

# Senior Housing Solutions Officer



## **Job Description**

### **1. POST DETAILS**

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

### **2. ORGANISATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS**

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Reports to:                | Housing Solutions Manager (Homelessness)       |
| Deputising Responsibility: | Housing Solutions Manager (Homelessness)       |
| Directly Supervises:       | None   |
| Indirectly Supervises:     | Housing Solutions Officers & Housing Navigator |

### **3. JOB PURPOSE AND 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 is homeless. To complete full housing assessment (s189a) and provide housing 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 be responsible for the day to day sign off of statutory decisions and to ensure quality and consistency in officers applying the legislation.
- ii. Responsible for approving Bed and Breakfast bookings on behalf of the Council, including the administration of purchase orders on the invoice financial system
- iii. To work with the Housing Solutions Manager to provide a joined up holistic, customer focused homelessness prevention service, ensuring consistency and accuracy within the team
- iv. To ensure the statutory duties of the Council under the Homelessness legislation are delivered in a clear and transparent way in line with best practice.

- v. To provide indirect supervision to the Housing Solutions Officers and provide cover in the absence of the Housing Solutions Manager
- vi. To undertake project work to enhance the working of the Housing Solutions Service.
- vii. To assist in the collection and monitoring of performance data
- viii. To ensure the Council are working towards achieving the objectives within the Councils Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy
- ix. To deputise (provide cover) for any Team Leader within the Housing Solutions Team and the Housing Solutions Manager and to maintain an up to date thorough knowledge of all service areas.
- x. To take decisions in the absence of the Housing Solutions Manager appropriate to their role & level.

### **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**

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 ensure the Housing Solutions Service meets the statutory duties of the Council under the Homelessness legislation and are delivered in a clear and transparent way in line with the Code of Guidance & Best Practice.
- ii. To assist the Housing Solutions Manager with all aspects of the management of the Housing Solutions Service.
- iii. To indirectly line manage the Housing Solutions Officers and make decisions in the absence of the Housing Solutions Manager
- iv. To apply, implement and participate in a duty rota to give advice on the telephone and face to face in reception.
- v. To approve & ensure robust s184, s190(2), s193(1) & s193(5) decisions relating to homelessness duties, are in line with current legislation, Code of Guidance (COG) & best practice & meets the Councils Policy.
- vi. To ensure all housing solutions officers are fully supported through on call duty cover & the sign off and approval of cases.
- vii. 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
- viii. To manage a housing case load appropriate to the role and to assist customers to resolve their homeless issues with a proactive and positive approach to prevention and relief.

- ix. To approve preparatory work for statutory reviews and to undertake s202 review work as required
- x. To liaise with Housing Benefit departments regarding Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP's) and to develop relationships with relevant organisations for the benefit of the team to ensure joint objectives are met.
- xi. To be aware and able to give advice on all issues of housing circumstances including disrepair, illegal eviction and other private sector housing matters, maintaining an up to date knowledge of other support available.
- xii. To ensure that any discharge of duty is in line with current legislation, COG & BP & meets the Councils Policy & applicants have an appropriate & robust s189/s193B/s195 decision in place. To ensure the council has the appropriate and robust policies and procedures in place and to contribute to the development of new ones when required.
- xiii. To approve & ensure robust s198 decisions to refer to another Local Authorities.
- xiv. To provide a telephone out of hour's emergency homeless service as part of a duty rota with other Housing Solutions Officers, this includes weekends & Bank Holidays.
- xv. To liaise closely with other Agencies such as Surrey County Council (Children & Adults Services), Community Mental Health Teams, Police, Probation & others regarding joint working, complex cases & nominations to Supported Housing.
- xvi. 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) . To disseminate knowledge and legal case law updates to the team
- xvii. To ensure that all case work is recorded on data recording system i.e. Locata, has integrity & will stand up to scrutiny & maintain an overview of correct assessment for the Housing Register.
- xviii. To take a portfolio lead or supervise Housing Solutions Officers in projects/areas as delegated by the Housing Solutions Manager.
- xix. To draft, revise & maintain a range of Housing Solutions information produced either as leaflets, fact sheets or media on the Council website. To take a proactive role in ensuring the website is up to date, accurate and legally compliant.
- xx. To work jointly with the wider housing solutions team to ensure a efficient and coherent approach across the department and to assist in making the best use of Council stock, properties through Magna Carta lettings and assist in the development of pre-tenancy training
- xxi. To ensure regular review of Personal Housing Plans is auditable.
- xxii. To ensure regular audit of all statutory 56 day duties.
- xxiii. To capture and prepare statistical data for government return and internal reporting. To ensure service standards are maintained to a high level.
- xxiv. To take a proactive role in developing the FUSE (Facilitate, Understand, Support, Empower) homeless group to ensure targets in the Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy are achieved. To contribute to the development of key documents such as the Housing Allocation Scheme, Homelessness Strategy and others as required.
- xxv. To attend key meeting such as MARAC and MAPPA on behalf of the Council and to present in a manner that upholds the Councils positive image. To lead on the Council's sanctuary scheme to support victims of domestic abuse.
- xxvi. 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 Disability Discrimination Act any reasonable adjustments will be made to overcome any factor which puts a disabled employee or applicant at a disadvantage.

- xxvii. 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

*General*

*The above is a record of the main duties and responsibilities of this post at a given date. The job may naturally change to meet the requirements of the service. If the changes are more significant your manager will discuss this with you.*

## **Person Specification**

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

|  | <b>Method of Assessment</b> |                  |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------|
|  | <b>App Form</b>             | <b>Interview</b> |
| <b><u>Essential Qualifications</u></b>   |                             |                  |
| Educated to A Level, including Maths and English to at least GCSE (A-C)  | <b>X</b>                    |                  |
| <b><u>Desirable Qualifications</u></b>   |                             |                  |
| Full CIOH qualification or studying towards completion   | <b>X</b>                    |                  |
| <b><u>Essential Working Experience</u></b>   |                             |                  |
| Considerable experience of assisting people with advice in respect of housing options                          | <b>X</b>                    | <b>X</b>         |
| Considerable experience of dealing with homelessness including a good working knowledge of current legislation | <b>X</b>                    | <b>X</b>         |
| Working knowledge of welfare benefits  | <b>X</b>                    |                  |
| Experience of using a range of PC software including WORD, EXCEL and housing software packages                 | <b>X</b>                    |                  |
| <b><u>Desirable Working Experience</u></b>   |                             |                  |
| Experience of housing benefit claims and local housing allowance issues  | <b>X</b>                    |                  |
| Ability to run reports and complete Excel spreadsheets   | <b>X</b>                    |                  |
| Ability to compile statistical data  | <b>X</b>                    |                  |
| Experience of managing staff   | <b>X</b>                    |                  |
| <b><u>Essential Skills/Attributes</u></b>  |                             |                  |
| Excellent interviewing and listening skills  | <b>X</b>                    | <b>X</b>         |
| Mediation skills   | <b>X</b>                    |                  |
| Ability to asses complex and sensitive information in an objective manner                                      | <b>X</b>                    | <b>X</b>         |

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| Ability to represent the Housing Solutions Manager at agency meetings  | X |   |
| Ability to maintain confidentiality where necessary and share information where appropriate in line with protocols | X |   |
| Ability to work within a team and be flexible when needed  | X | X |
| <b><u>Essential Personal Qualities</u></b>   |   |   |
| Objective  | X | X |
| Confident  | X | X |
| Assertive  | X | X |
| Team Player  | X | X |
| <b><u>Career Objectives</u></b>  |   |   |
| Commitment to continuous development in housing knowledge  | X | X |
| <b><u>Other Requirements</u></b>   |   |   |
| Able to participate in the out of hours, on call rota  | X |   |
| Holds full driving licence and has use of a vehicle for business use   | X |   |