

## Job description

<b>Post number:</b>	10490 / 10491
<b>Service:</b>	Specialist Services – Housing
<b>Job title:</b>	Specialist - Homelessness & Housing Options
<b>Band:</b>	6
<b>Responsible to:</b>	Homelessness, Advice & Allocations Lead
<b>Responsible for:</b>	N/A
<b>Date last reviewed:</b>	

### Job purpose

Ensure that customers in housing need or facing homelessness are offered a range of suitable housing options together with appropriate housing advice, to prevent their homelessness. If this is not possible to ensure that the Council meets its statutory obligations under part VII of the Housing Act 1996 and related legislation.

### Main duties

1. To participate in the Housing Options / Homelessness Prevention duty system to ensure that customers in housing need or facing homelessness have access to appropriate and timely housing advice.
2. To prevent and relieve homelessness wherever possible by ensuring customers can remain in their existing homes or are offered suitable alternative housing.
3. Undertake complex casework as necessary. This will involve:
  - carrying out in-depth interviews and home visits to assess housing need and any risk of homelessness
  - produce and review clients personalised housing plan (PHP) as required by Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
  - making necessary enquiries to determine the full circumstances in each case
  - assessing and advising clients of the options available to them in order to prevent homelessness
  - negotiating with clients, their families, friends, landlords, solicitors, financial institutions and other relevant parties to delay or prevent homelessness
  - liaising with other statutory and voluntary agencies on behalf of clients and attending or initiating case reviews and case conferences as required
  - ensuring that clients are kept apprised of the progress of their case, taking particular care where the applicant is vulnerable or disadvantaged through health or other reasons
  - maintaining accurate case records for the purpose of audit and legal requirements

Where homelessness cannot be prevented:

- arranging emergency or interim accommodation

- completing a full homelessness investigation
  - making a decision as to the duty, if any, the Council owes to the applicant
  - writing to the applicant to inform them of the decision and their right to a review
  - ensuring that any temporary accommodation that may be required under a full homelessness duty is provided
  - providing any ongoing housing advice and assistance that may be required.
4. To have and maintain an up to date working knowledge of relevant social welfare legislation, associated guidance and case law and be able to apply this in respect to individual casework. This includes:
- housing and homelessness
  - landlord and tenant (including security of tenure and protection from eviction)
  - family law, including that relating to children, relationships, domestic abuse and property)
  - welfare rights
  - asylum and immigration
  - community care (including mental health)
  - human rights.
5. To contribute to and carry out procedures to detect fraud. This includes:
- bringing suspected fraud to the attention of the relevant manager
  - liaising with other service units or sections for example, housing benefits, council tax, housing management, internal audit and legal
  - working with other agencies in the detection of fraud
  - carrying out interviews under caution
  - giving evidence in court proceedings
6. To provide landlords with advice and guidance on all aspects of lettings in order to encourage good practice and increase the supply of private rented accommodation. In addition to negotiate with landlords on matters relating to rent levels, tenancy conditions, damages and any other issues that may jeopardise the tenancy.
7. To promote and participate in multi-agency initiatives in the prevention of homelessness and help to implement the prevention of homelessness strategy.
8. To deal with relevant correspondence and enquiries, keeping clear and accurate written records of interviews and visits, update manual files and electronic information systems and provide information as requested in an appropriate format.
9. To contribute to continuous improvement of the Council's services.
11. To ensure rights to privacy and confidentiality are safeguarded and that personal information about individuals and staff is handled sensitively. To comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 and local protocols.
12. To comply with the Council's statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and vulnerable adults.
13. To attend training courses, meetings and project groups.
15. To maintain standards of best administrative practice, professionalism and customer service at all times.

16. If require, to participate in the Out of Hours Emergency Homelessness Service as a Tier 1 Duty Officer on a rota basis and to receive payment for this as detailed in the Terms of Reference.
17. Any other duties as may be reasonably required by the Homelessness, Advice & Allocations Lead / Senior Specialist Homelessness & Housing Options Officer
18. Agile worker - can work effectively for part of the week at a different location and can choose to split their time between home and a Council office with hot desking arrangements. To be agreed in advance by the Homelessness, Advice & Allocations Lead / Senior Specialist Homelessness & Housing Options Officer.

This job description reflects the core activities of the post. As the service and the post-holder develop, there will inevitably be some changes to the duties for which the post is responsible, and possibly to the emphasis of the post itself. We expect that the post-holder will recognise this and will adopt a flexible approach to work. This could include undertaking relevant training where necessary.

The line manager will consult the post-holder if significant changes to the job description become necessary. Any changes will be reflected in a revised job description.

## Person specification

This section describes the knowledge, experience and competence required by the post-holder that is necessary for an acceptable standard of performance in carrying out this role.		
	Assessment method (A, I, T or P)*	Essential/ desirable
<b>Qualifications</b>		
English and Mathematics, at GCE 'O' level/GCSE grades A*-C or equivalent.	A	E
Higher educational standard to degree level or equivalent .	A	E
The Chartered Institute of Housing Professional Qualification or other appropriate professional qualification.	A	D
<b>Knowledge and experience</b>		
Experience working in the social housing sector in the area of delivering housing advice or homelessness in a local authority setting.	A,I	E
Experience in the area of delivering housing advice or homelessness directly applying homelessness legislation in a local authority setting.	A,I	E
An up-to-date knowledge of housing and social welfare legislation and its practical application in homeless prevention. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Act 1996 Part VI, VII as amended</li> <li>• Homelessness Act 2002</li> <li>• Homelessness Reduction Act 2017</li> <li>• Protection from Eviction Act 1977</li> <li>• Housing Act 1985</li> <li>• Housing Act 1988</li> <li>• NHS and Community Care Act 1990</li> <li>• Mental Health Act 1983</li> <li>• Children Act 1989</li> <li>• Family Law Act 1996</li> <li>• Data Protection Act 1998</li> <li>• Human Rights Act 1998</li> <li>• Immigration legislation</li> <li>• any other relevant legislation</li> </ul>	A, I, T	E
Knowledge of welfare benefits including Housing Benefit/ Universal Credit	A, I, T	E
An understanding of special needs in relation to housing for example, mental health, drug and alcohol, learning disabilities, physical and sensory disabilities, frail and elderly, child protection, domestic violence, HIV, rough sleeping and single homeless.	A, I	E
Awareness of current best housing practice issues and initiatives.	A, I	D
<b>Skills</b>		
Excellent written and verbal communication skills.	A, I	E
Numerate.	A, I,T	E

Effective negotiation skills.	A, I	E
Assertive and able to deal firmly but sympathetically with customers.	A, I	E
Effective time management and ability to meet deadlines.	I, T	E
Able to demonstrate sound judgement in a wide range of situations.	I	E
Ability to deal with difficult people who may be distressed, offensive, aggressive and/or potentially violent within the Housing Advice Centre.	A, I	E
ICT literate and ability to use a range of software including, outlook, word, excel, power point.	A, I	E
<b>Special requirements (e.g. working hours, driving licence etc)</b>		
Driving licence valid to drive in the UK and use of own transport during working hours in order to carry out site visits.	A	E
Enhanced DBS check required		
<b>Behavioural competencies</b> This section details the level of competency required to carry out this role (please see below for an overview of the framework and refer to the full <a href="#">Organisational Culture Framework</a> for clarification where needed).		<b>Level</b>
Embraces change		2
Innovation and creative thinking		2
Effective communication		2
Customer focus		2
Problem solving and decision making		2
Focus on efficiency		2
Performance and learning		2
Team working		2
Builds relationships		2
Commitment to the organisation		2
Please note that the criteria specified on this form will be used as guidance when short-listing all applications and again at interview. Please ensure you provide evidence within your application giving examples, where appropriate, as to how you meet the specified requirement for the job.		
*Assessment criteria A = Application form; I = Interview; T = Skills based test; P = Presentation		