

Job Description

Job Title: Housing Adviser
Grade: SO2
Department: Neighbourhoods & Growth
Division: Housing
Function: Housing Needs
Reporting Homelessness Prevention Team Manager

Main Purpose of Job

To prevent homelessness in accordance with the provisions of the Homelessness Reduction Act, associated Code of Guidance, case law and best practice.

To undertake a housing needs assessments for people seeking housing assistance and create housing plans tailored to the individual's needs and circumstances.

To manage a complex and demanding case load in a busy and often challenging environment and prevent or relieve homelessness through the provision of advice, advocacy, negotiation and mediation.

To ensure that all housing options have been thoroughly explored to ensure best efforts to prevent homelessness.

To undertake the assessment and investigation of homeless applications under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 where prevention/relief is not possible, and inform clients of their assessment outcome.

Key Areas of Responsibility

To provide a front of house service for customers seeking housing advice and assistance, ensuring that both priority and non-priority customers are directed to the appropriate part of the service.

Provide an advice and mediation service for households who live with families of friends and have been asked to leave, conducting home visits if required in order to help them to remain in their current accommodation and to avoid them having to move into temporary accommodation

To deliver a customer-facing service via drop in and appointments and work occasional evening meetings where required to accommodate the demand and flow of customers.

To deliver a customer-facing service via a telephone advice-line providing a full casework service for callers, as required.

Assess the temporary accommodation needs of customers as required and follow established placement and sign-up processes in order to provide a seamless service

Manage a caseload of priority and non-priority need customers in housing need and maintain accurate and detailed casework records identifying priorities and meeting individual and service performance targets.

Manage conflicting priorities between case work, face to face interviews and operate an effective telephone service to ensure all customers can speak to housing advisers on the day of enquiry

To use a range of housing options to provide alternatives to temporary accommodation, assessing the suitability of private renting as an option, working closely with the Lettings service.

To provide private sector advice and casework to prevent the loss of private rented and owner-occupied accommodation and to ensure that accommodation is affordable and in a fit state of repair.

To gather, record and verify information in relation to housing and homeless applications and assist those customers or who need support to bid for permanent council or registered provider properties.

To provide advice and support to tenants affected by welfare reform. The post holder will actively engage private tenants and other residents affected by benefit changes and prevent homelessness by negotiating with landlords, increasing incomes, helping tenants to move to more affordable accommodation or supporting them into work and engaging with other support services.

To respond effectively to prevent homelessness through advice, negotiation, mediation or conciliation, or by securing immediate access to alternative accommodation and generally promoting a housing options approach to service delivery to a full range of customers, including people who are challenging and demanding

To assess the housing-related support needs of single people and arrange access to appropriate housing related support services (Pathways services) via agreed referral procedures.

To assist customers living in supported housing to move to suitable and appropriate accommodation when they are ready to move into general needs accommodation.

To assess clients under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 and recommend outcome for approval by the Homeless Assessment Manager

To maintain and develop an excellent knowledge of housing options, homelessness law and practice and related fields including housing benefit and welfare rights

Generic Responsibilities

Be a champion for excellent customer service delivery and customer care and contribute to the development and delivery of an integrated service.

Be self-serving with respect to administration, case record keeping and other related duties and utilise IT systems to update and record information required according to guidance and established procedures.

Participate in appraisals, one to ones, objective settings, personal development plans and working group meetings and take a full and active role in service development, including service reviews.

To carry out the duties of the post in accordance with the Data Protection Act, the Health & Safety at Work Act and other relevant legislation, as well as Council policies, procedures, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

To carry out the duties of this post with due regard to the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy and to actively promote and uphold the Council's FRESH values.

Take responsibility, appropriate to the post, for ensuring compliance with council policies and procedures aimed at promoting and safeguarding the welfare of vulnerable children and adults.

Take responsibility, appropriate to the post for promoting diversity including tackling racism and good race, ethnic & community relations.

To undertake any other duties appropriate to the grade, that may be required. These may be varied from time to time to meet the needs of the service.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Housing Adviser SO2

<p>It is essential that in your written supporting statement you give evidence or examples of your proven experience in each of the short-listing criteria marked Application (A)</p> <p>You should expect that all areas listed below will be assessed as part of the interview and assessment process should you be shortlisted.</p> <p>If you are applying under the Disability Confident scheme, you will need to give evidence or examples of your proven experience in the areas marked with a "Tick" (✓) on the person specification when you complete the application form.</p>			Shortlisting Criteria
Qualifications	Q1	Educated to degree level standard or equivalent or demonstrable suitable experience	
Key Knowledge	K1	Awareness of legislation relating to housing advice, homelessness, housing management and the allocation of housing, with a good practical understanding of the range of housing problems people may experience	A ✓
	K2	Broad knowledge and understanding of the housing and support needs of homeless and housing applicants and tenants.	A ✓
	K3	Excellent knowledge of negotiation and mediation techniques and their practical application	A ✓
Relevant Experience	E1	Experience of dealing with a diverse and vulnerable clientele in housing/homeless related environment.	A ✓
	E2	Experience of working in a service within a pressurised and high profile environment within a multi-disciplinary team, providing a quality service.	A
	E3	Experience of achieving performance targets and meeting departmental objectives	A ✓
	E4	Experience of providing quality advice and information to members of the public and of handling complaints and enquiries	A ✓
	E5	Experience of producing high quality written communications to a corporate standard	

	E6	Experience of using different IT systems in order to manage caseloads, monitor delivery of targets and drive improved service.	
Core Behaviours		<p>Focuses on People</p> <p>Is about considering the people who our work affects, internally and externally. It's about treating people fairly and improving the lives of those we impact. It's about ensuring we have the right processes in place.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining and developing staff by having one-to-ones, appraisals, team meetings and training plans • Empowering and supporting staff and being responsible for your team • Knowing your staff and emphasising with their issues • Thinking about what you would like if you were the customer • Being consistent and focussing on team building to achieve excellence • Creating an environment that staff can be creative • Treating everyone with respect, equally and fairly • Recruiting the best staff and providing quality learning opportunities • Ensuring an effective induction program for new joiners and returners 	A ✓
		<p>Takes Ownership</p> <p>Is about being proactive and owning our personal objectives. It's about seizing opportunities, driving excellence, engaging with the council's objectives, and furthering our professional development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having regular one-to-ones and conversations with your staff to discuss how they doing and seek their feedback • Engaging your staff in discussions about what's required to deliver and giving a sense of resource available 	A ✓

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving buy-in from staff so they can truly own their work by breaking down tasks into something achievable • Working with your staff to provide creative development opportunities including self-development • Owning your budget and spend, ensuring your teams focus on meeting outcomes • Identify and owning opportunities for service development • Being courageous even when you don't know the answer 	
		<p>Works Collaboratively</p> <p>Is about helping each other, developing relationships, and understanding other people's roles. It's about working together with colleagues, partners, and customers to earn their respect, and get the best results.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring all work with colleagues from across the council to reduce silo working and get things done in the most informed and best way • Encouraging staff to input to their objectives, then summarising goals and monitoring via regular one-to-ones • Building individual's ideas into team work planning • Seek to broaden the skill set of teams so that they can have transferable skills and support across a range of teams • Encouraging your staff to support each other where necessary to complete tasks and meet objectives • Promoting the development of skills and giving staff room and time to develop • Developing team morale and cohesiveness to help each member feel valued and productive and to help the team to build good working relationships 	

		<p>Communicates Effectively</p> <p>Is about how we talk, write and engage with others. It's about using simple, clear, and open language to establish positive relationships with others. It's also about how you listen and make yourself open to conversation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having regular, open conversations with people, clearly expressing ideas and views, seeking and passing on customer and staff feedback and suggestions • Setting up open communication channels for two-way feedback • Finding out and knowing your staff's skills and strengths, listening to what each other has to say and working as a team to deliver work • Making time for regular catch ups, team meetings and one-to-ones to give and receive information • Thinking carefully about avoiding jargon both internally and externally 	
		<p>Focuses on Results</p> <p>Is about ambition and achievement. It's about orienting ourselves towards the end product and considering the effect of our service. It's about making the right impact, having the right result and changing things for the better</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being ambitious, knowing the bigger picture of borough improvement • Ensuring teams are clear about the outcomes and objectives of the Council and show a clear link between what they do and how it makes an impact on the customer • Listening to staff after asking questions on how to improve service while considering costs • Setting clear objectives and targets, ensuring they are SMART and measurable and linked to business plans 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working with staff to make sure they have the right resources, tools and support to achieve their objectives• Helping staff stay motivated by finding learning opportunities for development and making them feel valued• Looking at any barriers or obstacles to work, review what is slowing down our progress• Exploring ways to improve the way things are currently done ensuring we maximise our resources• Meeting regularly with staff to ensure work is on track and focussed on objectives and tasks	
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