

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council

Role Profile – Housing Needs Officer

Role Title:	Move On (Prevention) Officer
Job Family:	Technical
Service:	Housing Services
Location:	Town Hall
Reporting To:	Housing Solutions Manager

<p>Role Purpose:</p> <p><i>Why the role exists and its contribution</i></p>	<p>To provide personalised move-on and resettlement support to homeless households in interim and temporary accommodation, with the aim of finding alternative housing solutions.</p> <p>This includes assessing the needs of these customers and assisting them to proactively find and secure move-on accommodation either into supported accommodation, private rented accommodation (with the assistance of the Rent Deposit Scheme) or temporary accommodation and then providing short-term tenancy sustainment and support to settle them into their new accommodation.</p> <p>In partnership with the Temporary Accommodation Team, oversee rental income management, arrears recovery and enforcement action for interim and temporary accommodation.</p> <p>As a member of the Council's team, contribute to the achievement of the Council's corporate vision, behaviours and priorities and the development of the Council's positive high performing culture.</p>
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Main Duties and accountabilities

<p>Service Specific</p>	<p>Securing Move-On accommodation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactively assist the customer to find and access private rented and supported accommodation. • Draw up, implement and review Move-On plans to meet the customer's identified housing needs. • Give information, advice and guidance to customers to enable them to find and secure suitable private rented/supported accommodation. • Motivate and help customers to search for their own accommodation. • Foster and develop proactive working relationships with supported accommodation providers to identify move-on options and, in conjunction with the Housing Needs Officer, make referrals to identified properties. • Build effective working relationships with private sector landlords and letting agents in order to increase access to the private rented sector. • Accompany/support customers to attend property viewings and where appropriate to encourage the customer to represent themselves. • Work with the Council's Rent Deposit Officer to coordinate the rent deposit scheme administration, deposits, rent in advance and incentive payments.
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- Provide a flexible approach to solving housing problems.

Tenancy and housing related support

- Support client to undertake e-learning pre-tenancy training.
- Assisting customers in developing budgeting, tenancy management and social skills necessary to maintain a tenancy effectively, working towards independence.
- Support the customer to access education, training and employment opportunities by referring into the Council's Skills Hub and Employment Training Housing Options Service (ETHOS).
- Provide practical support to enable customers to successfully move into temporary, supported, private rented, or settled accommodation, e.g. assisting with tenancy sign-ups, ensuring that the customer understands their license/tenancy agreement, accessing furniture projects, setting up utilities, claiming welfare benefits etc.
- Refer customers who require additional support to appropriate agencies. Work with these agencies to help support and sustain the tenancy and to ensure longer-term support network are created around the customer.

Rental Income Management for interim and temporary accommodation

- Act as the main point of contact for enquiries relating to rent, service, and storage charges for all interim and temporary accommodation.
- Ensure tenants and licensees receive clear information, advice, and support at the start of their tenancy/licence to help them manage rent payments and foster a culture of payment from the outset.
- Manage and monitor all rent and storage accounts on an ongoing basis in accordance with the Council's Rent Arrears Policy and Procedure and the Pre-Action Protocol.
- Liaise regularly with Housing Benefit to ensure that Housing Benefit claims and issues are dealt with promptly and claims are in payment and have not been suspended or cancelled.
- Maintain regular communication with tenants and licences through home visits, telephone calls, emails, and letters.

Tenancy Sustainment

- Take proactive tenancy sustainment measures at the earliest possible stage to prevent and reduce rent arrears, providing tenants & licences with appropriate information, advice and support.
- Support tenants and licences to apply for Housing Benefit, DHP and other appropriate welfare benefits.
- Identify households experiencing financial difficulties and refer them to specialist support agencies (e.g., CAB, debt advice).

Rent Arrears Recovery & Enforcement

- Undertake rent arrears recovery and enforcement action as outlined in the Council's Rent Arrears Policy and Procedure and the Pre-Action Protocol.
- Undertake Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) measures and enforcement action as outlined in the Council's ASB Policy and Procedure.
- Negotiate and agree affordable repayment plans and take action where agreements are breached.
- Apply to the DWP for a third-party deduction from welfare benefits to recover arrears

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and serve eviction notices in accordance with Council policies. • Escalate complex cases to the Housing Solutions Manager for enforcement or legal action. • Take action to recover former tenant arrears in line with Council policies.
Generic Duties	<p>Delivery</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieves individual targets and objectives to support the delivery of service plans • Provides work statistics to section timescales. • Maintains a good knowledge of service in order to give correct advice to customers. • Deals with enquiries regarding service-related matters • Ensures an efficient service is given whilst being polite, courteous and understanding • Complies with the Council's complaints procedure <p>Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adheres to service-related processes and manages workload to deliver services • Constantly review procedures to ensure efficient working • Keeps abreast of changes to service-related legislation • Assists in the achievement of any annual Performance Indicators targets / service delivery plan and contributes effectively to My Performance Conversations <p>One Team</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicates in a clear and concise manner • Liaises with other services across the Council • Liaises with outside bodies where necessary • Contributes to effective teamwork

The key decision-making areas in the role
<p>Judgment or decision making</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess customer's needs and devise Move-on plans. • Make decisions on securing suitable supported or private rented accommodation • Make decisions on repayment plans • Make decision on enforcing breaches of licence conditions, ASB and rent arrears, service of statutory notices to quit in accordance with the Council's Rent Arrears Policy and Procedure and the Pre-Action Protocol. • Make decisions on which cases to escalate to the Housing Solutions Manager for enforcement/legal action. <p>Organisation of workload and priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure the work is undertaken within the appropriate timescales and in accordance with

legislative requirements, local guidelines and procedures.

Information handling

- Understand and comply with the Data Protection legislation and with the Council's agreed policy and procedure for data security

Developing plans or strategies

- Contribute to the Council's, Temporary Accommodation procurement policy, Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy and Service Plan and lead on identified projects

Customers and contacts

Knowledge of other service areas within the Council/Authority

- Understand and comply with the Council's responsibilities for equalities under the Equality Act 2010
- Understand and comply with the Council's responsibilities for the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults and comply with relevant internal and multi-agency policies and procedures
- Understand and comply with the Council's responsibilities for healthy and safety and comply with relevant policies and procedures
- Have a good knowledge of other service areas within the Council, especially; Housing Benefit, Grants; Environmental Health and Community Services

Contact with clients/customers

- Ensure that the Council's corporate standards are met in respect of customer care
- Deal calmly and sensitively to the needs of people with housing problems who may be vulnerable and/or have complex needs
- Deal effectively with difficult situations & customer in stressful circumstances.
- Provide advice, information and guidance to support customers make informed decisions on their housing choices.
- Deal with enquiries on individual cases, face-to-face, over the telephone or replying to correspondence from applicants, MP's, Councillors or other agencies
- Conduct home visits

Dimensions of the role	
Financial	Non-financial
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiate deposit/rents/fees and incentive payments for private rented accommodation secured through the scheme. Assist in the operation of Housing Services renting accounting system including rent arrears recovery and legal enforcement action. Oversight of 100-200 rent accounts with a rental income of c£1.2 million Responsible for negotiating repayment plans and determining which cases to escalate to the Housing Solutions Manager for enforcement/legal action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organise approx. 20 Move-on placements each year Ensure accommodation meets current health and safety regulations/suitability standards Negotiate Private Rented Sector tenancies and contractual agreements Preparing/serving of notices for eviction. Emotional stress from the circumstances or behaviour or people The impact of your decision making on customers Implementing and enforcing regulations

Person Specification

Qualifications and Training	Essential (E) or Desirable (D)	Application	Interview/ Assessment
Good standard of general education including English and Maths	E	AP	INT
Knowledge and Experience			
Experience of working in a frontline housing needs, homeless, social work or community care environment at a local authority, housing association or voluntary agency	E	AP	INT
An understanding of the needs of homeless households	E	AP	INT
Understanding of Part VI and VII of the 1996 Housing Act, Homelessness Act 2002, Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, Code of Guidance and case law.	D	AP	INT
Experience of assessments of vulnerable people including support planning	E	AP	INT
Experience in providing housing related support	E	AP	INT
Knowledge of welfare benefits including Universal Credit and Housing Benefit	E	AP	INT
Knowledge of the private rented sector and the key operational and financial issues that affect securing private sector properties	E	AP	INT
Knowledge of sources of grants, support and practical help available to vulnerable people, including rough	E	AP	INT

sleepers			
Knowledge of rent accounting	E	AP	INT
Skills			
Good effective time management with the ability to prioritise tasks and manage own workload in demanding circumstances and with competing priorities	E	AP	INT
Strong interpersonal and communication skills, including the ability to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> deal with vulnerable and difficult customers in stressful circumstances deal calmly and sensitively to the needs of people with housing problems who may be vulnerable and/or have complex needs effectively liaise with a range of service providers or agencies in order to support the delivery of the service and source move-on accommodation establish effective negotiation skills	E	AP	INT
Excellent written and verbal communication skills with the ability to produce letters/emails and other information for a variety of audiences, including those with high, complex and multiple needs.	E	AP	INT
Ability to work safely in the community on your own across a geographical area.	E	AP	INT
Ability to record, collate and interpret statistical data	D	AP	INT
IT literate with ability to use a range of IT packages and able to help develop systems	E	AP	INT
Ability to negotiate, think, plan and act with a creative approach to problem solving and innovation	E	AP	INT
Be self-motivated and have the ability to work on own initiative with minimum supervision	E	AP	INT
The ability to work with others, displaying a strong sense of team cohesion	D	AP	INT
Additional Requirements			
Must have access to a vehicle and hold a current driving licence	E	AP	INT
Ability to work flexibly including working after 5pm as necessary, attend occasional evening meetings and respond to out of hours calls	E	AP	INT
Visits are required to applicants throughout the borough and neighbouring areas as an integral part of the duties	E	AP	INT
Must be legally entitled to work in the UK	E	AP	INT
No contra-indications in personal background or criminal record indicating unsuitability to work with children/young people/vulnerable clients/finance (CRB check required as appropriate).	E	AP	INT