



**Elmbridge**  
Borough Council  
*... bridging the communities ...*

## Job Description

**Title:** Homelessness Prevention and Advice Officer

**Post Number:**

**Directorate:** Resources

**Team:** Housing Solutions

**Location:** Elmbridge Civic Centre, High Street, Esher

**To whom the Postholder is responsible:** Team Leader Homelessness Prevention and Advice.

**Budgetary Responsibilities** (if applicable):

### The main purpose of the Job

1. To prevent homelessness where possible. To keep under review personalised Housing Plans as required by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 to ensure they remain relevant, motivating clients to be proactive in sustaining or seeking accommodation. To assist in supporting the team implement new legislation and bedding in of processes within the restructured Unit.
2. Where homelessness is not prevented to seek out suitable housing solutions to comply with the Council's relief duties in consultation with the client and other teams within the Housing Solutions Unit. To undertake homelessness investigation, determining the duty owed and issuing decision letters in compliance with the Council's duties under the Housing Act 1996 as amended, Homelessness Reduction Act, Codes of Guidance and caselaw.
3. To maximise housing solutions for clients working collaboratively with key partners and stakeholders to provide the best prospect for a client to secure and sustain accommodation keeping stays in temporary accommodation to a minimum, ensuring eligible clients are supported through the Search Moves Choice based lettings scheme.

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## Specific Duties and Responsibilities

1. To provide a responsive service to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness following a direct approach or having received a referral from a relevant public organisation or from internal teams. To assist members of the public who are in housing need or have housing related enquiries in person, telephone, letter or email. To participate in a duty rota to provide a responsive frontline service.
2. To manage clients expectations advising as to potential housing solutions including Private and hostel accommodation and as to the lower supply of social housing compared to demand. To undertake a holistic assessment of current housing issues and seek out appropriate solutions where possible at an early stage to prevent homelessness.
3. To develop Personal Housing Plans with clients as appropriate taking into account the circumstances that led to the threat of homelessness, the housing needs of the applicant and the type of accommodation required and support needed to secure and retain accommodation.
4. To issue relevant notices in writing ensuring the reasonable steps to be taken by the client and Council are clear in respect of securing and retaining accommodation. To seek the clients' agreement to the steps to be taken and to keep this under review until the prevention duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act ends.
5. Where homelessness can't be prevented or already homeless on approach to secure interim accommodation if there is reason to believe the client has a priority need. To investigate the case taking action under relief duties to help the client to secure accommodation for a 56 - day period or to refer cases to another local authority where satisfied local connection criteria is met. To monitor relief cases ending the duty as appropriate.
6. To fully investigate homelessness applications and complete records of enquiries updating databases. To assess clients' needs completing suitability of accommodation assessments To monitor cases set to view or offer under the Search Moves Choice based lettings scheme primarily for homeless cases.
7. Where a Part 6 offer is refused, or other accommodation to meet the 6 - month duty, to encourage acceptance of the property and ensure clients receive "Right to Review" documentation as appropriate and assist the Reviewing Officer in obtain further information to complete the review as requested
8. To identify and refer cases to the Homeless Floating Support workers / services or Complex Needs Officer where this service will be most effective e.g. those with a history of rough sleeping or where resettlement is needed to enable rehousing by social or other housing providers. To make a recommendation for spot purchase support for the most challenging clients.
9. To make referrals to the Elmbridge Mental Health panel and to attend panel as requested and assist in ensuring the Council meets its obligations under the Surrey wide Mental Health Protocol
10. To keep up to date with relevant case law particularly in respect of the tests of vulnerability and priority need and with reference to responsibilities under the Equality Act and Care Acts.
11. To provide information to clients on the operation of the Council's Housing Register. To give advice on a households position on the register, extending areas of choice and prospects of assistance with housing and update systems as necessary. To complete assessments on suitable accommodation for applicants to end the homeless duty and to arrange auto bidding for clients where necessary.
12. To work proactively with the Temporary Accommodation Co Ordinator to maximise

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housing opportunities including engaging with Councils and providers out of borough to seek housing solutions. To work closely with Rentstart to ensure the best use of resources as well as other agencies such as Transform who have access to accommodation to best meet clients needs.

13. Under direction of the Team Leader Homelessness Prevention and Advice to respond to notifications of street homelessness in Elmbridge through No Second Night out, including notification of the outcome of action taken. To take on the case or notify the Team Leader if further action and assessment is necessary or to refer to Rentstart as appropriate .

14 To make appropriate referrals to Rentstart and liaise with them as necessary regarding any PHP's for clients. To check information received from Rentstart for cases logged by them as referrals and outcomes to ensure the data matches and advising of any discrepancy

15. To identify suitable households for the Councils Rental Support Scheme making appropriate referrals and keeping them under review obtaining or providing the team with information on clients to make the best match with property and landlords. Where the private sector offer is to end the homelessness duty to liaise with them to ensure appropriate documentation is completed.

16. To visit clients at their home or alternative venue to assist in preventing homelessness, or for housing register or support assessments. To set up auto bidding for the Council's Choice Based Lettings Scheme for eligible clients and assist in all processes associated with direct lets for clients. To work with clients seeking their engagement and adopt a can do problem solving approach in addressing threats of homelessness.

17. To make recommendation for the use of the Council's Prevention fund for clients to prevent homelessness or to purchase bespoke additional support for particularly complex cases.

18. To promote and contribute to effective teamworking by communicating effectively with colleagues within the Housing Unit as appropriate in a timely fashion; to include attending, contributing to team meetings, one to one and casework supervision with the Team Leader – Homelessness Prevention and Advice.

19. To promote effective multi agency working by keeping up to date with other relevant statutory and voluntary agencies; cultivating good local contacts; by assisting the team to attend regular Network meetings and generally promoting the work of the Housing Service with other agencies.

20. To be proactive about arranging and attending meetings with other agencies for the general welfare of the clients including professional meetings with housing providers. To complete nominations to housing providers including for social housing.

21. To provide a responsive frontline service being aware at all time of the Council's commitment to customer care and the Councils duties under the Equalities Act.

22. To provide information as requested to enable a response to be provided for any complaint regarding the service or to respond to Councillor or Member enquiries or for Freedom of Information Act requests or the Local Government Ombudsman .

**No job description can cover every issue which may arise within the post at various times and the postholder is expected to carry out other duties from time to time that are broadly consistent with those in this job description.**

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**Standards of Conduct**

The Council expects the highest standards of conduct from its employees and at all times you must carry out your duties with integrity and in accordance with the Code of Conduct for employees.

**Equal Opportunities**

The Council has a strong commitment to achieving equality of opportunity and expects all employees to implement and promote its policy in their own work.

**Health and Safety**

The Council is committed to a healthy and safe working environment and expects all its employees to implement and promote its policy in all aspects of their work.

**Personal and Sensitive Data**

To have regard for the duty of care owed to personal data and sensitive personal data and any other confidential or sensitive information which you access in the course of your employment ensuring adherence to the Data Protection Act and the Council’s Information Security Policy and related guidance.

**Performance Review and Staff Development**

The Council expects all staff to participate in its processes for performance review and staff development. Those with a managerial responsibility must ensure that all staff within the section have a Performance Review at least once a year, with a six monthly review.

**Confidentiality**

The Council is committed to maintaining privacy of all its staff and customers. It expects all staff to handle all individuals’ personal information in a sensitive and professional manner. All staff are under an obligation not to gain access or attempt to gain access to information they are not authorised to have.

**Signatures – line manager and job holder**

Signed.....

Dated:.....  
line manager

Signed.....

Dated:.....  
postholder



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## Person Specification

**Please read the details on this form carefully before you complete your Application Form.**

**This form lists the essential requirements needed in order to do the job.**

Your written application will be considered in relation to the essential knowledge, skills, abilities, education and experience required for the job and candidates will therefore be selected for interview on this basis.

Elmbridge Borough Council is committed to providing the best possible services and ensuring they are accessible to all who need them irrespective of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious or political belief, Trade Union activity, age, disability, being male or female, married or unmarried, sexuality.

You will need to tell us throughout your application form and at interview how you can contribute to providing good quality services for all.

For each of the requirements listed overleaf, you will need to explain how your skills, abilities, knowledge, education and experience make you suitable for this post. These may have been gained through previous employment, voluntary/community work, spare time activities, home responsibilities, training or languages spoken. You should also include anything else relevant to the job which you think we should know about.

We regret that we can only consider applicants who are already eligible to work in the United Kingdom

<b>Job Title: Homelessness Prevention and Advice Officer</b>	<b>Post No:</b>
<b>Team: Homelessness Prevention and Advice.</b>	<b>Grade: Scale 6 – S02</b>
<b>Directorate: Resources</b>	<b>Hours: 36</b>
<b>Salary: £26,364 - £33,591</b>	<b>Car Allowance: C3</b>

The salary review date is 1st April each year.

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	Key job requirements based on the Job Description	Desirable / Essential	To be tested by: (√) as appropriate		
			App Form	Test	Inter view
	<b>Qualifications and Education</b>				
1.	GCSE or equivalent	E	Y		
	<b>Experience</b>				
2.	Experience of working in a frontline team in a housing social work or health setting giving advice on housing or welfare issues.	E	Y		Y
3	Investigation and determination of homelessness applications under the terms of the Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002	D	Y		Y
4.	Experience of providing advice on housing options and the prevention of homelessness preferably within a local authority setting	D	Y		Y
5.	Experience of making links with private sector landlords and voluntary hostels to secure accommodation and promote working relationships	D	Y		Y
6.	Experience of being able to influence and negotiate effectively.	E	Y		Y
	<b>Knowledge/Skills/Abilities</b>				
7.	Excellent written and verbal communication skills being able to write complex letters and reports.	E	Y	Y	Y
8.	It literate – experience of being able to effectively use a range of packages to access and record information on clients	E	Y		Y

9.	Must be able to remain calm when under pressure and deal effectively with difficult customers in stressful situations	E	Y		Y
10.	General understanding of the Council's duties to homeless households under the Homeless Reduction Act 2016 and the main duties owed under Housing Act 1996 i	E	Y	Y	Y
11.	Knowledge of access to social housing and supported housing	D	Y		Y
12.	General knowledge of Welfare Benefits and Housing Benefit.	D	Y		Y
13.	Flexible in approach to work being able to work on own initiative as well as part of a team responding to changing needs in a busy frontline service	E	Y		Y
14.	Must be able to have good listening skills and empathise with those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness with a focus on finding solutions.	E	Y		Y
<b>Special Requirements</b>					
15.	Must have access to a vehicle for visits and be able to visit clients in their home or other locations as appropriate to risk.	E	Y		Y
16.	Must be able to commence work at 8.45am as necessary on rota and stay beyond 5pm as necessary.	E	Y		Y