

Job Description and Person Specification

HOUSING ADVISER

A Lambeth to be proud of



Job Title: Housing Adviser
Grade: SO2
Department: Neighbourhoods & Growth
Division: Housing
Function: Housing Needs
Reporting Homelessness Prevention Team Manager

Main Purpose of Job

To prevent homelessness in accordance with the provisions of the Homelessness Reduction Act, associated Code of Guidance, case law and best practice.

To undertake a housing needs assessments for people seeking housing assistance and create housing plans tailored to the individual's needs and circumstances.

To manage a complex and demanding case load in a busy and often challenging environment and prevent or relieve homelessness through the provision of advice, advocacy, negotiation and mediation.

To ensure that all housing options have been thoroughly explored to ensure best efforts to prevent homelessness.

To undertake the assessment and investigation of homeless applications under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 where prevention/relief is not possible, and inform clients of their assessment outcome.

Key Areas of Responsibility

To provide a front of house service for customers seeking housing advice and assistance, ensuring that both priority and non priority customers are directed to the appropriate part of the service.

Provide an advice and mediation service for households who live with families of friends and have been asked to leave, conducting home visits if required in order to help them to remain in their current accommodation and to avoid them having to move into temporary accommodation

To deliver a customer-facing service via drop in and appointments and work occasional evening meetings where required to accommodate the demand and flow of customers.

To deliver a customer-facing service via a telephone advice-line providing a full casework service for callers, as required.

Assess the temporary accommodation needs of customers as required and follow established placement and sign-up processes in order to provide a seamless service

Manage a caseload of priority and non-priority need customers in housing need and maintain accurate and detailed casework records identifying priorities and meeting individual and service performance targets.

Manage conflicting priorities between case work, face to face interviews and operate an effective telephone service to ensure all customers can speak to housing advisers on the day of enquiry

To use a range of housing options to provide alternatives to temporary accommodation, assessing the suitability of private renting as an option, working closely with the Lettings service.

To provide private sector advice and casework to prevent the loss of private rented and owner-occupied accommodation and to ensure that accommodation is affordable and in a fit state of repair.

To gather, record and verify information in relation to housing and homeless applications and assist those customers or who need support to bid for permanent council or registered provider properties.

To provide advice and support to tenants affected by welfare reform. The post holder will actively engage private tenants and other residents affected by benefit changes and prevent homelessness by negotiating with landlords, increasing incomes, helping tenants to move to more affordable accommodation or supporting them into work and engaging with other support services.

To respond effectively to prevent homelessness through advice, negotiation, mediation or conciliation, or by securing immediate access to alternative accommodation and generally promoting a housing options approach to service delivery to a full range of customers, including people who are challenging and demanding

To assess the housing-related support needs of single people and arrange access to appropriate housing related support services (Pathways services) via agreed referral procedures.

To assist customers living in supported housing to move to suitable and appropriate accommodation when they are ready to move into general needs accommodation.

To assess clients under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 and recommend outcome for approval by the Homeless Assessment Manager

To maintain and develop an excellent knowledge of housing options, homelessness law and practice and related fields including housing benefit and welfare rights

Generic Responsibilities

Be a champion for excellent customer service delivery and customer care and contribute to the development and delivery of an integrated service.

Be self serving with respect to administration, case record keeping and other related duties and utilise IT systems to update and record information required according to guidance and established procedures.

Participate in appraisals, one to ones, objective settings, personal development plans and working group meetings and take a full and active role in service development, including service reviews.

To carry out the duties of the post in accordance with the Data Protection Act, the Health & Safety at Work Act and other relevant legislation, as well as Council policies, procedures, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

To carry out the duties of this post with due regard to the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy and to actively promote and uphold the Council's FRESH values.

Take responsibility, appropriate to the post, for ensuring compliance with council policies and procedures aimed at promoting and safeguarding the welfare of vulnerable children and adults.

Take responsibility, appropriate to the post for promoting diversity including tackling racism and good race, ethnic & community relations.

To undertake any other duties appropriate to the grade, that may be required. These may be varied from time to time to meet the needs of the service.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Housing Advisor SO2

<p>It is essential that in your written supporting statement you give evidence or examples of your proven experience in each of the short-listing criteria marked Application (A)</p> <p>You should expect that all areas listed below will be assessed as part of the interview and assessment process should you be shortlisted.</p> <p>If you are applying under the Disability Confident Scheme, you will need to give evidence or examples of your proven experience in the areas marked with “Tick” (✓) on the person specification when you complete the application form.</p>			Shortlisting Criteria
Qualifications	Q1	Educated to degree level standard or equivalent or demonstrable suitable experience	
Key Knowledge	K1	Awareness of legislation relating to housing advice, homelessness, housing management and the allocation of housing, with a good practical understanding of the range of housing problems people may experience	A ✓
	K2	Broad knowledge and understanding of the housing and support needs of homeless and housing applicants and tenants.	A ✓
	K3	Excellent knowledge of negotiation and mediation techniques and their practical application	A ✓
Relevant Experience	E1	Experience of dealing with a diverse and vulnerable clientele in housing/homeless related environment.	A ✓
	E2	Experience of working in a service within a pressurised and high-profile environment within a multi-disciplinary team, providing a quality service.	A ✓
	E3	Experience of achieving performance targets and meeting departmental objectives	A ✓
	E4	Experience of providing quality advice and information to members of the public and of handling complaints and enquiries	A ✓
	E5	Experience of producing high quality written communications to a corporate standard	
	E6	Experience of using different IT systems in order to manage caseloads, monitor delivery of targets and drive improved service.	

	E7	Educated to degree level standard or equivalent or demonstrable suitable experience	
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Core Values and Behaviours		<p>Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the views of others and ask for their opinions making sure that everyone in my team inputs into the things that matter. • Ensure fairness and justice is at the heart of my decision making and support to my team and others. • Take time to build trust, building the respect of our stakeholders and ensuring as a team we take accountability for doing what we agree to do. • Develop others and ensure we work as one team for Lambeth, encouraging everyone to play their part • Take positive action to ensure everyone in my team has opportunities to learn and grow at work • Encourage everyone to be themselves at work and value who they are • I am inclusive and actively celebrate diversity, recognising everyone in my team as individuals. 	
		<p>Kindness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat each member of my team with respect and dignity just as I would want for myself. • Encourage each member of my team to do their very best work and am available to them to provide support and guidance. • Personalise my support to each team members and look out for them, lending a hand wherever I can • Encourage everyone to try and learn from mistakes and use integrity to take action with my team to put things right together • Work with empathy seeking to understand each and every member of team, their unique perspective and circumstances and ensure everyone is heard • Take the time to communicate, being honest, open and genuine and taking the time to get to know team members as individuals. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show compassion and patience recognising that everyone in the team has unique experience and celebrating the great work they do for Lambeth. • Look after the health and wellbeing of my team members and encourage open and regular discussions about the issues that impact on them, working together to find solutions. 	
		<p>Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I encourage and support my team to do the right thing even when it's tough and we communicate our decisions in a timely way • I ensure my team and employees take individual and collective accountability for performance and delivery, making sure that they have clear plans and performance objectives. • I ensure my team plan ahead, getting the basics right and take swift action when problems arise • I encourage my team to be risk aware and ensuring that our decisions and actions are informed and understood and communicated to others. • I provide regular, timely and constructive feedback to my team members on their performance and behaviours and act quickly when performance is not on track. • I share my learning, knowledge and skills with others thorough coaching and mentoring and encourage others to do the same. • I ensure that my team and I put residents, communities, customers and their needs at the centre of everything we do. • I encourage my team to learn and grow and ask questions to find the information they need to do their jobs 	
		<p>Ambition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am proud of our borough and my team and encourage everyone in the team to aim for the highest possible standards of excellence in everything we do. • Encourage my team to be flexible and try new things when it's appropriate to do so and tell me what could be improved. 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Promote a one team for Lambeth approach reaching out to our stakeholders to face our challenges together• Encourage and support my team to be courageous for our residents and communities and stop at nothing to ensure they have the best possible outcomes• I make time for the team to Innovate and look for creative ways to do things better, being curious about possibilities.• Positively challenge and encourage the team to collaborate and look for solutions together across service and team boundaries.• Make time for my team to grow and develop taking advantage of opportunities to learn from each other and others. We plan our learning and career growth.	
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