



ROLE PROFILE FOR CASE OFFICER (HOUSING SOLUTIONS)

Role Title: Case Officer – Housing Solutions

Service: Housing Services

Location: Surrey Heath House, Knoll Road, Camberley, Surrey, GU15 3HD

Reporting To: Housing Solutions Manager

Role Purpose

To work as part of the Housing Solutions Team and undertake a personal caseload to deliver an effective and customer focused housing advice service to prevent homelessness, meet the Council's statutory duties and provide customers with a range of housing options.

To participate in the development and delivery of the Council's Homelessness Strategy.

Main Duties and Accountabilities

Knowledge and Expertise

- Providing a housing advice service that focuses on the prevention of homelessness through case work, advocacy and advice.
- Issue decisions to homeless applications in line with homelessness legislation.
- To assess the housing and wider needs of individuals and households to find tailored solutions to meet their immediate and longer term housing needs.
- Maximise access to the private rented sector through actively engaging with landlords and promoting the Council's Rent Choice and Landlord Accreditation schemes.



- Advise on housing legislation and case law in relation to Homelessness, Landlord and Tenant (private and social housing sectors) and have a good working knowledge of Family law, including domestic abuse, welfare benefits and rights, responsibilities of social landlords, Police, Probation, Social Services and Health in relation to housing need and homelessness to support the Council's homeless prevention and relief work.
- Where necessary, work alongside colleagues to deliver the Council's housing allocation and Home Choice schemes, supporting clients to apply for accommodation, being able to accurately assess applications against the Allocation Policy and advise on options.
- To communicate effectively the Council's duties and policies to customers, Members and partner organisations directly, in writing and through customer information.
- To participate in the development and delivery of the Council's Homelessness Prevention Strategy.

Relations with People (Internal and External)

- To build trust with customers, being able to identify their needs and support them to find a solution to their housing situation and to access wider services to move them to settled lives.
- To be able to have honest and sometimes difficult conversations with customers about their options and support their decision making while realistically managing their future expectations.
- To build and maintain effective relationships with partner agencies.
- To work closely with the Business & Finance Team, Housing Support Team, Home Solutions Team, Revenues & Benefits, the Family Support Team and other teams with mutual customers to achieve positive outcomes for individual customers.
- To work closely with the Customer Contact Centre to ensure a seamless customer experience.
- To work with Social Services, the Police, Probation and other agencies dealing with priority need groups and vulnerable people to deliver housing advice and options to individual customers.
- Ability to explain complex homeless legislation and homeless decisions to individuals who may not understand or agree with the decision.
- Ability to represent Council interests and influence decision making in a multi-agency environment.



- To liaise with private landlords to explore ways to prevent tenants from becoming homeless. Work in conjunction with the Lettings Negotiator to refer people threatened with homelessness to future accommodation options.

Creativity and Innovation

- To be able to listen to customers and identify their needs.
- To be able to work with customers to find tailored and creative solutions to their situation.
- To make the best use of resources available to prevent homelessness and reduce the future use of temporary accommodation and Bed & Breakfast.
- To contribute to the development and delivery of the Homelessness Strategy, staying up to date with best practice in housing needs work and suggesting service improvement.
- Make use of Homeless Prevention funds to provide cost effective non-standard responses to prevent and relieve homelessness.

Financial Accountability

- Contribute to delivering the service within budget and achieving value for money.
- Make use of Homeless Prevention funds to provide cost effective non-standard responses to prevent homelessness.
- Support customers in emergency Bed & Breakfast placements and liaise with Business and Finance Team Leader to prompt customer Bed & Breakfast payments.

Impact upon the Organisation & the Community

- Reduce community impact by working with individual vulnerable households to source suitable housing where they will be able to live independent lives with the appropriate support identified and supplied through multi-agency working.
- Work with partners in the community to sustain tenancies, and communities, through joint intervention.
- Attend multi-agency meetings, such as Core Group Meetings and Surrey Adults Matter (SAM) to work collaboratively to prevent homelessness and reduce community impact.

Management & Supervisory Responsibilities

- N/A



Initiative & Independent Action

- Authority to issue homelessness decisions in accordance with the Housing Act 1996 Pt VII (as amended).
- Authority to place homeless households in temporary accommodation where there is reason to believe they are eligible, homeless with a priority need.
- Consider whether financial assistance from the Council's Rent Choice Scheme is applicable for applicants facing homelessness.
- Explore options using Homeless Prevention funds to explore ways of keeping people in their existing homes when assessed as suitable and affordable.

General

- Support the Housing Solutions Manager in delivering service improvement.
- Promote a positive impression of housing needs work and the Housing Solutions Team at Surrey Heath, raising the profile of housing issues both internally and externally.
- Support other Case Officers, the Triage and Early Intervention Officer and the Lettings Negotiator to provide an excellent customer service experience for all clients.

Continuous Professional Development

- Pursue a programme of personal development as agreed with the Housing Solutions Manager to ensure knowledge stays up-to-date.

Customers and Contacts

Important Internal Relationships

- Business & Finance Team
- Housing Support Team
- Home Solutions Team
- Revenues & Benefits
- Customer Contact Centre
- Family Support Team
- ICT, Finance and Legal Services



Important External Relationships

- The Hope Hub and Emergency Accommodation Service (EAS)
- Registered Providers
- Adult Social Care and Children's Services
- Police
- Probation
- Other statutory and voluntary agencies working with shared customers and responsibilities, other local housing authorities, private sector landlords.



Job Title - Person Specification

Qualifications and Training

Criteria	Essential or Desirable	Application, Interview or Assessment
Good secondary education.	E	A
Previous housing advice, homelessness or related experience with knowledge of housing legislation and landlord and tenant law.	E	A

Knowledge and Experience

Criteria	Essential or Desirable	Application, Interview or Assessment
Experience of dealing with customers, including those who are vulnerable or distressed, and working with customers to find individual solutions. Experience of advising customers on complex matters.	E	A
Experience of undertaking holistic assessments, working with clients to agree actions and outcomes, and managing cases over a period of time	E	A & I
Understanding of general housing issues.	E	A
Knowledge of social care and health legislation and welfare rights issues.	E	A
Previous housing advice, homelessness or related experience with knowledge of housing legislation and tenant law.	E	A & I



Housing, health or social care qualification or relevant degree.	D	A
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Skills and Relations with People

Criteria	Essential or Desirable	Application, Interview or Assessment
Excellent communication skills, both orally and in writing, to secure effective results.	E	A & I
Ability to listen to what is being said and demonstrate sensitivity to customer issues.	E	A & I
Ability and willingness to work proactively with other Teams within the Council and other statutory and third sector partners to find individual solutions for customers and to deliver service improvement.	E	A & I
Understanding of and commitment to anti-discriminatory practice	E	I
Understanding of issues of confidentiality.	E	I
Experience of dealing with complex personal issues including negotiation with third parties to achieve positive housing outcomes and prevent and relieve homelessness.	E	A & I
Understanding of workings and responsibilities of partner organisations and ability to achieve negotiated outcomes within shared resources and constraints.	D	I

Creativity and Innovation

Criteria	Essential or Desirable	Application, Interview or Assessment
Proven ability to develop practical solutions to a wide variety of complex problems.	E	A & I
Experience of working with customers to find housing solutions.	E	A & I



Experience of creating and maintaining good working relationships with other public and private sector organisations.	E	I
Willingness to develop the role and show initiative.	E	I
Excellent prioritisation skills and the ability to manage own case load.	E	A & I
Ability to undertake individual project work to deliver service improvement.	E	A & I
Experience of undertaking project work to improve services.	D	A & I

Financial Accountability

Criteria	Essential or Desirable	Application, Interview or Assessment
Ability to contribute to delivering the service within budget and achieving value for money.	E	I
Make use of Homeless Prevention funds to provide cost effective non-standard responses to prevent and relive homelessness.	E	I

Impact upon the Organisation and the Community

Criteria	Essential or Desirable	Application, Interview or Assessment
Impacts upon the community through working with individual vulnerable households to source suitable housing where they will be able to live independent lives with the appropriate support identified and supplied through multi-agency working.	E	A & I



Works with partners in the community to sustain tenancies, and communities, through joint intervention.	E	A & I
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Management and Supervisory Responsibilities

Criteria	Essential or Desirable	Application, Interview or Assessment
N/A		

Initiative and Independent Action

Criteria	Essential or Desirable	Application, Interview or Assessment
Consider whether financial assistance from the Council's Rent Choice Scheme is applicable for applicants facing homelessness.	E	A & I
Explore options using Homeless Prevention funds to explore ways of keeping people in their existing homes when assessed as suitable and affordable.	E	A & I
Understanding of safe working practices within the office and lone working on home visits.	E	I
Commitment to working to the Council's health and safety policies and agreed local practice.	E	I



Additional Requirements

Criteria	Essential or Desirable	Application, Interview or Assessment
Support the Housing Solutions Manager in delivering service improvement.	E	I
Promote a positive impression of housing needs work and the Housing Needs Team at Surrey Heath, raising the profile of housing issues both internally and externally.	D	I
Purse a programme of personal development as agreed with the Housing Solutions Manager.	E	I
Support other Case Officers, the Triage and Early Intervention Officer and the Lettings Negotiator to provide an excellent customer service experience for all applicants.	E	I
Full UK driving licence and access to a vehicle.	E	A

DBS Requirements

- Enhanced Check

