amendments clearly and carrying out adjustments where needed.
- Ability to work with minimum supervision and under pressure
- Be aware of legislation relevant to the functions of your post and team.

9. Key Performance Indicators

- Common performance targets are set and monitoring procedures are in place to ensure compliance and recognise improved achievement levels to achieve economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

B. Person Specification

Corporate Collections Officer

This person specification will be used for recruitment to this post. It will form the basis of the application form, and candidates will be also assessed against aspects of this person specification at interview.

1. QUALIFICATIONS	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	SCALE
Good standard of education to Grade C in GCSE Maths and English and one other subject or equivalent qualifications	✓		5 & 6
A level, NVQ3, or BTEC level qualification or equivalent (relevant experience can be considered as an alternative)		✓	5 & 6
2. STATUTORY or ROLE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	SCALE
Ability to learn, understand and apply legislation as required for the role	✓		5 & 6
Confident in using a wide range of software, in particular Microsoft and Google products.	✓		5 & 6
Flexibility with working hours in order to meet deadlines, or attend meetings	✓		5 & 6
3. EXPERIENCE	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	SCALE
Experience of working within a financial environment in a large organisation.	✓		5 & 6
Demonstrable experience in dealing with the public in respect of financial affairs in writing, interview and on the telephone	✓		5 & 6
Practical experience in debt recovery and credit control.	✓		5 & 6
Experience of organising and managing a varied workload in order to meet deadlines and set targets	✓		5 & 6
Experience of presenting evidence cases in a County Court.	✓		5 & 6
4. KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	SCALE
Ability to carry out calculations, adjustments and entries to accounts accurately.	✓		5 & 6
Advanced IT skills, experience of using MS Office applications and ability to use a wide range of software in particular Microsoft products, Google documents and financial packages to achieve work objectives and statistical data.	✓		5 & 6
Good verbal communication skills to deal confidently with customers and staff in difficult circumstances	✓		5 & 6
Ability to set and maintain timetables and priorities	✓		5 & 6
To be able to meet set targets and achieve excellent attendance and time keeping standards and be available to	✓		5 & 6

customers, meet deadlines and complete projects.			
Sound knowledge of best practice in Income recovery, debt counseling & debt collection.	✓		5 & 6
Ability to work to deadlines and manage workload, balancing long term, shorter term and immediate priorities with minimal supervision	✓		5 & 6
Good written communication skills to write effective letters to encourage a response from customers, respond to queries.	✓		5 & 6
Excellent written and verbal communication skills with ability to write effective letters that encourage a response from customers, respond to queries and able to communicate confidently with customers and staff in contentious and sensitive situations with respect care and empathy.	✓		6
Have knowledge of The Care Act 2014, in relation to Adult Social Care debt recovery.	✓		5 & 6
5. COMPETENCIES	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	SCALE
“Can do” positive attitude Demonstrates a commitment to changing work practices and processes, and a willingness to try new ways of working or thinking.	✓		5 & 6
Takes responsibility and delivers results Adapts to changing demands to ensure that objectives are met, overcoming problems and making well considered decisions.	✓		5 & 6
Team working Acts as a role model to others in the team, sharing knowledge and experience when necessary, whilst respecting and valuing the contribution other team members' experiences can bring.	✓		5 & 6
Communication Demonstrates well developed written and verbal communication skills; and the confidence to present reports and verbal accounts credibly to a variety of different audiences.	✓		5 & 6
Customer Care Develops contacts and relationships with customer/ client groups, regularly reviewing service delivery and taking responsibility to ensure quality service provision.	✓		5 & 6
Takes ownership of personal development Takes action to develop own and others' capability and knowledge by promoting and supporting developmental opportunities to improve performance.	✓		5 & 6