



A week in the life of an Office Based Corporate Services Assistant – Kieran Tait

Tuesday 26 May

Back to work after the Bank Holiday weekend. And unlike the rest of my colleagues who are working from home, I'm actually going back to the office. When lockdown first happened, the Association was keen to try and maintain some kind of staff presence in the office even though we were closed to the public. My Dad Stephen Tait is Head of Development & Property Services so it made sense for the two of us to continue working from the office as we were both coming from the same household so there would be less risk to ourselves and others.

Even though direct phone numbers for staff have been publicised through our website, the main office line continues to be busy. Today was particularly busy, probably because we have been closed Friday and Monday. Calls have been from tenants paying rent, checking their balance, reporting repairs and asking about their housing application. It can be tough, as there are usually 4 of us on hand to answer the phones but now there is just me.

This morning I processed all the rent payments made over the phone last Thursday onto the computer. This is a daily task which needs to be completed in the morning so that Housing Officers are able to check rent accounts. Mail is still being delivered to our office – the

postman puts it in our mail box outside our office. So I opened and logged it all, emailing any urgent letters to relevant staff. I finally managed to finish off the minutes from the Management Committee meeting which took place on Zoom at the beginning of the month. These minutes normally don't take me long at all, but it has been difficult this month due to having to handle all the phone calls myself.

Some staff were in touch today to ask me to print out letters and post for them. Not all our staff have access to a printer at home so it is easier for me to do this from the office.

My manager Mandy White was in touch to ask if I could upload a staff diary (Marie Savage) onto the website, but for some reason it isn't working. I will try again tomorrow and if need be I'll contact the website designer for assistance.

It's just after 3pm now so time to take outgoing mail to the post office and head home. Since lockdown our office hours have been reduced to 10am-3pm, which helps. Staff working from home continue normal 9-5 working hours so that tenants can always contact one of us.

Wednesday 27 May

Daily tasks taken care of again – processing the rent debit card payments made yesterday over the phone and recording the incoming mail. The phones have been really busy today. As it is nearing the end of the month, a lot of tenants are phoning in to pay their rent. I also processed a refund to a tenant whose account was in credit. A couple of staff were in touch with me about issues with their computer. They are all connected to the computer system on laptops in their homes, but sometimes the connection can be lost. This requires me restarting their office computers so it is handy being in the office to be able to do this. One of our housing staff Heather Robertson was also on the phone asking me to send out some mail for her.

I also had a phone call from a tenant who had problems with bees and another with an issue about her bins. Unfortunately I couldn't help them as these

issues are dealt with by East Dunbartonshire Council and not ourselves. But I gave both callers the numbers for Environmental Health and Cleansing Departments so hopefully they were able to help. Some other phone calls were from people wanting housing application forms sent out. Although our lettings and allocations have been suspended since lockdown, we hope to be able to start this again before too much longer, although we may have to do things differently for a while yet.

The website was working again so I managed to upload Marie's diary. This means I can now arrange for a link to be put on Facebook and Twitter.

Took the mail to the post office again after closing at 3. The sun is out today so I might go for a run when I get back home.

Thursday 28 May

Today has definitely been the busiest day in the office this week. As usual, I processed the rent payments from yesterday and dealt with the incoming mail. Our Director Stephen Macintyre emailed me to say the reports for next week's Management Committee meeting on Zoom are ready to be printed out, photocopied and sent to the 11 committee members. My manager Mandy thankfully realised this might be difficult for me and suggested I could put the answer phone on for a certain period of time to allow me to get the committee mailing together without the phones ringing. I decided to see how the day went.

As the day went on, things got extremely busy. Lots of tenants phoning to pay their rent, a couple of calls about repairs, and even a visitor to the back door – one

of our tenants looking for some dog bags. Thankfully we have plenty of hand sanitiser in the office so I can minimise risks when handing over things like this.

I ended up having to divert phone calls to the answer machine for half an hour in the afternoon to allow me to get the committee papers together. But I left details on the message about when the phone line would be open again and to email our admin address if they needed assistance before then. My manager receives these emails and was able to monitor them while the phones were off.

Mailing complete along with the other outgoing mail, some more phone calls and at last it is 3pm. Time to go home and enjoy some more sunshine.

Friday 29 May

I didn't think it was possible but today has been actually busier than yesterday! As well as the daily tasks processing rents and distributing mail, I have had to restart a couple of computers for the home workers. A lot of calls from tenants paying rent, as well as some repairs and housing queries. And I printed off some letters for staff working at home to go out in the mail.

By the time 3pm came I was definitely ready for the weekend! Plus I have taken a couple of days holiday

on Monday and Tuesday so it will be a nice long weekend. Normal weekends for me would involve seeing my friends and going to clubs or football but nothing is normal these days.

The working weeks certainly feel strange, with only 2 in the office as opposed to 25! I am happy to be able to come into the office but it can be stressful at times. Hopefully it won't be too long until there are more of us here.