

JOB DESCRIPTION**JOB TITLE:** Welfare Advice Officer**REPORTS TO:** Senior Housing Officer**DEPARTMENT:** Housing Department**DATE:** November 2022**REVIEW DATE:** November 2023**ROLE PURPOSE:**

To provide a high quality and professional financial inclusion/welfare reform advice to Apex tenants, ensuring tenants' income is maximized. To deliver advice to tenants and support them to access debt advice, money management, low cost borrowing, tenancy set-up and sustainment services and digital inclusion, etc. To work with colleagues, providing advice and training, collecting and managing information to ensure effective delivery of services. To share information and ideas to improve service delivery and liaise with staff on a day to day basis to ensure tenancies are sustained and households are supported. To maintain and develop knowledge to enhance service delivery.

Key Area**Key Activities****Welfare Changes/
Universal Credit**

- To advise and support tenants who may need help with any aspect of the welfare changes, including support for universal credit claims.
- Interview tenants using sensitive listening skills in order to allow tenants to explain their circumstances, ensuring their income is maximised through the take up of all appropriate benefits.
- Ensure effective and appropriate referral mechanisms are in place and signpost tenants to other services as required.
- To follow up on welfare issues as they arise, such as the Mitigation scheme, and liaise with Apex management team on appropriate action.
- Keep updated with the changes relating to Welfare Reform and the benefits systems.

Financial Inclusion:

- To implement a comprehensive welfare advice service, which includes financial assistance information and support, to assist tenant to sustain their tenancy and improve their quality of life.
- To provide advice and assistance to tenants to help them: reduce arrears; ensure their income is maximised; manage their finances effectively and reduce their debt; assist them in sustaining their tenancy; and enable them to access training/employment.
- Under the direction of the Housing Manager/Senior Housing Officer team, work proactively with colleagues to identify tenants potentially in need of assistance including, those impacted by the welfare changes, those struggling to maintain their tenancy, vulnerable tenants, etc.
- Maintain knowledge and research further financial services and products, enabling tenants to manage their money effectively including access to affordable credit, bank accounts, saving facilities, financial education, literacy and capability.
- Develop excellent working relationships with external organisations including charitable and financial organisations to ensure support available to Apex tenants is maximised.

Advice and Support

- Identify the welfare advice and financial support needs of tenants and develop a comprehensive response to identified needs.
- Develop advice and guidance on the Cost-of-Living crisis especially for tenants who are experiencing financial hardship.
- Develop and manage systems to identify need, ensuring appropriate outcomes are achieved and evidenced.
- Develop and deliver comprehensive welfare advice services for tenants and ensure staff receive relevant training and advice to identify issues at the earliest possible point and provide initial advice/signposting at the earliest possible stage.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver and facilitate advice and support through all options available including: telephone, appointments, website updates, publications, surgeries, home visits, events, etc. • Work with the housing management team to support tenants to avoid/reduce arrears, sustain their tenancy and respond appropriately to debt. • Develop and maintain an advice/support/signposting resource for tenants facing financial difficulties to enable them to access the necessary support. Ensure outcomes are monitored, achieved and reported on. • Develop and maintain links with external agencies, community organisations and tenant support networks to provide advice, information and support to tenants and staff.
<u>Recordkeeping</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain all relevant records in a timely, appropriate and confidential manner. • Provide statistical information and reports as and when required, evidencing that service targets and outcomes are achieved, impact is measured and service user needs are met. • Review and analyse statistics ensuring services remain relevant and making recommendations for improvements.
<u>General</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with the preparation of statistical information/reports for quarterly Housing Management Sub Committee reports. • Develop and maintain policies, procedures and guidance for the delivery of effective services. • Develop relevant, accurate and timely information for tenants and staff on an ongoing basis. • Work with colleagues to ensure the best possible service is delivered to tenants at all times. • Ensure Apex's ethos and values underpin service delivery in area of responsibility. • Be an ambassador for Apex at all times. • Provide the highest quality of service incorporating the principles of Continuous Improvement, working to continually improve standards promoting the Association to its customers and contacts. • Comply with the Association's policies and procedures relating to Fair Employment and Equal Opportunities and ensure a neutral working environment is maintained at all times. • Ensure compliance with GDPR legislation, policies and procedures in relation to the release of information. • Implement the Associations policies, procedures, codes and initiatives with regard to customer care and health and safety. • Respect the confidentiality of all information received as a result of the post-holders duties. • Attend meetings and training at various locations as and when required.
<u>Miscellaneous</u>	<p>Adhere to the Association's Equal Opportunities Policy and commit to the principles and aims of the Equality Scheme Section 75 duties to ensure fairness and equality in all aspects of work.</p> <p>No job description can cover every issue which may arise within the post at various times, this job description is not a rigid or inflexible document but provides guidelines regarding the duties expected while in post.</p>