

Job Description and Person Specification

Job details

Job title: Housing Options Advisor

Grade: Band 5 (SCP 11-13)

Reports to: Housing Options Team Leader

Responsible for: No direct responsibility for employees

Directorate and Service area: Housing, Communities and Wellbeing

Purpose of the job

The primary objective of this post is to deliver operational housing options advice and homelessness prevention, support and assessment services to enable the continuing improvement and ongoing enhancement of Housing Services. Reporting into a Housing Options Team Leader the post holder will offer housing advice and homelessness services in accordance with relevant Government Legislation. Emphasis will be placed on elevating customer service standards, effectively managing homeless cases within current legislation and actively contributing to the prevention of homelessness.

Principal responsibilities

Housing Options

1. To provide advice and assistance to customers, colleagues and external partners seeking advice and assistance on all aspects of homelessness, availability of accommodation, disrepair, housing rights and any other related issues.
2. To provide a single point of contact for customers seeking advice on their housing options.
3. To undertake a Full Housing Assessments of customers' housing needs in order to identify appropriate housing options and create a tailored Personalised Housing Plan to their individual needs and to prevent homelessness.
4. To maintain up to date knowledge and expertise in relation to homelessness prevention and homelessness legislation and surrounding case law.

Homelessness Prevention and Relief

5. To create, monitor and review Personal Housing Plans with customers.
6. To liaise with third parties such as statutory and voluntary organisations, housing providers, private landlords, lettings agents and building societies in order to resolve housing problems and prevent homelessness.
7. To administer a personal budget for homelessness prevention activities to provide financial assistance to applicants in order to prevent their homelessness, by using the Homeless Prevention Fund, PRS Access scheme or other financial incentive.
8. To work in partnership with the Private Sector Housing team where appropriate to secure privately rented accommodation from approved landlords for applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
9. To liaise with private landlords, lettings agents and Housing Benefits on behalf of applicants to negotiate rent levels, property standards and terms and conditions of occupancy as and when required.

10. To liaise with voluntary and statutory organisations to ensure that customers whose homelessness has been prevented as a result of the Council's intervention receive high quality support and assistance to enable them to sustain their tenancies.
11. To monitor outcomes with households whose homelessness has been prevented via our interventions, and provide further support when necessary.

Housing Allocations

12. To provide advice to housing applicants and other stakeholders on eligibility for social and affordable rented housing under the Keyways Housing Allocation Scheme.
13. To provide advice and assistance to housing applicants on making an application to the Keyways housing register.

Homelessness Investigations

14. To keep up to date with changes in the homelessness legislation and surrounding case law, and undertake training courses as required.
15. To accept, carry out enquiries and assess homeless applications in accordance with Part VII of the Housing Act 1996, the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities and other relevant legislation and case law, reporting recommendations to the Senior Housing Options Advisor.
16. To carry out home visits to verify circumstances and find solutions to enable the customer to remain in their existing home where appropriate.
17. To make appropriate placements in temporary accommodation for homeless households, dealing with any breaches of licence to occupy.
18. To assist as necessary in the provision of emergency advice and assistance outside of office hours, including arranging temporary accommodation.

Miscellaneous

19. To deliver training sessions on housing options, housing allocations and homelessness to a variety of audiences including other officers within the Council and partner agencies, and customers, as part of their tenancy training programme.
20. To participate in countywide and multi-agency group meetings including MAPPA and MARAC, to contribute towards the development of housing solutions for victims of domestic abuse or those covered by public protection arrangements.
21. To assist in the development and introduction of new housing options or other initiatives to prevent homelessness.
22. To contribute to the development of new policies and procedures for the Housing Options team.
23. To maintain manual and computer records so that they accurately describe the housing needs of customers, their current situation, the advice that has been given and outcomes.
24. To undertake other duties, which are commensurate with the salary, skills, knowledge and experience of this post, as and when required by the Head of Housing.

General responsibilities applicable to all jobs

1. Demonstrate awareness/understanding of equal opportunities and other people's behavioural, physical, social and welfare needs.
2. Comply with the Council's policies and procedures including (but not limited to) safeguarding, financial regulations, promotion of equalities, customer care, agreed audit actions and health and safety (ensuring that reasonable care is taken at all times for the health, safety and welfare of yourself and other persons).
3. Understand the council's commitment to Corporate Parenting and take responsibility to support this commitment. Enable the council to be the best corporate parents possible to children and young people in our current and previous care.
4. Carry out any other duties which fall within the broad spirit, scope and purpose of this job description and which are commensurate with the grade of the post.

This job description reflects the major tasks to be carried out by the post holder and identifies a level of responsibility at which they will be required to work. In the interests of effective working, the major tasks may be reviewed from time to time to reflect changing needs and circumstances. Such reviews and any consequential changes will be carried out in consultation with the post holder.

Special features of the post

This post requires satisfactory clearance of a Disclosure and Barring Service disclosure.

Person Specification

Attributes	Essential criteria	Desirable criteria
Education, Qualifications and Training	Hold a relevant qualification (e.g. HND/NVQ Level 4) or show an equivalent capability.	
Experience and Knowledge	Minimum 2 year's relevant work experience with a local authority, housing association or voluntary organisation	Experience of working effectively in partnership with a range of stakeholders
Ability and Skills	<p>Extensive knowledge of the homelessness legislation and case law.</p> <p>Experience of managing and prioritising own workload, and ability to work effectively as part of a team.</p> <p>Excellent verbal and interviewing skills.</p> <p>Well developed and wide- ranging negotiating and problem solving skills.</p> <p>Able to produce clear, concise and persuasive written reports on complex issues.</p> <p>IT and keyboard skills, including the ability to use Microsoft Office.</p> <p>Good analytical skills and ability to produce and interpret statistical information.</p>	Experience of working with vulnerable people

Attributes	Essential criteria	Desirable criteria
	Ability to successfully operate in a multi-disciplinary and multi-functional environment.	
Equal Opportunities	Ability to demonstrate awareness/understanding of equal opportunities and other people's behaviour, physical, social and welfare needs.	
Additional Factors	<p>Full driving licence and access to a car for work or ability to travel within the Borough.</p> <p>Willing to work outside normal office hours as necessary.</p> <p>This post will be subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service check</p>	