

**ROLE DESCRIPTION**

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| **JOB TITLE** | **POST NUMBER** |
| **Housing Options Support Officer** | **D3013, D3033** |
| **DIRECTORATE** | **LOCATION** |
| Community | Council Offices, Hailsham & Homeworking |
| **GRADE** | **OTHER ALLOWANCES** |
| **WDC3** | N/A |
| **KEY WORKING RELATIONSHIPS** | **INTERNAL/EXTERNAL** |
|  | **Internal** – Officers, including Head of Housing & Property Services, Housing Options & Strategy Manager, Housing Options Team Leader, Housing Register & Lettings Team Leader, Officers and Members of Council  **External** – Customers, other members of the public, officers and representatives of other organisations |
| **STATUTORY RESPONSIBILITIES/LEVEL OF ACCOUNTABILITY** | |
|  | The role does not include statutory duties, managerial or supervisory responsibility.  The post holder is the first point of contact for the Housing Options & Allocations team, often customers will be in significant housing need and/or vulnerable as generally this is the reason that housing assistance is required, therefore this role must balance the ability to give accurate, complex information and housing advice in a highly compassionate manner and in a way the customer understands.  Dealing with customers original identity, financial and other sensitive documents is also part of this post holders responsibility, ensuring these are scanned and returned to customers in a secure way.  Given the importance of this role and the vulnerability of our customers, if the right questions are not asked then, in extreme cases, we risk not make safeguarding reports when we should have done so.  Incorrect advice could lead to reputational damage and considerable legal costs to the Council as we provide a statutory function.  The post holder will also be responsible for the accurate production of invoices and financial reconciliation, the Housing Options Team is expected to spend in excess of £500,000 on emergency and temporary accommodation and therefore a keen eye for detail is required to ensure accurate processing of invoices for payment. This role acts as the point of contact for the Finance team to have a clear picture and assurance that payments are processed accurately and in a timely manner. |
| **ROLE OVERVIEW** | |
| To provide and maintain a high quality and reliable service to customers seeking access to housing options services and other Council services. To administer Council systems and provide administrative and clerical support to other staff within the authority, and to carry out specialist housing functions as required. To provide administration for financial payments to and from the Housing Options team and to work closely with the Council’s financial services team. To provide and maintain a high quality and reliable service to customers seeking access to housing options services and other Council services. To provide administrative and clerical support to the Housing Options & Allocations Team. | |
| **SERVICE OVERVIEW** | |
| The Housing Options & Allocations team are a busy team that provides statutory housing advice and assistance to all of our residents, and works to prevent homelessness in the District.  The team also provide advice and assistance to residents who require help in accessing suitable accommodation, and assess statutory applications for housing and homelessness under Part 6 and Part 7 of the Housing act 1996 (as amended), fulfilling duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2018. This includes advice for rough sleepers, gypsies and travellers and those leaving care, prisons, youth detention or hospital. As well as for those with mental health issues or suffering domestic abuse and former members of the armed forces.  Many of our residents have complex issues and are facing difficult circumstances, we are experiencing an increase in demand on our service which has amounted to a growing number of homeless presentations and people requiring support to sustain their homes during the first quarter of 2023. We also processed over 2000 applications to the Housing Register in 2022. | |

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| **ROLE RESPONSIBILITIES** |
| **Administration Support**   1. To provide clerical and administrative support to Housing Options officers and Allocations officers and to ensure delivery of service standards to customers, taking ownership of and solving the enquiry at the first point of contact, where possible 2. To deal with and distribute post and emails, log and scan all post correspondence for the Housing Options team and disseminate to relevant staff and ensure document attachments are appended to customer records. 3. To receive incoming supporting information from customers applying for housing, ensuring this is recorded and logged in their application. 4. To support Allocations staff to send reminders to housing applicants for supporting information, to ensure new applications are registered within the target time. 5. To provide practical support to customers applying for housing online, either in person in reception or over the telephone, responding promptly and accurately to customer enquiries at the same time, ensuring the needs of the customer and the Council are balanced. 6. To provide any other administrative support to the Housing Options and Allocations team as directed. 7. To provide occasional personal assistant support to senior managers as required to include assistance in organising meetings, note taking, booking appointments, and responding to enquiries and correspondence. 8. To participate in a rota alongside the Housing Options team to provide lunch and late cover. 9. To keep all systems up to date for homelessness, housing advice, the housing register and lettings; including updating of customer records and housing applications, and other systems used by the service. 10. To be responsible for maintenance of accurate records, including customer enquiries, files, file notes, written correspondence and electronic communications, storage and retrieval of data, for performance and financial monitoring purposes. 11. Deliver services to customers and others in a manner that actively minimises complaints and reduces unnecessary contact.  Finance and systems support (12) To assist with ensuring the Housing Options team discharges its responsibilities regarding creditors, debtors and purchasing, liaising with suppliers and the Council’s Financial Services team to ensure invoices are paid within given timescales.  (13) To process payments and invoices for the Housing Options team, using the Council’s e-financials system.  (14) To provide administration and financial support to the Housing Options team, including completing necessary paperwork and updating systems to enable payments to be made for emergency accommodation, deposit schemes, tenancy sustainment, homeless prevention purposes, Ukrainian Resettlement Programme or other as directed.  (15) To support the Financial Services department in the administration of rent deposit debtors.  **Service Development**  (23) To fully participate in individual and team training and development exercises to ensure the dissemination of best practice in service delivery.  (24) To undertake such further duties commensurate with the level of the post as may be required from time to time.  **General**  (25) To abide by the Council’s Equal Opportunity Policy Statement that makes commitment to promote equal opportunities and race equality in Wealden.   1. To comply with GDPR, ensuring customers’ data is protected and the Council’s obligations are met. 2. To act in accordance with the Council’s Health and Safety Policy to take reasonable care for your own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by your work activity. 3. Comply with the Council's policy on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. |

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| **Special Conditions (as relevant to role) JE Factor K Working Environment**  The duties of the post may on ad hoc occasions require members of staff to work in other locations within the district and work outside normal office hours (for example attendance at tenants meetings or consultation exercises), and to be on duty during office opening hours. |

This is an outline job description designed to summarise the key responsibilities of the role and is not intended to cover every task that may be required. You will be expected to be flexible to respond to change and organisational need.

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| **Additional Information** | |
| Standards of Conduct | You will be required to comply with the Council’s Standing Orders and Standing Financial Instructions, and at all times deal honestly with the Council, Members, Colleagues and all those who have dealings with the Council, including customers and suppliers.  To positively demonstrate the Wealden values yourself and to continue to build the culture of the Wealden values through the appointment, management, appraisal and development of staff (as well as third party providers). |
| Health & Safety/Risk Management | Wealden District Council’s Health & Safety Policy and other safety procedures and guidelines are deemed part of this job description. Employees must look after their own health, safety and welfare and be mindful of other persons who may be affected by their acts. Employees must co‑operate and comply with management instructions regarding H&S issues and report all accidents, incidents and problems to their supervisor, manager or other senior members of staff, in line with the H&S policies.  You will need to be compliant with the Council’s risk management policies and procedures. These describe the Council’s commitment to risk management, the recognition that our aim is to protect colleagues and visitors from harm, and stress that all colleagues have a responsibility to minimise risk. |
| Governance Standards | Comply with the relevant governance standards applicable to the Council as communicated to the post-holder from time to time. |
| Data Protection | To comply with Council Policies and the Data Protection Act in all respects, with particular relevance to the protection and use of staff and customer information. |
| Confidentiality | Council colleagues are required to ensure that information about customers and staff is safeguarded to maintain confidentiality and is kept securely in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA18). The Council’s Data Security and Protection policy ICT policies provide guidance on how this can be achieved. |
| Communication | To encourage innovation and positive challenge through effective involvement, motivation and communication with Officers, Members, Partners and other Stakeholders, actively promoting the Council’s reputation and image as an employer of choice. |
| Digital/  Records Management | To direct the identification, development and implementation of digital and other systems and procedures which are aligned to the Council’s Drive to Digital Strategy and are shaped to reflect our customers’ and stakeholders’ needs.  To maintain Council customer and staff records (both paper and electronic) in accordance with Council policies. |
| Freedom of  Information | To provide advice and assistance to all persons who propose to make, or have made requests for information, and to ensure all requests for information are managed appropriately in accordance with Council Freedom of Information procedures. |
| Security | To comply with Council policies to ensure there is a safe and secure environment that protects Members, staff and visitors and their property, and the physical assets and the information of the organisation. |
| Other duties | Participate in such non-routine duties as elections and Emergency Planning as directed by the Chief Executive to include, where appropriate, the setup of a Rest Centre. |
| Freedom to Speak Up  (Whistleblowing) | You have responsibility for customer and staff welfare and should raise any concerns relating to a breach of Council policies and procedures with your manager or refer to HR for alternative options. |
| Environmental Impact | You will ensure compliance with the Council’s environmental management policies and procedures. These describe the Council’s commitment to climate change and carbon management, the recognition that our aim is to protect the environment and the use of natural resources that all staff have a responsibility towards. |
| Performance review | This Job Description will be used as a basis for individual performance review between you and your line manager.  The Job Description covers only the key result areas and, as such, does not intend to provide a comprehensive list of objectives. Specific objectives will be reviewed each April and may develop to meet the changing needs of the service. You will need to take due account, in the way they achieve the key result areas, of Council policies and procedures. |
| Equality and Diversity | To take responsibility and comply with the Council’s Equal Opportunities policy (which makes a commitment to promote equal opportunities and equality of all protected characteristics in Wealden), Officers’ Code of Conduct, Data Protection and other relevant policies, procedures and legislation, to ensure these are embedded and applied throughout the service in both service provision and employment issues. |

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| EVALUATION FACTOR GUIDE |
| **A – Education** You should identify the minimum requirements for the job for the job to be performed competently. |
| This factor relates to the level of education/formal training/qualification that indicate the "mental ability" required for the job to be performed competently. This does not necessarily mean that a specific jobholder has obtained the qualifications referred to (they may have acquired the knowledge by another route), nor that a specific jobholder has only the qualifications referred to. |
| **B - Proven Ability** This factor gauges the skills and aptitudes needed for the jobholder successfully to apply the mental ability assessed under Factor A so as to perform the job competently. |
| . These attributes may have been gained through successful exposure to work of a similar type or order, but may equally well have been acquired via some other route altogether. |
| **C - Managerial and Supervisory Responsibility** This takes account of the degree to which the job holder is expected to manage people and the requirement to perform or act in a specialist “advisory” capacity. |
| This factor examines managerial and staff responsibilities, with balance being struck between controlling a large number of staff carrying out routine tasks and a small team carrying out complex assignments requiring professional skills. It may also include staff without a formal management responsibility but who delegate some work to more junior staff. |
| **D - Accountability** The level of accountability is related to what extent the job holder is answerable for their actions and the consequences. It is important to recognise the difference between responsibility and accountability. |
| This factor examines accountability for operations, equipment, procedures and projects, some of which may not carry managerial or staff responsibilities. The level of responsibility is related to the impact of the job on end results and the consequence of errors. |
| **E - Independence of Action** This factor takes account of the freedom to act, the extent to which procedures are followed and the involvement/input into the formulation of strategy. |
| This factor examines the extent to which initiative can be used and decisions taken by job-holders. In essence, this covers freedom to operate. |
| **F - Complexity** This factor relates to the spread and types of different skills/activities involved in the job and considers the depth and degree of complexity required versus the routine nature of the job. |
| This factor examines the variety and diversity of tasks and challenges faced by the job-holder linked to the range of skills required. |
| **G - Relationships** This factor takes account of the degree of people contact in the context of internal/external, the level and the nature. |
| This factor examines the extent to which the work involves contact with people inside and outside the organisation, the level and importance of these contacts and the impact of the results of the relationship on the reputation and performance of the organisation. |
| **H - Direction** This factor assesses how the work is generated and the frequency of checking/review against progress. |
| This factor is akin to independence. It is, in fact, the opposite of independence and examines the constraints that are in place to act as a check on jobs. |
| **J - Pressure of Work** This factor relates to the mental and physical pressure. It is important to recognise that work volume is not considered within this factor. |
| This factor examines the mental and physical stress inherent in jobs. |
| **K - Working Environment** This factor takes account of the working conditions normally encountered when carrying out the job. A consistent assessment should be considered for discrete groups of employees. |
| This factor examines the physical environment within which jobs operate together with other physical factors, such as mileage, overseas travel etc. |

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| **PERSON SPECIFICATION** |

| **CRITERIA** | **ATTRIBUTES** | **ESSENTIAL** | **DESIRABLE** |
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| **Experience** | Experience of using computer systems. | ü |  |
| Experience of dealing with customers in a front line social housing or similar local authority environment. | ü |  |
|  | Experience of working in a local authority allocations or homelessness team would be advantageous. |  | ü |
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| **Qualifications/**  **Education**  **JE Factor A** | GCSE Grade C or above in English Language & Maths or NVQ Level 2 Administration (or equivalent qualification), or can otherwise demonstrate relevant level of literacy and numeracy through work experience. | ü |  |
| **Knowledge** | Practical, working knowledge of housing advice, homelessness or allocations |  | ü |
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| **Skills and aptitudes**  **JE Factor B** | Ability to work with flexibility in a team. | ü |  |
| Ability to write letters and deal with general correspondence. | ü |  |
| Organisational skills, ability to prioritise and work under pressure and to tight deadlines | ü |  |
| Ability to interpret customers’ needs and provide solutions face to face and over the telephone. | ü |  |
|  | Ability to problem solve, deal with difficult situations and manage customer expectations | ü |  |
| **Personal attributes** | An ability to manage customer expectations whilst demonstrating empathy towards customers' situations and respond appropriately in a professional manner | ü |  |
| Occupational Requirement to have a command of spoken English sufficient for effective performance. | ü |  |
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| **PERSONAL VALUES & BEHAVIOURS** | |
| **General Competencies** | |
| **Agile**  **Embracing & supporting change** | **Caring**  **Well being** |
| * Responds positively to change and has a ‘can do’ outlook * Constantly looking to improve what we do * Keeps up to date with job knowledge and undertakes learning and development * Learns from others and help other people learn | * Looking after each other’s wellbeing * Bringing a friendly, positive approach to work * Delivering the best possible outcome focussed service to our customers * Responds to customers positively, promptly and with courtesy |
| **High Performing**  **Performance focus** | **Together**  **Team working & effective** |
| * Committed to the work of our teams and of the Council * Carries out work with quality and accuracy * Focused on the clear goals we need to achieve * Making efficient and effective use of resources * Constantly striving to delivery best possible ‘value for money’ | * Actively building good working relationships within and across teams where appropriate * Offers help and co-operates with others to get the job done * Ensuring everyone knows what they need to know and hear it from the right source * Being open and transparent about what we are doing * Committed to two-way communication * Reflects and promotes Wealden’s culture and values |

**Management Competencies**

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| **Mandatory training standards** | **Other minimum core competencies and skills (where appropriate)** |
| * Performance Management (including appraisals) * Recruitment and Selection * Risk Management * Stress Management * Finance for budget holders * Sickness Absence monitoring * Grievance, Disciplinary & Capability Proceedings * Health and Safety * Ethics | * Coaching employees * Managing change * Managing employees who work remotely * Report writing * Presentation skills * Having that difficult conversation * Commercial awareness and acumen * Corporate * Decision making * Accountable |
| **Caring** | **High Performing** |
| * Understands customer needs * Regular 1-1s with employees (at least quarterly) * Gives recognition, praise and feedback to employees * Promotes and delivers a safe and healthy environment * Effective sickness absence management * Completion of job evaluation work * Supports new employees through induction and probation actions | * 100% completion of appraisals * Appraisal Action Plans reviewed * Effective budget management and control * Manager and employees attend mandatory training * Report writing is completed in a timely fashion |
| **Agile** | **Together** |
| * Actions from service reviews implemented * Employees in their team have the right skills & knowledge to do their job and deal with change * Reviewing ways to improve how we work and/or do things differently | * Regular team meetings and attendance (at least quarterly) * Communicating the Council’s Vision, Priorities and Service Objectives * Attendance at manager/conferences and employees briefings * Commitment to working in partnership |

**Leadership Competencies**

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| **Skills** | **Other Behaviour Standards** |
| * Leading the change process and people through change * Building personal resilience * Fostering innovation & commercial acumen * Developing ‘political’ awareness | * High Performing * Delivery of financial efficiency goals * Together * Engage with Members to enhance two way communications and keep relevant * Strong ethical and governance standards * Highly corporate |