

Housing Solutions Officer (Prevention, Relief & Homelessness)



Job Description

1. POST DETAILS

Business Centre:	Housing
Division:	Housing Solutions Team
Working Hours:	37 hours
Grade:	9 - 10
Work Base:	Civic Centre, Addlestone
Prepared/Agreed by:	Andy Kefford

2. ORGANISATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Reports to:	Housing Solutions Manager (Homelessness)
Deputising Responsibility:	None
Directly Supervises:	None
Indirectly Supervises:	None

3. JOB PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

To be a key member of our statutory prevention and relief housing service for anyone who is at risk of becoming homeless, or who may be actually homeless. To complete full housing assessment (s189a) and provide solutions advice to enable individuals to resolve their housing difficulty. This will include linking them into appropriate help and support to enable them to sustain their existing accommodation and working with them and others to find tailored housing solution.

- i. To ensure the statutory duties of the Council under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) are delivered in a clear, lawful and transparent way in line with best practice.
- ii. To assess every approach for housing assistance fairly, in a customer focussed way, whilst being proactive in the prevention of homelessness.
- iii. To record all cases on the data recording system and to assist in the collection and monitoring of performance data, including ensuring data is ready for timely H-CLIC submission
- iv. To contribute to the performance of the Council in achieving the objectives within the Councils Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy
- v. To make bed & breakfast (B&B) bookings on behalf of the Council, including the administration of purchase orders on the invoice financial system

Customer Care:

To ensure all government legislation and guidelines are adhered to. To ensure value for money and high standards of customer care are maintained.

Equal Opportunities:

The Council is committed to achieving equality of opportunity and expects all employees to implement and promote its policies in all areas of their work including attending training as appropriate.

Health and Safety:

The Council is committed to providing a healthy and safe working environment and expects all employees to implement and promote policies in all areas of their work including attending training as appropriate.

4. MAIN DUTIES OF THE POST

- i. To provide a full assessment service and to give advice on all issues of housing circumstances, maintaining an up to date knowledge of other support available to the applicant.
- ii. To participate in a duty rota to give advice on the telephone and face to face in reception.
- iii. To provide accurate advice in difficult and emotional circumstances and to ensure all information is recorded on the data recording system. To ensure notes and recordings on the system are clear, appropriate, accurate of the customers circumstances and needs and free from bias.
- iv. To provide the initial assessment when anyone approaches for housing assistance and devise a detailed personalised housing plan for the customer.
- v. To work as part of the wider Housing Solutions Team to ensure that the Council discharges its statutory duties under relevant legislation legally and effectively. Such as working positively with the Housing Allocation service and our in-housing private rented offer (Magna Carta Lettings).
- vi. To provide assistance with accessing full Housing Solutions, including social rented housing, home ownership, shared ownership, private sector renting, rent deposit schemes, mutual exchanges, and tailoring these solutions to the individual's circumstances.
- vii. To ensure you have a current knowledge of all other support services available including housing benefit, welfare benefits, debt counselling services and other services and agencies that are part of full housing solutions. To ensure that timely referrals are made to support the customers holistic needs i.e. referral to drug service for a user.

- viii. To be responsible for the decision making process in a range of cases to include all duties under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).
- ix. To ensure referrals are made in a timely manner, ensuring sufficient information is provided to temporary accommodation, the shared house and external providers such as supported housing.
- x. To positively represent the Housing Solutions Team in all external Agency and Partner meetings which are case related.
- xi. To be responsible for the issuing, in agreement with the applicant, of Personal Housing Plans and their regular review throughout the process.
- xii. To ensure regular review of 56 day duties for Prevention & Relief and ensure that all case work is correctly recorded on the appropriate data recording system in a timely manner. That it has integrity and will stand up to scrutiny.
- xiii. To maintain an overview of correct assessment on the Housing Register and to provide basic advice about the Housing Allocation Scheme.
- xiv. To maintain an up to date knowledge of legislation case law, Government Guidance & Professional Good Practice in relation to parts VI & VII Housing Act 1996 (as amended).
- xv. To provide a telephone out of hours emergency homelessness service as part of a duty rota with other Housing Solutions Officers, includes weekends and bank holidays.
- xvi. To prepare cases for Statutory Review.
- xvii. To assist in the review and development of procedures and to contribute to policy review within the team i.e. Housing Allocation Scheme. To assist in delivering the objectives outlined in the Council's Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- xviii. To work jointly with the wider housing solutions team to ensure an efficient and coherent approach across the department and to assist in making the best use of Council stock, properties through Magna Carta Lettings..
- xix. To be aware of professional boundaries, safeguarding responsibilities and alert relevant officers of any issues or concerns through the proper channels and maintain timely and accurate case notes in all cases.
- xx. To carry out such other duties as may be required by line management appropriate to your skills and to a level of responsibility not exceeding the grade on which you are appointed. In accordance with the Equality Act any reasonable adjustments will be made to overcome any factor which puts a disabled employee or applicant at a disadvantage.

General

The above is a record of the main duties and responsibilities of this post at a given date. As necessary, following consultation, duties and responsibilities may change from time to time to meet the requirements of the service.

Person Specification

Please indicate whether the criteria is assessed again the application form or interview by using a ✓ in the columns to the right.

	Method of Assessment	
	App Form	Interview
<u>Essential Education & Training</u>		
Good general level of Secondary Education including in Maths and English	✓	
Training in Housing Act Part VI & Part VII	✓	✓
Housing Law training	✓	
Welfare Reform training	✓	✓
<u>Desirable Education & Training</u>		
Part CIH qualification in housing, or studying towards completion	✓	
<u>Essential Experience & Knowledge</u>		
Experienced in providing exceptional customer service.	✓	✓
Knowledge of homelessness, including a good working knowledge of current and imminent legislation	✓	✓
Knowledge of Welfare Benefits and Welfare reform	✓	
Knowledge of housing benefit claims and local housing allowance issues	✓	
Considerable experience of dealing with people in difficult situations	✓	✓
Considerable experience of managing conflicting workloads	✓	✓
Experience of Homelessness Casework	✓	✓
Experience of writing Statutory Decision Letters	✓	✓
Working knowledge of Housing Act 1996 parts (VI/VII) as amended	✓	✓
Considerable experience of working in partnership with other agencies or providers	✓	✓
Experience of using a range of PC software including WORD, EXCEL and housing software packages		

	Method of Assessment	
	App Form	Interview
<u>Essential Experience & Knowledge Continued</u>		
Ability to run reports and complete Excel spreadsheets		
Good understanding of the requirements of Homelessness Reduction Act 2017	✓	✓
<u>Desirable Experience & Knowledge</u>		
Ability to compile statistical data		
Experienced in a Housing Solutions service delivery in a Local Authority environment	✓	✓
Knowledge of and experience with using Locata Housing Systems.	✓	✓
Knowledge of and experience with using Housing Software Systems.	✓	✓
<u>Essential Personal Qualities/Personality</u>		
Team Player	✓	✓
Objective	✓	✓
Confident	✓	✓
Assertive	✓	✓
<u>Essential Skills</u>		
Excellent interviewing and listening skills		✓
Excellent negotiation and mediation skills		
Ability to asses complex and sensitive information in an objective manner		
Ability to represent the Housing Solutions Team at agency meetings		
Ability to maintain confidentiality where necessary and share information where appropriate in line with protocols		
Ability to work within a team and be flexible when needed	✓	✓
Ability to prioritise workload		✓
Ability to keep clear and concise records		✓
Ability to deal with customers in difficult situations		✓

	Method of Assessment	
	App Form	Interview
<u>Essential Skills Continued</u>		
Excellent interpersonal skills	✓	✓
Confident I.T. skills	✓	
Numerate/Literate	✓	
Ability to write using clear English	✓	
Ability to extract data from systems for analysis		
Able to work flexibly on own or as part of a team		✓
<u>Special Requirements</u>		
Able to participate in the out of hours, on call rota.		
Required to have a current full driving licence, with a vehicle available and insured for business use.	✓	
Required to undertake visits to people in their homes unaccompanied.		
Willing to work outside normal working hours (on occasion).		