

Job Description and Person Specification

Job details

Job title: Accommodation for Ex-Offender's Officer (AfEO Officer)
Grade: Band 5
Reports to: Senior Landlord Liaison Officer
Responsible for: No direct responsibility for employees
Directorate and Service area: Adults, Health Partnerships and Housing

Purpose of the job

Working within the Housing Advice and Options Service, this role will focus on increasing access to the private rented sector for ex-offenders at risk of homelessness. Through effective landlord and letting agent engagement, the post holder will secure sustainable housing solutions and support tenancy sustainment for this cohort, with the overarching aim of preventing and relieving homelessness and reducing the cost and use of temporary accommodation

The post holder will build strong relationships with private landlords, letting agents and criminal justice partners, including prison in reach work to identify housing pathways for individuals prior to release from prison or move on from CAS3 accommodation or Approved Premises.

Working with prison leavers and ex-offenders to assess and determine the assistance to which they are entitled under homelessness legislation including progressing and recording homelessness applications contributing to effective case management and positive housing outcomes.

To support the Senior Landlord Liaison Officer in providing information and advice on private rented sector trends and challenges, helping to shape policy and service delivery.

The role will be based across the locality of North Northamptonshire.

Principal Responsibilities

1. Develop, build and maintain strong working relationships with private landlords, letting agents, other housing providers and criminal justice partners to increase access to suitable private rented accommodation for ex-offenders.
2. Act as a single point of contact for all agencies working with prison leavers and ex-offenders, alongside landlords and letting agents offering expert advice, guidance, and support on housing options, tenancy sustainment, landlord responsibilities ensuring compliance with relevant legislation, tenancy agreements, and best practice to encouraging participation for the AfEO scheme.
3. Conducting in-reach work within prisons, liaising with probation and prison resettlement teams to assess housing need, conduct thorough risk assessments and work to identify housing options before release.
4. Develop effective joint working arrangements with partner agencies including providing briefings, attending team meetings and delivering training for staff working directly with ex-offenders, with the objective of encouraging early referrals into the AfEO scheme and building relationships with staff

and clients at an early stage to manage expectations and an understanding of the needs of the cohort.

5. Work closely with other areas of the Housing Solutions service to ensure a seamless and joined up approach to supporting prison leavers and ex offenders and the development of initiatives and pathways.
6. Manage homelessness applications for ex-offenders eligible for support under the AfEO scheme, ensuring all advice, casework, and actions comply with the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), other relevant legislation and caselaw, keeping up to date with legislative changes and best practice, contributing to the development and implementation of service improvement.
7. Work proactively with ex-offenders, providing tailored advice and support on tenancy sustainment, addressing any risk factors and ensuring access to appropriate support services such as financial support, physical and mental health services, substance misuse services etc. Through regular contact and review, ensure that any issues are identified and supported in a timely manner.
8. Assist with the Senior Landlord Liaison Officer to develop and implement new AfEO initiatives to improve access to private rented sector housing, addressing barriers that prevent landlords from engaging with the scheme.
9. Support tenancy sustainment and move on efforts by working closely with colleagues, partner agencies and support services to provide a consistent, high level of support for those accommodated via the AfEO Scheme, through building a professional and trusting relationship, supporting them effectively, ensuring all work is needs led and ensure professional boundaries and confidentiality are always maintained.
10. Contribute to performance monitoring and reporting, ensuring accurate case recording and data entry to track outcomes and support service improvement.
11. Assist with budget management by keeping detailed records of, and monitoring, all expenditure relating to the AfEO scheme including any incentives, deposits, or funding allocations.
12. Contribute positively to the development of new working practises and initiatives and implementation of changes to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the service, and to the development of processes, procedures, policies and strategies.

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 councils 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 housing qualification (CIH Level 4 Diploma or equivalent) or show an equivalent capability	Evidence of continuous professional development
Experience and Knowledge	<p>Experience of working within a local authority, housing association or voluntary organisation</p> <p>Knowledge of private rented sector access issues and challenges</p> <p>A good understanding and knowledge of the main causes of homelessness and rough sleeping, and the barriers that people face when trying to access accommodation and support services</p> <p>Experience of handling a caseload and provision of housing or tenancy related support</p>	<p>Experience of working in a housing options / homelessness service</p> <p>Knowledge of homelessness legislation, guidance and caselaw.</p> <p>Experience of working effectively in partnership with and liaising with a range of stakeholders</p> <p>Experience of working with ex offenders</p>
Ability and Skills	<p>Spoken and written English fluency</p> <p>Ability to form and develop professional and effective working relationships with colleagues, partners and service users and work effectively and enthusiastically as part of a team</p> <p>Ability to manage a varied, complex caseload, and remain focussed on performance and outcomes</p> <p>Able to produce clear, concise and persuasive written reports on complex issues.</p>	<p>The ability to liaise with, and negotiate and persuade landlords and letting agents to contribute to the Council's strategic aims</p> <p>The ability to work with vulnerable people in difficult situations and handle challenging behaviour</p>

Attributes	Essential criteria	Desirable criteria
	<p>Excellent written and verbal communication skills</p> <p>Good analytical skills and ability to produce and interpret statistical information</p> <p>Excellent numerical skills and ability to use spreadsheets and systems to monitor expenditure against budgets</p> <p>Excellent interpersonal skills and the emotional resilience to deal effectively with complex circumstances surrounding vulnerable people</p> <p>Excellent listening and interviewing skills, with a proven ability to inspire and motivate people to improve themselves and/or others</p> <p>A skilled problem-solver and negotiator with the ability to develop practical and creative housing solutions with an organised and imaginative approach to work and the ability to manage difficult and sensitive situations</p> <p>Ability to work well under pressure, on own initiative, and manage and prioritise own workload and team members when needed</p> <p>Effectively work with others to achieve a positive outcome by being proactive and solution focused</p> <p>IT and keyboard skills, including the ability to use Microsoft Office and maintain accurate records and case files.</p>	

Attributes	Essential criteria	Desirable criteria
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 own transport for work purposes</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> <p>This post is office based</p>	