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# JOB DESCRIPTION

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## Directorate: Communities & Opportunities

**Job title: Housing Management & Lettings Officer**

**Location: The Guildhall, Northampton**

**Salary: £25,150 - £29,636**

**Division: Housing & Communities**

**Section: Homelessness & Housing Solutions**

**Reports to: Social Lettings Agency Manager**

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**JOB PURPOSE**

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To provide a high quality, responsive, customer-focused housing management and lettings service for everyone living in the private rented housing and temporary accommodation that is being managed by the Social Lettings Agency and Temporary Accommodation team, ensuring that all homes are well managed, inspected regularly and maintained in a safe and habitable condition.

To establish, develop and maintain effective working arrangements with the Council’s Money Advisers, the Revenues & Benefits Service, the Tenant Mentors and local advice and support providers in order to maximise rent collection and tenancy sustainment.

To work proactively and collaboratively with the Homelessness & Housing Solutions Team and Northampton Partnership Homes to minimise the Council’s use of Bed & Breakfast, make best use of the Council’s stock of self-contained accommodation, and ensure that homeless households are able to move into, and out of, leased accommodation as quickly as possible.

To ensure fairness and transparency in the way in which accommodation is allocated, help tenants to make informed decisions and choices about their future housing, and actively promote the full range of affordable housing options.

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# KEY RESULT AREAS

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To provide a high quality, responsive, customer-focused housing management and lettings service, maximise rent collection and tenancy sustainment, make best use of the Council’s stock of self-contained accommodation, and ensure that homeless households are able to move into, and out of, leased accommodation as quickly as possible.

In doing this, the Housing Management & Lettings Officer will:

1. Work collaboratively with the Homelessness Reduction Team, the Lettings Negotiator and the Temporary Accommodation Team to deliver efficient, joined-up services and ensure that the size, type, cost and location of the homes being managed by the Social Lettings Agency are meeting the needs of tenants and the Council.
2. Develop and maintain close working relations with Council services and a wide range of other stakeholders in order to facilitate the flow of information, encourage joint working and co-operation, achieve the prompt resolution of complex problems and ensure that, where an input is required from a number of teams, service delivery is properly co-ordinated and the customer is kept fully informed of developments.
3. Carry out accompanied viewings with prospective tenants, as part of the lettings process, and provide homeseekers with advice and information – and the opportunity to ask questions – to enable them to make informed decisions about their housing.
4. Ensure that an accurate record is kept of all offers and lettings and that the methods used to match properties and prospective tenants are fair, consistent and transparent.
5. Undertake tenancy sign-ups and initial ‘welcome’ visits to new tenants, ensuring that tenants are provided with comprehensive advice and guidance on all aspects of the tenancy (including housing benefit, the tenancy conditions and the role of the Social Lettings Agency), they understand how to use the heating / hot water system and all of the equipment and appliances, and they are aware of the local facilities and amenities.
6. Ensure that all payments, including deposits and rent-in-advance, are properly recorded and that deposits are placed in an approved tenancy deposit protection scheme.
7. Ensure that a comprehensive, up-to-date inventory and schedule of condition (including photographs) is maintained in relation to every property that is being managed by the Social Lettings Agency and that this is always issued to the incoming tenant for checking.
8. Undertake regular visits and inspections to ensure that all of the properties that are being let and managed by the Social Lettings Agency and Temporary Accommodation team continue to meet the lettable standard and have not been damaged, sub-let or abandoned and, if they have been, take appropriate action to ensure that tenants are recharged for the repairs, possession is recovered and, where appropriate, the Council’s homelessness duty is discharged.
9. Work proactively and collaboratively with the Housing Advice & Options Team and Northampton Partnership Homes to minimise the Council’s use of Bed & Breakfast, make best use of the Council’s stock of self-contained accommodation, and ensure that homeless households move into, and out of, leased housing as quickly as possible.
10. Ensure that all repairs are completed within agreed timescales and that, where the property is being leased by the Council and the repairs are the responsibility of the landlord (lessor), the repairs request is referred to the landlord promptly and action is taken to ensure the repairs are carried out within the agreed timescales and, if they are not, the works are carried out in default by the Social Lettings Agency.
11. Strictly enforce the terms and conditions of all contracts relating to the supply of leased accommodation through the timely execution of works in default, the reduction or suspension of rent payments and, where necessary, the termination of the lease.
12. Establish, develop and maintain effective working arrangements with the Council’s Money Advisers, the Revenues & Benefits Service, Tenant Mentors and local advice and support providers in order to maximise rent collection and tenancy sustainment.
13. Ensure that all tenants comply with their conditions of tenancy (including paying their rent in full and on time, and providing access for inspections and annual gas safety checks) and take appropriate action in the event of any breach of those conditions.
14. Provide tenants with comprehensive advice on their housing options, taking into account their needs and aspirations, their eligibility for assistance under the homelessness legislation, their priority on the housing register, and their ability to meet their housing needs through affordable home ownership and the private rented sector.
15. Develop and maintain close working relations with a broad cross-section of Council services and local organisations in order to secure the help and support that tenants need in order to sustain their tenancies and address their housing and support needs.
16. Maintain a good understanding and awareness of Northampton’s policies and procedures for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, and alert Children’s Services and/or Adult Social Care where it is suspected that a child or vulnerable adult might be being abused, neglected or harmed.
17. Investigate and, where possible, successfully resolve – with the help of other agencies, including the Police, Anti Social Behaviour Team and Environmental Health – neighbour disputes and complaints about anti-social behaviour, nuisance and hate crime.
18. Meet regularly with the Social Lettings Agency Manager and the Lettings Negotiator in order to ensure good communication and an equitable distribution of the workload.
19. Work proactively with the repairs / voids contractors and the Temporary Accommodation Team to ensure that all accommodation is repaired – and that any furniture, floor coverings or appliances which require replacement are replaced – in accordance with the agreed timescales and service specifications.
20. Inform the Lettings Negotiator, Temporary Accommodation Team and the Homelessness Reduction Team of any new or imminent vacancies in order to assist the pre-allocation of void properties.
21. Provide the Social Lettings Manager and Lettings Negotiator with clear recommendations and timely advice on the appropriateness of renewing private sector leases and ensure that all lease renewals and hand-backs are tightly managed and completed within agreed timescales and in a way that minimises any disruption to homeless households and avoids the Council incurring any additional costs.
22. Contribute to the regular review and updating of the Social Lettings Agency’s processes, policies and procedures, ensuring that they are compliant with the relevant legislation and reflect, wherever practicable, good practice.
23. Actively consider new and innovative ways of doing things, recognising and promoting the positive benefits of change as a means of improving services and achieving goals.
24. Contribute to the development and implementation of new initiatives and working practices that increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the Social Lettings Agency, improve private sector housing conditions, maximise the number of empty homes brought back into use and reduce the cost of temporary accommodation.
25. Ensure that an accurate, comprehensive record is kept of all interviews, inspections, telephone calls and follow-up action (and that files are maintained to a high standard) in order to assist monitoring, decision-making and effective case management.
26. Maintain professional competence and keep abreast of developments through research and reading, attendance of courses and briefings, and the use of established networks.
27. Work in a safe manner and contribute positively to the creation of a safe and healthy

working environment, strictly in accordance with the council’s policies and procedures.

1. Create and maintain accurate records (using manual and computer systems) on all aspects of the service to ensure compliance with agreed reporting arrangements and provide management with the information it requires to monitor performance and service standards in accordance with Council policy and current legislation.
2. Ensure that Management is provided with early alerts in the event of poor or failing performance, or a suspicion of fraud, corruption or impropriety.
3. Perform any other duties (appropriate to the grading of the post) that are required by the Social Lettings Agency Manager or the Housing Advice & Options Manager in order to ensure the delivery of a high quality, caring and effective Social Lettings Agency.

## Job descriptions will be subject to review and possible change on an annual basis subject to corporate and service plan priorities.

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**PEOPLE AND RESOURCES**

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The Housing Management & Lettings Officer is not responsible for the management of any budgets or the supervision, management and direction of any employees.

## Other people both external and internal

1. The Postholder will act on behalf of the Council (as an ambassador and/or negotiator, as appropriate) in relation to:
   * Other local authorities / public bodies including governmental organisations
   * Organisations representing private landlords and rental agents
   * Organisations representing private sector tenants
   * Organisations representing carers and people with disabilities
   * Charities, social landlords, supported housing providers and other non-governmental organisations
   * Other key stakeholder groups – including local advice and support providers, private tenants, private landlords, property owners, leaseholders etc.
2. The Postholder will work with Councillors, managers and employees of the Council to meet the Council’s aims and objectives.

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# CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITIES

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* To ensure that the services delivered by the Council are designed to meet the needs of Northampton’s diverse customer base and are delivered to the highest possible standards.
* To make a positive corporate contribution, including contributing to or leading on corporate projects and initiatives which may cross cut service boundaries
* To positively work with partners in the best interests of Northampton promoting a

“Team Northampton” approach.

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# DATA PROTECTION ACT / FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

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Working with manual and computerised systems, the Postholder will need to be fully aware, at all times, of their responsibilities under the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and Data Protection Acts of 1998 & 2018 for the security, accuracy and relevance of personal data held on such systems, and to be conversant with the implications of the Freedom of Information Act. The Postholder will also be required to be fully aware of, and comply with, the Council’s Data Quality procedures to ensure that all management information is accurate and fit for purpose.

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# ---PERSON SPECIFICATION

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|  | Essential/Desirable? | | Methods of Assessment (Yes = Y) | | | |
| **KNOWLEDGE** | E? | D? | Application  Form | References | Interview | Other |
| A good understanding and awareness of housing issues, and of government  policy relating to housing and homelessness | E |  | Y | Y | Y |  |
| Knowledge of landlord and tenant law, landlords’ repairing obligations and  the grounds for possession | E |  | Y | Y | Y |  |
| Experience of casework management |  | D | Y | Y | Y |  |
| Experience of managing social rented / affordable rented housing, private rented  accommodation and/or temporary accommodation |  | D | Y | Y | Y |  |
| Experience of providing advice on housing and homelessness issues |  | D | Y | Y | Y |  |
| Knowledge of housing benefit and the impact of welfare reform |  | D | Y | Y | Y |  |
| Experience of effective joint working in a particularly demanding environment | E |  | Y | Y | Y |  |
| Extensive experience of acting on own initiative, prioritising competing demands and meeting tight deadlines | E |  | Y | Y | Y |  |
| Experience of using IT applications, including word-processing, spreadsheets  and databases | E |  | Y |  | Y |  |
| Experience of collating and evaluating monitoring information, and of  using the information to improve productivity and/or performance | E |  | Y |  | Y |  |
| An understanding of equality and diversity | E |  | Y |  | Y |  |
| An understanding of the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 | E |  | Y |  | Y |  |
| An understanding of the requirement to ensure accurate data entry into record  keeping systems for the purpose of producing statistical returns | E |  | Y |  | Y |  |
| **SKILLS** | E? | D? | Application  Form | References | Interview | Other |
| Good standard of literacy and numeracy | E |  | Y |  | Y | Y |

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| **SKILLS (continued)** | E? | D? | Application  Form | References | Interview | Other |
| Excellent communication skills (verbal and written) and the ability to influence a  variety of audiences, including landlords, tenants, contractors and partners | E |  | Y |  | Y |  |
| Effective team player with a proven ability to develop positive relationships with colleagues, managers and other services and organisations | E |  | Y | Y | Y |  |
| Excellent negotiating and advocacy skills, and the drive and commitment to  achieve positive outcomes for customers | E |  | Y | Y | Y |  |
| An effective problem-solver with an organised and imaginative approach to work  and the ability to manage difficult situations | E |  | Y | Y | Y |  |
| Ability to work on own initiative and make clear, consistent decisions | E |  | Y | Y | Y |  |
| Ability to work well under pressure, prioritise work and meet tight deadlines | E |  | Y | Y | Y |  |
| Ability to look critically at existing practices, evaluate options and recommend  better ways of doing things | E |  | Y | Y | Y |  |
| Ability to explain and present complex information clearly and concisely | E |  | Y | Y | Y |  |
| Ability to initiate and manage change | E |  | Y |  | Y |  |
| Ability to analyse, manage and interpret information and data, and to use it to  inform decision making and improve services | E |  | Y |  | Y |  |
| **ATTRIBUTES** | E? | D? | Application  Form | References | Interview | Other |
| A self-starter who is outcome focused and target driven | E |  | Y | Y | Y |  |
| Full driving licence and access to own transport for work purposes | E |  | Y |  | Y | Y |