

**HIGHTOWN HOUSING ASSOCIATION
JOB DESCRIPTION**

JOB TITLE:	Income Recovery Officer (Care & Supported Housing Lead)
DEPARTMENT:	Operations
RESPONSIBLE TO:	Income Recovery and Lettings Team Manager
RESPONSIBLE FOR:	Not applicable
BASED AT:	Hightown House, Maylands, Hemel Hempstead

JOB CONTEXT

Hightown is a charitable housing association operating principally in Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire. We believe everyone should have a home and the support they need, so our aim is to build new homes and to provide excellent housing and support.

We currently manage over 4,700 homes and employ over 600 full and part time staff from our head office in Hemel Hempstead. We have an annual turnover of £48 million and a development programme that will deliver around 300 new affordable homes each year.

Within our care and supported living schemes we work across a diverse range of client groups. These include people with Learning Disabilities (including Autistic Spectrum Disorders), people with Mental Health problems, Young people and adults experiencing Homelessness.

Our aim is to help them develop independent living skills, to be involved in decisions regarding their lives and to participate in their local community.

OVERVIEW

The Income Recovery Officer (Care and Supported Housing Lead) will be responsible for providing a highly professional customer focused arrears recovery service to Hightown's residents in General Needs Housing and Care and Supported Housing services.

The duties will include monitoring rent accounts, taking appropriate action to identify and manage rent arrears in accordance with Hightown's procedures, legislation and best practice.

Key Responsibilities

1. To be instrumental in the transfer of Care and Supported Housing rent account management from schemes to the centralised Care and Supported Housing rent team at head office.
2. To manage a patch of General Needs and Care and Supported Housing properties, ensuring that all rent accounts are monitored regularly, taking action in line with Hightown's procedures.
3. To carry out home visits for general needs tenants and case review meetings in supported housing services.

4. To ensure that clear and up to date information is maintained on the database
5. To liaise with a wide variety of stakeholders, including: Tenants, Service Users, Support Workers, Service Users' families, Appointees, Care and Supported Housing Staff and external agencies.
6. To ensure rent account flags are in place and up to date to ensure appropriate and effective rent account management.
7. To deal with enquiries about rent accounts.
8. To make appropriate contact with Service Users and/or their support worker/advocate where supported housing rent accounts are in arrears.
9. To carry out arrears enforcement action.
10. To liaise with Housing Benefit departments regarding updates on claims.
11. To ensure that arrears recovery action is undertaken in accordance with Hightown's Policies and Procedures.
12. To issue update and warning letters to Tenants, Service Users and/or their advocate, as appropriate, and in line with Hightown's procedures.
13. To monitor arrears repayment agreements, taking appropriate action against breaches.
14. To liaise with Housing Benefit Departments to ensure prompt and accurate payment of claims, and speedy resolution of problems. To ensure that Housing Benefit and Tenant/Service User self payments are accurately recorded.
15. To liaise with Care and Supported Housing support staff to ensure service users understand any correspondence they receive and to ensure messages are reinforced.
16. To maintain an up to date knowledge of housing and welfare benefits to ensure that tenants are provided with welfare benefits advice and debt counselling and to be aware of specialist agencies in the area to which tenants can be referred.
17. To keep up to date on any change in legislation and best practice work in relation to arrears recovery.
18. To represent Hightown at Court as necessary.
19. To work in partnership with outside agencies to ensure that Hightown is delivering a responsive service and maximising income recovery.

General

1. To ensure accurate and clear records are kept and correspondence logged and filed using Hightown's systems. To assist in the development of computerised monitoring, processing and data collection.
2. To attend and participate in team meetings using them as an opportunity to pass on updated knowledge gained on welfare benefits.
3. To keep abreast of current legislation, regulatory requirements and best practice.
4. To attend meetings and carry out duties outside of normal office hours when necessary for the delivery of the service.
5. To participate in the review of this job description from time to time
6. To carry out any other duties consistent with the responsibilities of the post, as directed by the Income Recovery Team Leader or Tenant Services Manager.
7. To log correspondence and ensure that all responses are sent within target times.
8. To meet the requirements of the Data Protection Act in handling confidential information.
9. To carry out duties outside of office hours when necessary for the delivery of the service.
10. To maintain the appropriate level of skill necessary to carry out the duties of the post.

11. To adhere to Hightown's financial regulations, standing orders, policies and procedures.
12. To be proactive in seeking improvements in Hightown's service delivery for the benefit of our service users.
13. To attend and participate in team meetings.
14. To undertake any other reasonable duties consistent with the responsibilities of the post at the request of the Income Recovery and Lettings Team Manager, Head of Housing or Director of Operations.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications		
GCSE grade C or above, or equivalent, in Maths and English	√	
Educated to A Level or equivalent		√
Knowledge and Skills		
Understanding of the impact Mental Health, Learning Disabilities and homelessness may have on tenancy sustainment and payment of rent		√
Knowledge of key stakeholders in Care and Supported Housing services		√
Knowledge of Welfare Benefits		√
Skills and Ability		
Computer literate with good understanding of spreadsheets and ability to use various software packages	√	
Numerate and accurate with figures	√	
Good communicator both orally and in writing	√	
Able to use own initiative in dealing with a wide variety of people	√	
Ability to work with individuals who have complex needs and whose behaviour may challenge	√	
Ability to organise own workload effectively with excellent time management and ability to meet targets and deadlines	√	
Experience		
Debt recovery	√	
Managing processes and systems	√	
Day to day decision making in an office environment	√	
Preparing and representing in the County Court		√
Personal Characteristics		
Commitment to Equal Opportunities	√	
Energetic and resourceful	√	
Commitment to the values of Hightown to put our residents and service users first and deliver excellent levels of service.	√	
Take ownership for resolving problems, demonstrating courage and resilience in dealing with difficult situations.	√	
Work co-operatively with others to get things done, willingly giving help and support to colleagues	√	
Other requirements		
Car owner and qualified driver	√	

Candidates are reminded that the shortlisting process is based on the evidence provided on the application form of the skills demonstrated above.