

Harlow Council Job Description

Job Title:	Housing Fraud Officer	Post Number:	HM0017X
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Grade:	11	Date:	September 2025
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Directorate:	Housing Operations (People)
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Location:	Civic Centre
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Responsible to:	Estates and Tenancy Team Leader - People
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Job Purpose:

The Council is committed to the highest level of customer care and service delivery. The post holder will work as part of the Housing Management Team to proactively carry out housing fraud investigations and pursue all aspects of social housing fraud, including audit and inspections of council owned properties, unlawful sub-lettings, in eligible succession claims, non-occupation or non-use of Council property as principal home; fraudulent Right to Buy applications, mutual exchanges for payment and fraudulent housing applications.

- 1.0** To proactively carry out housing fraud investigations and act as Lead Officer on housing fraud, co-ordinating the Council's response to social housing fraud, and ensuring processes and procedures are actioned in-conjunction with the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy.
- 2.0** To support and advise others on complex cases to ensure all cases of fraud are dealt with effectively.
- 3.0** To work closely with partner agencies and other departments to prevent housing fraud.
- 4.0** To assist in the delivery of the team plan and local strategies.
- 5.0** Other duties appropriate to the role.
- 6.0** Statement of Health and Safety

Breakdown of tasks:

- 1.0 To proactively carry out housing fraud investigations and act as Lead Officer on housing fraud, co-ordinating the Council's response to social housing fraud, and ensuring processes and procedures are actioned in-conjunction with the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy.**
- 1.1** To investigate and pursue all aspects of social housing fraud, such as unlawful sub-letting; ineligible succession claims; non-occupation or non-use of Council property as principal home; fraudulent Right to Buy applications; mutual exchanges for payment and fraudulent housing applications.
- 1.2** To undertake proactive and reactive investigations in line with the relevant legislation relating to Housing and Social Housing Fraud.
- 1.3** To interview suspects of fraud in accordance with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act. Take witness statements from witnesses and third parties either at the Civic Offices, their homes or their place of employment if and when necessary. Ensuring compliance with the Civil Procedure Rules.
- 1.4** Ensure that taped interviews are transcribed in the required format for presentation in Court.
- 1.5** To undertake random and targeted checks of Council properties to ensure that social housing fraud is not taking place.
- 1.6** Carry out home visits as required.
- 1.7** Gather evidence by way of written requests, conducting interviews, observations, visiting properties and taking statements from applicants, witnesses and third parties. This may necessitate working outside of normal office hours.
- 1.8** Deal with all correspondence relating to Housing Fraud including telephone enquiries relating to investigations.
- 1.9** To liaise and assist Legal Services in order to prepare and compile case files, including witness statements to support prosecution and legal action, including appropriate submissions for referral to the Police, the Department for Work and Pensions or any other Government department. Providing witness statements and attending court as required at Magistrate's or County Court Hearings.
- 1.10** To ensure that all information relating to investigations remains confidential and not disclosed to unauthorised persons, paying particular attention to the Data Protection Act.
- 1.11** To ensure that comprehensive up-to-date, clear, easily accessible, written notes and documentation are maintained on individual cases and where appropriate electronic records are regularly updated and maintained.
- 1.12** To be responsible for responding to, investigating and resolving reports of housing fraud using all available tools and resources in a timely manner.
- 1.13** To develop and implement effective working practices and procedures for dealing with housing fraud ensuring compliance with relevant legislation and regulations.
- 1.14** Establish a system to accurately record all relevant information on housing fraud cases and to provide data/statistics as required.
- 1.15** Monitor and manage the NFI database, responding to enquiries and anomalies within agreed policy and procedure.
- 1.16** Prioritise and organise own workload without direct supervision and co-ordinate tasks with other team members as and when required.

2.0 To support and advise others on complex cases to ensure all cases of fraud are dealt with effectively.

- 2.1** Maintain a thorough knowledge of Housing Legislation relating to fraud investigations.
- 2.2** To attend Court as a Council witness in repossession and prosecution cases.
- 2.3** To work with and assist the Area Housing Manager in developing, implementing and operating a range of systems to identify fraud from initial investigations, evidence gathering and liaison with the Council's Legal services regarding actions necessary to secure the recovery of a property on behalf of the Council.
- 2.4** To participate in regular liaison/progress meetings with the Team Leader to share data and proposed actions, identifying which service takes the lead in pursuit of individual cases, and those services that provide a support role.

3.0 To work closely with partner agencies and other departments to prevent housing fraud.

- 3.1** To work closely with other departments, services, agencies and partners to ensure a "joined up" approach to the service in the successful conclusion of housing fraud cases.
- 3.2** To liaise and work with other sections and services of the Council and external agencies/organisations as necessary in carrying out the duties of the post. To develop contacts relevant to the purpose of the post with External Agencies and throughout the Council.
- 3.3** To improve, strengthen and maintain existing lines of communications between Revenues and Benefits, Council Tax, Audit, Housing Management, Home Ownership, Sheltered Housing and Housing Options and Advice with regard to the existing arrangements for Fraud Initiative data sharing.

4.0 To assist in the delivery of the team plan and local strategies.

- 4.1** To contribute to discussions about the formation of the team plan.
- 4.2** To assist in the delivery of the team plan.
- 4.3** To adhere to individual and team targets and objectives identified through the team plans and personal performance plans.

5.0 Other duties appropriate to the role.

- 5.1** To undertake other duties commensurate with the grade, skills, knowledge and experience of the post holder.
- 5.2** All employees are expected to show a commitment to safeguarding children, young people and adults with care and support needs.
- 5.3** All employees are expected to have regard and operate within the Council's commitment to equality and diversity and customer care.
- 5.4** All employees are expected to adhere to requirements of GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) and The Data Protection Act 2018 and comply with measures to protect the confidentiality of information in accordance with Council policies and procedures.
- 5.5** All employees are expected to familiarise themselves with and adhere to all relevant Council Policies and Procedures.
- 5.6** This job description is not intended to be an exhaustive list but to indicate the main responsibilities of the post. It will be reviewed periodically to take into account changes and developments in service requirements.

6.0 Statement of Health and Safety

- 6.1** Harlow Council is committed to the provision of high quality health and safety standards. In order to achieve this all staff employed by the Council have the following specific responsibilities, which are consistent with the requirements of the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974.
- 6.2**
- To take reasonable care for the health and safety of yourself and of other persons who may be affected by what you do or fail to do.
 - To co-operate with Harlow Council in order to enable statutory requirements to be implemented.
 - Not to intentionally interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health and safety.