

**When potential
is unlocked,
talent *thrives***



**West
Northamptonshire
Council**

Job description and person specification

Housing Options Officer

Housing Solutions, Communities & Opportunities

Thank you for your interest in this role. Our vision at West Northamptonshire Council (WNC) is: 'to make West Northants a great place to live, work, visit and thrive'.

We truly stand by this and work hard every day to make this a reality, and at WNC it's about our people. People who thrive with ambition, bring new ideas, demand better ways of working, care about every detail, and who never shy away from a challenge.

Our culture is a gateway for new experiences. A place to forge new opportunities. To empower you in your career and unite you with like-minded people. When potential is unlocked, talent thrives.



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Purpose and impact:

To be part of a high demanding frontline Housing options Service that is responsible for providing timely housing advice to customers on a range of housing enquiries relating to preventing and relieving homelessness across West Northamptonshire

The postholder will be responsible for managing a varied caseload and provide holistic case management support to address customer need from the initial point of contact through to case closure. They will be responsible for working collaboratively with customers, statutory agencies, the voluntary sector and housing services to provide effective support, decisions and advice on all matters relating to housing options.

Accountable to:

This role is accountable to the Housing Options Team Leaders. The role is within the Housing Options Service, part of the Communities & Opportunities Directorate in West Northamptonshire Council.

Responsibilities:

1. To provide support from the initial point of contact to case closure. To triage, advise, support and assist customers of varying backgrounds in relation to housing and homelessness advice. This will include ensuring support and personalised housing plans are effectively implemented to support customers address route issues and underlying causes i.e. financial, health and wellbeing, and wider determinants.
2. You will be responsible for processing and investigating homeless applications, having a clear focus on working in collaboration with customers to positively prevent and relieve their homelessness. You will have a clear focus on supporting customers to take ownership of their situation and advise them on finding a suitable pathway to ensure they have suitable accommodation whether this be with a family or friend, privately rented accommodation, Council or housing association.
3. To make inquiries as necessary to determine what duty is owed to customers under the Housing Act 1996; as amended Homeless Reduction Act 2017. Ensure that advice and information on housing solutions is readily available and work in partnership with support and safeguarding services as required e.g. social care, health, police, advocacy services etc.
4. To assist in addressing core housing strands in relation to rough sleeping, family exclusion, end of tenancy, domestic abuse, single/couples without children, care leavers, hospitals and prisons to improve the quality of life for customers across West Northants.
5. Have a detailed understanding of, and be able to implement, a wider range of legislation, procedures and policies relating to housing and welfare rights, including homelessness, landlord and tenant law, immigration and asylum, and matrimonial and family law.
6. Ensure all correspondence is responded to appropriately including telephone enquiries, emails and requests from customers, internal departments and external agencies.
7. To undertake interviews and home visits, often on the day of exclusion; within expected guidelines and procedures, ensuring all necessary paperwork and records are effectively maintained in a timely manner.

8. To safeguard customers by providing direct support and ensuring services are aligned to improve their situation. This will include attending multi agency meetings, review of personalised housing plans, completion of safeguarding referrals to social care, police, GP or other, and completion of risk assessments e.g DASH.
9. Work with the Temporary Accommodation & Private Sector Access services to negotiate and secure suitable emergency temporary accommodation for homeless households according to statutory requirements. Work proactively with homeless households to secure suitable housing solutions to help them to move on from temporary accommodation in a timely manner, working to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation.
10. Contribute to the development of local policies and procedures and promote and facilitate customer engagement and lived experience input to improve service delivery.
11. To be available during office hours in person as and when required to meet the demands of the service. This includes at the One Angel Building and/or from different hubs. To also be available out of hours in line with the needs and demands of the service (both on a rota basis and in the event of an emergency).
12. To maximise personal productivity, minimise duplication and errors; and manage our information efficiently and securely to reduce risk, through effective use of Office 365 and our internal IT systems and applications.
13. Actively challenge and seek to eliminate any directly or indirectly discriminatory practice or behaviours, and be an advocate for equality, diversity and inclusion of customers and Council workforce.
14. Demonstrate awareness and understanding of other people's behavioural, physical, social and welfare needs and ensure that reasonable care is taken at all times for the health, safety and welfare of yourself and other persons.

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.

Person specification:

The requirements for the role are outlined below and will be part of the selection process. Each of the criteria listed below will be measured by:

(A) Application Form, (T) Test, (I) Interview, (P) Presentation, (D) Documentation.

Minimum levels of knowledge, skills experience and qualifications required for this job.

Skills and abilities:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
Empathetic and able to deal with customers in a sensitive and appropriate manner in a demanding and challenging environment. Also, able to be firm and assertive when necessary.	E	A/I
Able to work holistically with stakeholders and customer to address varying scenarios and cross cutting matters in relation to their housing situation, such as:	E	A/I

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Domestic abuse - Safeguarding - Financial - Substance misuse - Health and Wellbeing inc Mental health - Crime and anti-social behaviour - Housing conditions 		
Good persuasive & negotiation skills, with the confidence and ability to make decisions without guidance of supervisors	E	A/I/T
Ability to interpret and explain complex legislation, policy and guidance, to a variety of audiences, and to make clear, consistent and often difficult decisions.	E	A/I
Ability to develop close professional relationships with colleagues and other professionals to problem solve and generate positive outcomes for customers.	E	A/I
Ability to work in a methodical manner, manage time, maintain accurate records, and respond promptly to enquiries.	E	A/I
Excellent written and verbal communications and use of English language. Including Good IT and writing skills with the ability to interrogate databases to record and retrieve customer information.	E	A/I /T
Able to work outside of office hours on a rota basis.	E	A, I

Knowledge:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
A current and deep knowledge and understanding of current housing law, such as the Housing Act 1996, Parts VI and VII, Homelessness Act 2002, Localism Act 2012, Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and immigration law as it applies to housing eligibility, relevant code of guidance and case law.	E	A/I
Knowledge of safeguarding, landlord and tenant law, matrimonial and family law and welfare benefits system, and how they are applied in real world situations.	E	A/I
An understanding and awareness of current challenges around housing and homelessness at a local, regional and national level.	E	A/I /T
An understanding of the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the need to ensure accurate data entry for the purpose of producing statistical returns.	E	A/I

Relevant experience:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
Demonstrate a proactive approach to seeking appropriate housing solutions, including preventing homelessness and accessing the private rented sector.	E	A/I

Experience of working within a front-line service with high levels of demand, significant time pressure and conflicting priorities, including crisis management.	E	A/I
Experience of conducting thorough investigations with a focus on positive outcomes and preventing further escalation.	E	A/I
Experience of working in a homelessness and housing allocations environments and/or similar working backgrounds	E	A/I
Experience of dealing with the public providing advice and/or support including resolving disputes.	E	A/I

Education, training and work qualifications:	Essential / Desirable	Measured by
Educated to degree level or equivalent qualification or has significant experience and on-the job training relating to the role or similar.	E	A, I, D
Evidence of continued professional and personal development.	E	A
Hold a professional housing qualification and member of the Chartered Institute of Housing or the ability to obtain the qualification.	D	A
Hold a full driving licence and have access to own transport for work purposes.	E	A

All appointments are subject to standard pre-employment screening. This will include identity, references, proof of right to work in the UK, medical clearance, and verification of certificates.

Additional pre-employment checks specific to this role include:

Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.

Day-to-day in the role:

Hours:	37	work base:	One Angel Square, Primary Northampton
Job family band:	RT	Worker type:	Part-flexible
Salary range:	TBC	Budget responsibility: None	
People management None	responsibility:		

Working conditions & how we work:

We are open to discussions about flexible working.

This role has been identified as a part-flexible worker type, this means that you will be able to work from other work locations and when not working from an office you will be working remotely for up to 3 days a week (including from home).

Our organisational values and behaviours

Everything we want to achieve for West Northants depends on having the right people in place and doing the right things and we want all colleagues to THRIVE, both personally and professionally. Our values and our behaviours framework underpin how we work and what partners and customers can expect from us. We want to do our very best for our residents, service users and businesses and for our staff – we want everyone to THRIVE.

T	we are honest, fair, transparent, and accountable. We can be trusted to do what Trust we say we will.
H High Performing	we get the basics right and what we do, we do well. We manage our business efficiently.
R Respect	we respect each other and our customers in a diverse, professional and supportive environment.
I Innovate	we encourage curiosity, we are creative and seize opportunities to grow individually as an organisation and as an area.
V Value	we continually strive for best practice and ways of improving existing procedures, practices and systems and thereby promoting efficiency and cost effectiveness
E Empower	we believe in people, will listen, learn, and trust them to make decisions. We help people to realise their ambitions.

“Valuing colleagues as individuals and encompassing our different perspectives to deliver our collective ambitions. One West inclusive culture”

When potential is unlocked, talent *thrives*

Choose a career that offers you a true sense of achievement, fills you with pride and challenges you in a positive way, everyday.

The benefits of a career at WNC include:

- **People** are at the centre of everything we do. Without our people, we wouldn't be able to deliver services to the people in our community.
- **Ambition** runs through everything we do at West Northants Council, we nurture and develop our people's ambition and willingness to succeed, to continually improve the service we provide to the community.
- **Care** is at the heart of West Northants Council, we care in so many ways; seen and unseen, helping our colleagues and community to thrive.
- **Flexibility** is key, we know work-life balance is critical to wellbeing, so we work hard to make sure our benefits package promotes and improves wellbeing; from annual leave, sick pay, family leave and flexible working, financial security offered by a local government pension scheme and life assurance, and discount schemes which make a difference to your day-to-day life, through to employee helplines offering free legal, health, financial and wellbeing advice and support.

We want you to have balance and be happy.

