

ROLE PROFILE

Role Title:	Legal Officer
Department:	Customer & Communities - Income Team
Role Purpose:	The Income Legal Team is primarily responsible for court attendance for rent possession claims and gas injunctions, as well as the initial stages of disrepair dispute resolution. So as to assist in maximising the company's income collection, the team looks to ensure the best legal outcome for Midland Heart and its customers.
Reporting to:	Income Legal Manager
Responsible for:	No line reports
Disclosure level:	Standard
Role Level:	<u>Frontline Worker</u>

Key Role Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To be competent in providing income related legal advice and assist in providing necessary training and advice to the Rent Payment Team and other internal departments. Ensure compliance with the Rent Pre-Action Court Protocol & Civil Procedure Rules and keeping abreast with any legal or political changes that affect the team and the work it does. ▪ Prepare information for court hearings, and attend court as a representative of Midland Heart to ensure the best legal outcome for Midland Heart and its customers. This will require travel across the regions, covered by Midland Heart, to the various County Courts. Therefore, having access to a car is essential. ▪ Have strong negotiation skills to maximise income collection whilst sustaining tenancies. ▪ To liaise with external solicitors regarding claims and applications, including responding to Defences and Counter claims within set timescales. ▪ Have excellent interpersonal and communication skills ▪ Have good time management skills, with the ability to prioritise particular tasks and urgent applications. ▪ Be able to work on your own initiative and work flexibly.
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1. To liaise with the Rent Payment team, Money Advice team, Neighbourhoods team, advice agencies, Social Services and Housing Benefit departments to ensure up to date information is presented at court.
2. To update and maintain notes, arrangements, costs on Northgate and ensure correct information is entered onto systems to enable statistical analysis to be carried out on the progress of legal action, and provide reports as and when required.
3. Prepare and present legal cases on behalf of other internal departments, such as gas injunction orders, disrepair disputes and possession for breach of tenancy.
4. Prepare and attend court for complex cases which may include, the preparation of witness statements, allocation questionnaires and directions. Identify complex cases and individuals/vulnerable groups and make relevant referrals to Money Advice, CAB or any other agencies. This will require the ability to listen, clarify issues, suggest options and solve problems.
5. To attend and represent the team/organisation to allocated Court User Group Meetings
6. To update and maintain computer records of recovery action taken on Northgate.
7. To maintain a good working knowledge of existing Midland Heart policies and procedures, especially income related ones
8. To participate in team meetings, bring forward suggestions for service improvement and assist in training sessions and working groups.
9. To support colleagues through innovation and learning and contribute to making Midland Heart a great place to work. This will include assisting with the training of new staff and Rent Officers attending court.
10. All staff are expected to work flexibly within their skill level to respond to changing priorities and make sure that customer needs and business objectives are met. You will need to be able to work flexibly, so as to provide cover and support to other staff when required.
11. Respond to written correspondence from external agencies in relation to rent proceedings, within timescales.
12. Ensure that adherence is given to Data Protection legislation. In particular ensure that appropriate security checks are undertaken before speaking to a customer or notice of acting provided by a relevant solicitor or its firm.

Relationships

1. All staff have a responsibility to ensure any concerns are reported, which may include using the whistle-blowing policy and procedure where appropriate
2. Attend and contribute to regular one to one meetings and annual review with line manager
3. Develop and maintain professional relationships with customers and external agencies.
4. Liaise with internal departments to resolve any customer disputes or queries.

General Requirements

1. Be responsible for the health, safety and welfare of yourself and others at work and to undertake the health and safety duties outlined in the Midland Heart Health and Safety Policy commensurate with this position.
2. Observe Midland Heart's Code of Conduct and report any breaches to line manager.
3. Attend any required internal and external training.
4. Promote and uphold Midland Hearts policy on equal opportunities.
5. To comply with reasonable management requests and undertake other duties commensurate with the grading of the post, as may be required from time to time.

Education, Qualifications and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A good standard of education is essential to this role with a sound understanding of pre-action court protocols & relevant Civil Procedure Rules. A minimum of 5 GCSEs, or equivalent including Maths and English is essential.
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Knowledge and Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of attending court, ideally in respect of rent possession hearings and other applications, and for a housing association or local authority. This includes representing at court hearings. You must also have a track record of delivering results. • A sound knowledge of Housing Law and Civil Procedure Rules in relation to income recovery processes and welfare reform is essential.
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Role Specific Skills & Behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possess excellent negotiating skills. • Have attention to detail. • Be able to prioritise workload. • Possess excellent interpersonal skills, with the ability to communicate at all levels with both internal and external customers. • Be able to work using own initiative to resolve problems. • Have a diplomatic approach to problems and ability to handle difficult situations. • Have a methodical, organised approach to work and self-motivation to complete tasks to the required quality and within timescales. • Be committed to giving all customers a good quality
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	<p>service regardless of age, disability, ethnicity, religion or belief, marriage or civil partnership, gender reassignment, marriage or paternity status, gender or sexual orientation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have a polite and professional manner at all times.• Display behaviours in line with Midland Heart's Code of Conduct.• Be a team player, and be flexible in your approach to work to make sure that business objectives and customer needs are met.
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