



JOB DESCRIPTION

Directorate:	Housing and Wellbeing
Job title:	Housing Transitions Officer
Location:	The Guildhall, Northampton
Grade:	6
Salary:	£29,636 – £33,798
Section:	Housing Advice and Options
Reports to:	Single Homelessness Pathway Manager

JOB PURPOSE

To prevent homelessness and reduce the use of temporary accommodation by providing a high quality advice, assessment and resettlement service that ensures that appropriate housing and support is provided, in a planned and timely way, for people who will be homeless when they are discharged from hospital, released from prison or leave care.

To respond to, and assess, all relevant referrals (including those that are received under the 'Duty to Refer' arrangements) and make initial enquiries as appropriate.

To carry out a comprehensive assessment of each customer's needs and circumstances and encourage an innovative, solution-focused, multi-agency approach to meeting those needs.

To oversee and facilitate customers' transition into appropriate, settled housing and act as a single point of contact for customers, their families and other stakeholders.

KEY RESULT AREAS

To prevent homelessness and reduce the use of temporary accommodation by providing a high quality advice, assessment and resettlement service that ensures that appropriate housing and support is provided, in a planned and timely way, for people who will be homeless when they are discharged from hospital, released from prison or leave care.

In doing this, the Housing Transitions Officer will:

1. Work closely with colleagues in the Council's One Stop Shop and Customer Services Centre, and respond promptly and efficiently to all homelessness approaches and all referrals received under the 'Duty to Refer' arrangements, in order to meet customers' needs and tackle, prevent and reduce homelessness in the borough.

2. Develop and maintain close working relations with a wide range of teams, services and organisations in order to facilitate the flow of information, encourage effective joint working and co-operation, achieve the prompt resolution of complex problems and ensure that, even when an input is required from a number of teams, service delivery is always well co-ordinated and the customer is kept fully informed of developments.
3. Work collaboratively and proactively with Northampton General Hospital, Berrywood Hospital, health and social care professionals, social landlords, private landlords and advice and support providers to facilitate the safe and timely discharge of patients from hospital, in a planned way that avoids a placement in temporary accommodation, in accordance with agreed hospital discharge procedures.
4. Provide hospital patients with comprehensive advice on their housing options, taking into account their overall financial situation, their needs and aspirations, their eligibility for assistance under the homelessness legislation, their priority on the Housing Register and whether or not they are able to sustain a tenancy in the private rented sector.
5. Contribute positively to the development of patients' hospital discharge plans, ensuring that suitable accommodation and a bespoke package of care and support are provided in order to meet their housing, health, social care and support needs, facilitate their safe and timely discharge from hospital and reduce the likelihood of their readmission.
6. Work collaboratively and proactively with the National Probation Service, BENCH, NACRO, the Police, the Prison Resettlement Teams, the Bridgewood Approved Premises, social landlords, private landlords and advice and support providers to ensure that appropriate housing and support are in place for offenders when they are released from prison or they are required to move on from their Approved Premises.
7. Ensure that offenders are provided with comprehensive advice on their housing options as early as possible and that, based on a robust assessment of their needs and any risk that they may pose to individuals and/or the community, urgent action is taken to secure suitable accommodation prior to their release from prison in order to give them time to plan and prepare for release.
8. Represent the Council (as a Core Panel Member for Housing) in local forums, including IPP (Indeterminate Sentences for Public Protection) Progression and MAPPA Levels 1 and 2, and contribute to risk management planning, provide advice and ensure that the person's housing needs are met, and any issues resolved, within acceptable timescales.
9. Work collaboratively and proactively with MAPPA, Northampton Partnership Homes and the Bridgewood Approved Premises to facilitate the provision of appropriate and timely move-on accommodation in accordance with agreed move-on procedures.
10. Ensure that all housing applications submitted by care leavers who are ready to move on from local authority care are assessed and prioritised in accordance with Northamptonshire's Housing Protocol for Care Leavers, in order to help young people who are leaving care to achieve a smooth transition to independent living.
11. Establish, develop and maintain strong and effective working relationships with accommodation providers and other stakeholders in order to maximise housing supply, monitor waiting times and length of stay, identify and overcome barriers to move-on, and develop multi-agency move-on plans for customers with complex needs.
12. Oversee and facilitate customers' transition into appropriate, settled housing and act as a single point of contact for customers, their families and other stakeholders.

13. Attend the weekly meetings of the Multi Agency Homelessness Pathway Panel, as appropriate, and ensure that all of the accommodation that is let through the Panel is prioritised on the basis of clear, transparent and specific criteria.
14. Represent the Council on a variety of forums and working parties for the purpose of exchanging information, improving joint working, developing strategy, delivering better outcomes for customers, and enhancing the reputation of the Council.
15. Ensure that each customer has a comprehensive personalised housing plan that is kept under review and that, subject to the relevant permissions being given, the contents of the plan are shared with Children's Services and Adult Social Care.
16. Support and promote Northampton's Homelessness Forum as a useful and effective way of co-ordinating advice and support services, improving liaison, encouraging multi agency working, identifying unmet needs and developing new services.
17. Work closely and collaboratively with the Council's Single Homelessness Adviser, Street Outreach Workers and the Nightshelter Team to provide a seamless Single Homelessness Pathway Service and deliver excellent joined-up services, avoid any unnecessary duplication of work and ensure an equitable distribution of the workload.
18. Complete all casework and homelessness prevention and/or relief activity (including research and information gathering, record keeping, assessments, the development and ongoing review of personalised housing plans, and the timely production of notifications and decision letters) in accordance with Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, relevant guidance and case law, and the Council's policies and procedures.
19. Make optimum use of the opportunities to prevent or relieve homelessness, including Northampton's Nightshelter, the Homelessness Prevention Fund, Discretionary Housing Payments, the private rented housing that is secured by the Social Lettings Agency and the supported housing that is offered through the Multi Agency Assessment Panel.
20. Complete and submit referrals to Northampton's Emergency Nightshelter and raise awareness of the Nightshelter's key role in preventing rough sleeping and helping people to achieve a successful transition from the street to independent living.
21. Ensure that an accurate, detailed record is kept of all interviews, telephone calls and follow-up action taken (and that files are maintained to a high standard) in order to assist monitoring, decision-making and effective case management.
22. Create a new case on the Jigsaw system every time that a rapid initial assessment is completed and ensure that the notes section of Jigsaw is continually updated until the case is reassigned to another Officer within the Single Homelessness Pathway Service.
23. Ensure that all data entry and case recording is accurate and complete, and that it is undertaken within agreed timescales, in order to assist performance monitoring, the analysis of trends and the completion of internal and external returns, including the government's quarterly HCLIC return.
24. Meet regularly with the Single Homelessness Pathway Manager to review the performance of the Single Homelessness Pathway Service, resolve any problems, inform decision making and ensure a high standard of work, an equitable distribution of the workload and the effective monitoring of performance against targets.

25. Maintain an extensive, up-to-date, in-depth knowledge of relevant legislation, guidance and case law, and share learning with colleagues, in order to ensure that the Council meets its statutory obligations towards people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, and that only those households for whom the Council has a duty are provided with accommodation.
26. 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.
27. Maintain a good understanding of the Council's policies and procedures for safeguarding children, vulnerable adults and people affected by domestic violence, and alert Children's Services and/or Adult Social Care if they suspect that a child or vulnerable adult might be being abused, neglected or harmed.
28. Work proactively with colleagues and other stakeholders to increase efficiency, improve service delivery and value for money, encourage multi agency working, develop strategy and policy, and agree new and more innovative ways of working.
29. Undertake project work and contribute positively to the development of new protocols, working practices and initiatives that prevent homelessness, increase the take-up of housing options and support the implementation of the Rough Sleepers Strategy.
30. Ensure the accurate recording of data and information relating to the work of the Single Homelessness Pathway Team in order to assist the monitoring of performance, forecast future need for the service and implement agreed service improvements.
31. Support the investigation and analysis of customer complaints, and contribute to the drafting of responses to Freedom of Information requests and enquiries from Councillors and MPs, taking appropriate action to address procedural failings.
32. 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, to ensure compliance with health and safety requirements and legislation.
33. Maintain professional competence and keep abreast of developments through research and reading, and by attending relevant courses, meetings and supervision.
34. 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.
35. Perform any other duties (appropriate to the grading of the post) that are required by the Housing Advice & Options Manager in order to ensure the delivery of a high quality, responsive and caring Single Homelessness Pathway Service.

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

PEOPLE AND RESOURCES

The Housing Transitions 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

- (i) The Postholder will act on behalf of the Council (as an ambassador and/or negotiator, as appropriate) in relation to:
- Other local authorities and public bodies including hospitals, prisons and governmental organisations
 - Organisations representing private landlords, tenants and homeless people
 - 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
- (ii) The Postholder will work with Councillors, managers and employees of the Council to meet the Council's aims and objectives.

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITIES

- 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 corporate projects and initiatives which may cross cut service boundaries
- To work positively with partners in the best interests of Northampton promoting a "Team Northampton" approach.

DATA PROTECTION ACT / FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

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.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

	Essential/Desirable ?		Methods of Assessment (Yes = Y)			
	E?	D?	Application Form	References	Interview	Other
KNOWLEDGE						
Sound understanding and awareness of housing and homelessness	E		Y		Y	
Extensive experience of providing comprehensive, in-depth housing advice.	E		Y		Y	
Experience of working in a fast-moving work environment involving co-ordination of a wide range of key stakeholders to achieve positive outcomes	E		Y	Y	Y	
Extensive experience of delivering and/or managing an efficient and effective casework management service in a homelessness / supported housing service	E		Y	Y	Y	
Knowledge of mental health services, adult social care, children's services, probation and youth offending services and current policy agendas and how these relate to homelessness and the provision of supported housing	E		Y	Y	Y	
In-depth knowledge of the homelessness legislation and guidance, and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017	E		Y	Y	Y	
Proven success in preventing homelessness through imaginative problem-solving and skilful negotiation with private landlords and rental agents	E		Y		Y	
Experience of developing and sustaining effective working relationships, and works successfully in partnership with other services and organisations	E		Y	Y	Y	
Experience of working with hospitals and/or prisons to ensure that patients leave hospital, and offenders leave prison, in a planned and timely way		D	Y		Y	

KNOWLEDGE (continued)	E?	D?	Application Form	References	Interview	Other
Experience of managing a range of complex tasks, with competing demands, and successfully responding to changing circumstances and priorities	E		Y	Y	Y	
Proven experience of successfully managing a large caseload, undertaking research and meeting agreed standards and objectives	E		Y		Y	
Experience of using IT applications, including Microsoft and specialist housing and/or homelessness systems	E		Y		Y	
An understanding of equality and diversity	E		Y		Y	
An understanding of the requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation	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						
Good standard of literacy and numeracy	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 communication skills (verbal and written) and the ability to influence a variety of audiences, including customers, landlords, lenders and the courts	E		Y		Y	
Ability to interpret and explain complex legislation and guidance, to a variety of audiences, and to make clear, consistent decisions.	E		Y	Y	Y	
Excellent negotiating and advocacy skills, and the drive and commitment to achieve positive outcomes for customers	E		Y	Y	Y	

SKILLS (continued)	E?	D?	Application Form	References	Interview	Other
An effective problem-solver with an organised and imaginative approach to work and the ability to manage difficult situations	E		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	
Ability to look critically at existing practices, evaluate options and recommend better ways of doing things	E		Y	Y	Y	
Ability to provide service users with a range of options to suit their needs	E		Y		Y	
Ability to maintain accurate records and case files in electronic and paper format	E		Y		Y	
ATTRIBUTES						
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

REVIEW AND SIGNATURES

This document will be reviewed from time to time to ensure that it continues to reflect our vision, values and priorities.

Prepared by:	Emma Forbes
Job title:	Housing Advice & Options Manager
Date:	December 2018 (Pay scale updated to 2019/20)

Job evaluation date:	
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Name of job holder:	
Job holder's signature:	
Date:	