

Job description

Service Charge Officer

- Grade: SO1-SO2
- Reports to: Service Charge Calculations Manager / Project Manager
- Direct reports: None
- Your team: Service Charge Calculations / Consultation & Major Works Invoicing
- Service area: Home Ownership Services
- Directorate: Housing Operations

Special requirements of the post

Workstyle: Roaming (Medium presence, two days a week)

- Colleagues whose activities are a mix of remotely and periodic onsite work and/or meetings with third parties and businesses, going on site visits, and occasional resident engagement

This post requires a DBS check at the appropriate level: Basic

Our mission

Islington is a place rich with diversity and culture. As a council our sense of purpose couldn't be clearer: we serve. It's in the logo. We are committed to challenging inequality in the borough and as one of the largest employers we know that to look after the place and the planet, we have to look after our people. **Together we can change the future.**

To do this, everyone who works at Islington Council lives by a set of values which guide us in everything that we do: collaborative, ambitious, resourceful, and empowering. They spell out 'CARE', which is what we think public service is all about.

Overview of the role

Officers work across two specialist teams which are responsible for calculating and invoicing service charges and for undertaking section 20 leaseholder consultation:

- The Service Charge Calculations Team (led by the Service Charge Calculations Manager) calculate and invoice annual service charges (including building insurance and ground rent), shared ownership rent and other leasehold recharges across a residential and commercial portfolio.
- The Consultation & Major Works Invoicing Team (led by a Project Manager) consult residential leaseholders about major works and qualifying long-term agreements. They also calculate and invoice major works service charges.

Staff are arranged in teams for line management purposes but the managers work collaboratively to ensure that calculation, invoicing and consultation projects are sufficiently resourced so there will be an element of matrix-management.

Key responsibilities

1. Calculate, invoice and certify service charges and all other charges due under leases/transfer documents. Maximise income by ensuring that charges are levied in accordance with contractual and statutory requirements and by scrutinising Housing Revenue Account expenditure to identify all rechargeable costs.
2. Maintain accurate service charge accounts on the council's housing management system including creating and closing accounts, maintaining admin units and service usages (for the coding of service charges), processing charge adjustments and managing suspense accounts. Maintain records of invoicing activity and s20 consultation, including digital archive files and databases.
3. Be responsible for data collection, inputting and validation processes, assessing the chargeability of works and services, coding expenditure to blocks and estates, and resolving any charge omissions, errors or anomalies.
4. Work collaboratively with service areas, TMOs and co-ops etc (providing training and support as appropriate) to ensure they supply accurate and timely details of services and works provided, expenditure and supporting documentation.
5. Provide service charge breakdowns that are sufficiently detailed, well-presented and easily accessible to staff and customers. Also facilitate s22 Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 requests for leaseholders to inspect the accounts, receipts and other supporting documents which relate to their service charges.
6. Provide service charge estimates for Right to Buy and new build sales; full and final settlement figures for buy backs and freehold enfranchisement cases; and information on planned/uninvoiced major works for inclusion in sell-on packs.
7. Issue section 20B notices as required within statutory time limits.
8. Develop and maintain knowledge of the legislation and best practice in relation to residential leasehold management.

9. Investigating and responding within target timescales customer queries and disputes concerning service charge calculation, acting as customer advocate where appropriate and liaising with service areas. Also carrying out site visits, meeting customers online and in-person, and attending resident engagement events.
10. Assisting in the preparation of county court and tribunal cases and giving evidence/witness statements as required.
11. Undertake section 20 consultation for both major works and qualifying long term agreements, ensuring that council procedures are followed and statutory requirements are met, including calculating estimated charges and responding to leaseholders' formal s20 observations. Undertake additional, non-statutory consultation including attending leaseholder meetings.
12. Optimising service delivery by being highly flexible, including covering for absent colleagues and undertaking other duties as required or additional duties consistent with the grade and level of responsibility of this position, for which the holder possesses the required experience and/or training.

Budget responsibilities

None

Compliance

Ensure adherence to legal, regulatory, and policy requirements under GDPR, Health and Safety, Employee Code of Conduct and in your area of expertise by identifying opportunities and risks, and escalating issues as necessary.

Person specification

Your application form needs to demonstrate how you fulfil the role's requirements. It is essential to address the criteria, as this will be used to evaluate your suitability for the position.

Essential and desirable criteria

Essential: the basic requirements that must be met for someone to be considered for a particular job. These criteria are mandatory and cannot be negotiated. Essential criteria directly impact the core qualifications or skills necessary to perform the job effectively.

Desirable: the additional qualities, skills, or qualifications that would be advantageous for a candidate to possess but are not mandatory. Not meeting them does not automatically disqualify someone from consideration for the job. This also allows candidates who do not possess certain desirable criteria the opportunity to explain how their other knowledge, experience and skills relate to these and what they may be in the process of doing or willing to do to achieve these.

Knowledge, experience, and skills

Point	Criteria description	Essential/desirable
1	Professional qualification: TPI, RICS or an equivalent professional qualification.	Desirable
2	Experience: at least two years' experience of working in a residential leasehold management role, including: service charge calculation and invoicing, and delivering front-line services to residents.	Desirable
3	Professional knowledge and expertise: Knowledge of current legislation, case law and best practice relating to service charges and leasehold management.	Essential
4	Communication skills: Excellent verbal and written communication, with the ability to explain complex legal documents and legislation to varied audiences.	Essential
5	IT proficiency: Strong IT skills, including a good working knowledge of Microsoft software and of Housing Management systems	Essential
6	Attention to detail and record keeping: High level of attention to detail, strong numeracy skills and accurate record keeping.	Essential

Point	Criteria description	Essential/desirable
7	Casework management: Ability to investigate casework, disputes and complaints, and to identify and implement customer-focused solutions. Ability to demonstrate empathy, patience and understanding of customers' needs and requirements.	Essential
8	Problem-solving and negotiation: Strong problem-solving and negotiating skills and experience of dealing with emotive situations.	Essential
9	Organisation and workload management: Self-motivated and able to organise own workload, manage conflicting demands and prioritise tasks effectively.	Essential
10	Teamwork and collaboration: Ability to work collaboratively with colleagues and to adopt a flexible approach to team working.	Essential
11	Flexibility: Ability to attend evening meetings and undertake out-of-hours commitments as may be necessary.	Essential

Our accreditations



Our accreditations include Disability Confident Leader, The Mayor's Good Work Standard, London Living Wage Employer, Stonewall Diversity Champion, and Employer with Heart.