

Lancaster City Council - Job Description

Job Title:	Housing Options Officer (Domestic Abuse)	Grade:	Grade ?	Job Code:	
Job Family:	Housing Options	Job Family Group:	Housing	Reports to:	
Line manages:	N/A				

Job Summary

To provide a quality homelessness and housing options service to all those approaching the authority for advice and information, including investigation and determination of claims, and to ensure that the Council complies with current legislation and good practice. To provide a homelessness and housing options service to victims of domestic abuse and identify suitable temporary accommodation when necessary

Direct Responsibilities

- Identify potential homeless situations from information received at referral and offer early advice to customers to seek to prevent homelessness occurring
- Work with families and individuals who are or have been subject to domestic abuse, and relevant agencies, to provide support and advice identify alternative accommodation when necessary, taking full account of safety and risk management issues
- To ensure that the safety and wellbeing of clients and their children is monitored and reviewed regularly
- Play an active role in local partnership responses to domestic abuse including referring to and attending MARAC meetings and feedback relevant issues of risk and safety to other members of the Housing Options Team
- Work within a multi-agency framework with statutory and voluntary sector agencies such as Victim Support providing services to people experiencing domestic abuse to ensure effective joint-working
- Be aware of the impact of domestic abuse on children and make appropriate referrals where necessary
- Arrange sanctuary measures with the agreement of other involved agencies where this is the preferred option of the victim and aligned with formal risk-assessment processes
- Advocate for victims with agencies who can help to address the domestic abuse by understanding how the role fits into these services and referring or signpost clients for longer term or additional needs support
- Liaise between landlords and tenants, courts, loan agencies, etc in endeavours to resolve disputes and prevent homelessness in cases where domestic abuse is not the cause of homelessness
- Interview homeless claimants, including both emergency situations and those who are likely to become threatened with homelessness in the near future
- Carry out appropriate and thorough investigations within agreed timescales in relation to the customers' claims of homelessness, including home visits and face-to-face interviews where practicable
- Offer comprehensive advice and assistance in relation to accessing different types of housing tenure, and social housing stock in Rossendale for clients' particular needs and resources, including liaison with statutory agencies regarding their clients' housing needs
- Ensure that appropriate notifications of S.184 decisions and duty discharged are issued within timescales and with details of right of review

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- Ensure that reasonable offers of accommodation are made to the applicants and that they are notified of their right of review
- Ensure suitable temporary accommodation is provided to applicants in accordance with the homelessness legislation
- Attend Reviews and Appeals if required with the Housing Manager
- To ensure that persons placed in temporary accommodation receive appropriate support and the maximum benefit entitlement
- To be responsible for the efficient collection of money due to the Council by way of payment from persons placed in temporary accommodation
- To liaise closely with Capita to ensure efficient processing of claims
- To report on the suitability of temporary accommodation bringing to the attention of senior officers any perceived problems
- To actively encourage customers to be involved in providing feedback on the quality and appropriateness of the support services and ensure they are involved in the design and review of the support service
- Maintain statistical records as necessary in connection with the work of the team and ensure the upkeep of customer files and case notes on the in-house IT systems
- To assist in supervising and monitoring the budget for homelessness
- To participate in and advise upon the development and review of Council policies and strategy relating to homelessness and the prevention agenda
- Attend meetings with other agencies to represent the Council and develop good working relationships
- To undertake additional training relevant to the duties of the post and to keep abreast of changes in legislation
- To attend public meetings, liaison, consultation and partnership groups and other related groups relevant to your work area to explain or present the work
- To ensure effective working relationships are developed and maintained with other departments, agencies and organisations and colleagues to develop and implement service delivery relevant to the work of the Authority.
- To undertake continuing professional development and maintain knowledge of changes in legislation, technology and best practice.
- To carry out all duties with due regard to Council policies and procedures, especially those concerning customer care, equality and community safety.
- To manage and monitor own work activities and report progress to the Housing Manager.
- To participate in the emergency response 'Out of Hours' service as required.
- To participate in training and development opportunities as agreed in order to continually update technical and professional skills and knowledge.
- To carry out any other related duties of an equivalent nature that the Council may require within the level of competence of the post-holder.

Primary Objectives

To prevent homelessness and support families and individuals who are or have been subject to domestic abuse and provide the appropriate support.

Staff Management Responsibilities

N/a

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Knowledge & Educational Requirements

Specialised knowledge: Specialised Knowledge

A good understanding and implementing the duties owed to customers threatened with Homelessness under current homelessness and related legislation including the roles and responsibilities associated with homeless prevention and the pursuit of wider housing options.

A Detailed working knowledge of the current domestic abuse legislation.

A good understanding of child protection and safeguarding processes.

A good understanding of the duties owed to customers threatened with Homelessness under all relevant legislation

A detailed understanding of the services available to customers seeking help and accommodation provided by other organisations, both statutory and voluntary.

Detailed knowledge of the requirements of data protection and equality and diversity

Trained to recognise and (within the remit of the post) to effectively respond to situations raising significant safeguarding concerns involving children and vulnerable adults

Trained to deal with conflict and aggression

Functional Knowledge

Good functional knowledge of the relevant legislation code of guidance and regulatory law policy and good practice.

Close working knowledge of accommodation and community supported based services provided to vulnerable client groups

The post holder will follow established protocols policies, procedures and service guidance with the exception of informal complex problem solving.

Familiarity is required with the strategies, service functions, and work of the council's functions together with those of relevant external housing-related agencies and organisations

Excellent verbal and written communication skills

Ability to mediate and negotiate in difficult situations

Able to create a range of formal written reports on relevant complex topics, as well as press releases, minutes of meetings and website material.

Able to coordinate events involving a wide variety of partners

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LCC specific knowledge:

Understanding, implementation and adherence to Lancaster City Council's policies and procedures.

Understanding, implementation and adherence to the Council's Values and Behaviours.

Understanding of the post holder's own and their team's contribution to the Council's Corporate.

Other Requirements

The hours of work are 37 hours per week, working Monday to Friday

Additional information

General Statement

The information contained in this job description is furnished to assist employees joining the council to understand and appreciate the work content of their post and the role they play in the organisation. However, the following points should be noted:

- Whilst every endeavour has been made to outline all the duties and responsibilities of the post, a document such as this does not permit every item to be specified in detail. Broad headings, therefore, may have been used, in which case all the usual associated routines are naturally included in the job description

Learning and Development

You are expected to undertake any training and development appropriate to the current and future needs of the post.

Health & Safety at Work

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 stipulates that it is the responsibility of every employee to observe all rules governing health and safety and such safety equipment as provided must be used.

Equal Opportunities

The Council is an Equal Opportunities Employer and has equal opportunities policies with which you are expected to comply at all times. The Council condemns all forms of April 2017 Version1 5 harassment and is actively seeking to promote a workplace where employees are treated with dignity, respect and without bias. Where appropriate the duties may be reviewed where an applicant is a disabled person, or an existing employee becomes unable to carry out the full range of duties due to a disability. This will be undertaken in line with the Council's equality duties set out in the Equality Act 2010.

Community Safety

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act requires local authorities to consider the community safety implications of all their activities. Officers of the Council should have an awareness of community safety and consider any community safety implications within their own area of responsibility.

Safeguarding

Lancaster City Council delivers a range of services and activities that impact on the lives of children both directly and indirectly. Safeguarding children, ensuring their welfare, safety and health is of paramount importance. We are committed to providing safe and supportive services that will give children the opportunities to achieve their full potential.

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Employee signature:		Print name:		Date:	
Manager Signature:		Print name:		Date:	