

Job summary

Role title: Homeless Prevention & Relief Officer
Department: Housing
Basis: Permanent position
Salary: £35,820 - £41,925 (TS2)

General description of the role

In this exciting and fast paced role, you will be working as part of a friendly and supportive team to help to prevent or relieve homelessness. You will use your detailed housing knowledge, motivation and life experiences to provide detailed and comprehensive housing options to a range of diverse clients. You will undertake detailed Housing Assessments, produce and update tailored Personal Housing Plans to support households to remain in their home or support them into alternative accommodation for at least six months and issue statutory decision letters in line with legislation.

Clients can include private or social tenants, homeowners, those evicted by family members, people experiencing relationship breakdown, or survivors of domestic abuse. Clients may be vulnerable and/or have complex needs.

Responsibilities of the role

CASE WORK

1. To undertake thorough and detailed interviews with clients to ascertain housing need which may be in person, via telephone or on MS Teams.
2. To manage a caseload of household's threatened with homelessness or homeless; conducting an assessment of their housing circumstances, housing and support needs, plus providing them with advice and a personal housing plan to help address their particular issues.
3. Manage clients' expectations and offer realistic options tailored for the household.
4. Meet agreed targets of a set number of positive housing outcomes annually to prevent or relieve homelessness and to contribute to positive outcomes for the wider team.
5. Support clients to maximise income; working with internal and external colleagues such as debt advice agencies and Money Support.
6. Assess financial risk for Loan Scheme, Guarantors and rent top-ups.

7. Issuing statutory decision letters in accordance with current housing legislation
8. Investigating priority need, intentionality and Local connection
9. Carrying out casework e.g., negotiating with landlords/family members.
10. Helping to address problems with benefit claims and undertake financial assessments to determine suitability for the Prevention Loan Scheme, taking into account the need to protect public funds.
11. Assisting with the completion of court defence paperwork and writing support statements for court hearings.
12. Reviewing progress against personal housing plans.
13. Work in partnership with NextStep Private Rental Service.
14. Undertake home visits where necessary and beneficial to determine housing need, mediating with families and assessing housing conditions and disrepair.
15. Liaising with internal departments e.g. Housing Register, Housing Benefit, Environmental Health, Money Support, Family Support.
16. Working with external agencies such as debt advice agencies, Probation and Police, private landlord schemes, registered social landlords and other housing providers.
17. Keeping accurate, up to date and detailed case notes on our internal systems (Locata)
18. Working closely with Homeless Prevention Officers where prevention may not be successful.
19. To make referrals to accommodation providers or support services where relevant.
20. Refer to the Code of Guidance in determination of advice and homelessness applications.
21. Commitment to working within the bounds of the Data Protection Act and GDPR legislation.

HOUSING DUTY

22. To be the department Housing duty officer on a rota basis. This can include managing homelessness on the day cases and providing technical advice to officers, including the triage officer.
23. Assess client's eligibility, homelessness and priority need to determine any duties owed by the council including provision of interim accommodation.
24. Make enquiries into the case to establish housing duties and try to prevent homelessness where possible.
25. Negotiate with providers and locate suitable interim accommodation through the council booking procedures.
26. Keep accurate notes on the housing database

OPERATIONAL DUTIES

27. To provide expert, comprehensive advice by telephone to those calling the Council's Housing Advice Line, including Housing and tenancy rights in both the private & social rental sectors, as well as for homeowners.
28. To assist with team email inboxes, including housing advice emails, triage line and any other operational duties on a rota basis as and when required.
29. To explain the council's role for those homeless and / or threatened with homelessness under homelessness legislation (Part 7 Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 etc).
30. To be part of a duty rota, providing a presence at the Town Hall in Reigate.
31. To assist the homelessness duty officer and relief officers with emergency homelessness situations on a daily basis.

CONTRIBUTING TO SERVICE DELIVERY

32. To assist with the continual improvement of our housing service provision.
33. Contributing to the development of the information we provide to customers including Personal Housing Plans, advice leaflets, website content etc.
34. Identifying opportunities to work with new service providers.
35. Keeping own knowledge of housing legislation, best practice and case law current.
36. Managing particular service areas or projects e.g. rent guarantor scheme, fraud assessments, acting as key contact for receiving eviction notifications from social landlords
37. To undertake any other duties that may be allocated from time to time which are commensurate with the post holder's qualifications and experience.
38. To take ownership of & develop expertise in a particular area such as care leavers, army discharge, substance misuse etc. on behalf of the team
39. To represent the Council at internal & external meetings relevant to the role, for example: MARAC & MAPPA (on a rota basis)



Person Specification

Role title: Homeless Prevention & Relief Officer
Department: Housing

| Qualifications | Essential / Desirable | Assessment by A / I / T (Assessment/Interview/Testing) |
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| Educated to minimum GCSE level or equivalent | Essential | |
| Qualification from Chartered Institute of Housing or equivalent | Desirable | |
| Experience and achievements | | |
| Experience of delivering housing advice or tenancy support | Essential | |
| Comprehensive knowledge of Housing Acts 1985, 1996 Part VI and VII, Homeless Reduction Act 2017, tenancy rights, and the benefits system | Essential | |
| Experience of working in a local authority housing department, for a Registered Social Landlord or in another housing related role, in a capacity which involves providing direct services to the public | Essential | |
| Experience of working with clients in a sensitive, empathetic and compassionate manner | Essential | |
| Experience of working in a busy, front-line client focussed team | Essential | |
| Experience of liaising with statutory, non-statutory and voluntary agencies | Desirable | |
| Experience of dealing with vulnerable and/or demanding clients | Essential | |
| Role required competencies and behaviours | | |
| Excellent communication (oral and written) and negotiation skills | Essential | |
| Ability to work effectively with clients who may be chaotic, demanding, vulnerable or do not wish to engage | Essential | |
| Commitment to excellent standards of customer care | Essential | |
| Excellent team player | Essential | |

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| Resilient with the ability to work calmly and effectively under pressure and deal with unforeseen demands | Essential | |
| Excellent IT skills, preferably with knowledge of a housing program such as Locata. | Desirable | |
| Willingness to undertake further training and expand knowledge | Essential | |
| Compassion and empathy | Essential | |
| Champion equality, diversity and inclusion in every aspect of the role | Essential | |

Great People at Reigate & Banstead

Our great working environment and the values and behaviours of every individual and team in the Council, help to evolve the culture of our organisation to become more commercial, innovative and embracing of change.

Successful applicants to our career opportunities will be able to demonstrate they share the values and behaviours we seek in our organisation.

Our Vision

Working together to make a great place to live, work and enjoy.

Our Values

Making a difference, doing the right thing, being bold and confident.

Our Behaviours

We should demonstrate our values by being positive, supportive, flexible, and innovative.

Positive: I maintain a “can do” attitude and a smile

- ✓ Create an encouraging and optimistic environment and bring others with me
- ✓ Approach others in a pleasant, happy and upbeat manner
- ✓ Maintain enthusiasm in difficult times
- ✓ Demonstrate commitment to my own service and to the Council
- ✓ Demonstrate an "I care" attitude

Supportive: I create an environment where the people I work with feel valued and respected and have confidence to develop

- ✓ Understand the council's priorities and work towards a common goal
- ✓ Work across boundaries to develop relationships, share information and keep others informed
- ✓ Listen to the views of others allowing the best way forward to be found
- ✓ Communicate in a courteous and respectful manner
- ✓ Behave in ways that promote the fair and equal treatment of all

Flexible: Adapting the way I work, I can deal confidently with change and accept new and different ideas and approaches

- ✓ Accept that change is an integral part of working at Reigate & Banstead
- ✓ Demonstrate an open mind to new ideas and proposals
- ✓ Display a willingness to do things differently
- ✓ View change in working practices as an opportunity for improving and developing
- ✓ Adopt a flexible approach to meet the team's requirements

Innovative: I work to develop new ideas and workable solutions to drive the Council forward

- ✓ Question currently accepted ways of doing things
- ✓ Implement good ideas, learn from others, both internally and externally
- ✓ Identify novel ways of resolving issues using own initiative
- ✓ Suggest and try out new approaches
- ✓ Challenge the status quo in a constructive way

Great People



Summary of employment package

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| Place of work | <p>Reigate Town Hall with some Hybrid working by arrangement with the Homeless Relief Team Leader. You will be expected to work at least two days per week in the office. This may change according to service needs and ensuring that the statutory function is met.</p> <p>We may require you to work from another place of work within the Borough or a neighbouring Borough or District, or further afield by prior agreement.</p> |
| Salary | <p>Graded Technical Specialist 2, the salary will be in the region of £35,820 - £41,925 per annum, dependent upon experience. Cost of living awards are reviewed annually on 1 April. Incremental progression and bonuses may be payable in line with the appraisal scheme.</p> |
| Duration of contract | <p>The contract will be offered on a permanent full-time basis.</p> |
| Probationary period | <p>Upon joining the Council, all staff are required to satisfactorily complete a six-month probationary period.</p> |
| Hours of work | <p>Hours of work are 36 hours per week.</p> |
| Employment Benefits | |
| Flexible working hours | <p>Flexitime allows for the alteration of start/leave times and length of lunchtime break, time off in lieu for longer hours worked and a flexible working system.</p> <p>Whilst staff are expected to manage their time and keep working hours within acceptable limits, flexible working arrangements are always subject to sufficient office cover and the particular needs of the service at that time.</p> |
| Annual leave | <p>The basic leave entitlement is 259.2 hours per annum pro rata (equivalent to 36 standard days), rising to 295.2 hours per annum (equivalent to 41 standard days) pro rata after five years continuous local government service, inclusive of Bank Holidays.</p> <p>Annual leave must be taken on the Council's discretionary day off around Christmas and New Year period.</p> |
| Pension | <p>You will be auto enrolled into the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) to which the Council contributes 15% of your earnings each year.</p> <p>You are able to transfer funds into the LGPS within the first twelve months of employment. However, you can also choose not to join the scheme and make your own arrangements. If you wish to opt out of the scheme you will not be able to do so until after your first day.</p> <p>Your pension contribution rate will depend on your full time equivalent annual salary. The salary and rates are reviewed annually on 1 April each year. The current rates can be found on the Surrey Pension Fund website: http://www.surreypensionfund.org/surrey-pension-fund/paying-in/membership-and-contributions/#contribution-rates</p> |
| Training and development | <p>The Council actively encourages continued professional development and talent development.</p> <p>Learning facilities are available in-house, including a dedicated Training Room for both individual and group learning. The Council also has a number of Computer Based Training packages.</p> |

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| Professional subscriptions | If you are required to be a member of a professional organisation(s) for your role, we will pay the subscription fee(s) each year directly by invoice. |
| Car parking | The Council offers interest free loans to encourage staff to travel by alternative methods to solo car use. Loans are available to purchase bicycles and accessories to the value of £1000, for quarterly/yearly rail season or bus tickets or a season car park pass. |
| Travel loan scheme | The Council offers interest free loans to encourage staff to travel by alternative methods to solo car use. Loans are available to purchase bicycles and accessories to the value of £500, quarterly or yearly rail season tickets, or a season car park pass. |
| Cycle purchase scheme | The Council offers staff who have passed the probation period and are employed for 18 months or more, the opportunity to lease/purchase bikes and related safety equipment up to £1000, reducing tax and National Insurance deductions. Staff are required to use the bike mainly for journeys between home and work. |
| Employee discounts | <p>All staff have access to special offers and discounts on national and local high street shops, restaurants, motoring benefits, discount cinema and theatre tickets, holidays, insurance and much more.</p> <p>Full annual discounted membership is available for the 'Better' run leisure centres at Tadworth, Redhill and Horley.</p> |
| Other Conditions | |

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| Pre-employment checks | <p>Appointments are offered subject to several pre-employment checks to comply with the Home Office's Baseline Personnel Security Standards (BPSS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least two satisfactory references • eligibility to work within the UK, and proof of your identity • evidence of relevant qualifications • basic or enhanced criminal record check (As access to secure government systems is an intrinsic requirement of the role) |
| DBS clearance | Employment with the Council will also be subject to receipt of standard or enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance. Details will be provided to the successful applicant, which may require completion of an online application and/or registration to the DBS 'Update Service'. |
| Paid work with another employer | <p>If you are appointed, your contract with the Council should normally be classed as your main employment.</p> <p>You will devote your whole-time service to our work and not be involved in any other business or take up any other appointment without getting written permission from your manager or the Chief Executive.</p> |
| Disclaimer | Please note that this document outlines the likely employment package for this role but does not form part of your terms and conditions of employment if you are subsequently employed by Reigate & Banstead Borough Council. These will be outlined in any contractual documents addressed to you directly. |