

Job Description

POST TITLE	Housing Needs Officer	POST NO:	HH1232 HH1240 HH1241 HH1242 HH1243
SERVICE UNIT	Housing & Development Control	GRADE:	9
JOB EVALUATION	A2154	JOB FAMILY	If applicable
RESPONSIBLE TO:	Senior Housing Needs Officer		
RESPONSIBLE FOR:	None		
LOCATION	Burnley Town Hall	STATUS	Staff

Job Purpose

To provide an effective, professional service on behalf of the Council including offering a full range of advice on housing options in the private and public sector and ensuring a comprehensive homelessness prevention and relief service.

To provide an effective, professional homelessness service on behalf of the Council including assessment and investigation of homeless approaches and applications in line with the Councils' statutory duties under Housing Act 1996 Part 7 and relevant case law.

To develop, update and review Personalised Housing Plans for customers on behalf of the Council under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. These Plans will ensure that homelessness is prevented or relieved through active engagement with the public and private sector services.

This position is fundamental to the provision of services to vulnerable customers who may approach the council for assistance through the Children's Act, the Care Act, and all relevant housing legislation including the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Main Duties and Responsibilities:

1. To provide an effective, efficient and customer-friendly service to clients presenting with housing problems to the Local Authority: to support them in keeping their current home, or in accessing a new home in the public or private housing sector.
2. To advise clients on a full range of options to solve their housing problem, including intervention if threatened with homelessness, registering on the choice based letting system, initiatives for RSL tenants, private renting, and services available through the Council's prevention of homelessness programme.

3. To provide a professional and effective housing needs interview and homelessness investigation service; to facilitate a full application from the service user and issuing of personalised housing plans to prevent or relief homelessness.
4. To assess the customers housing needs in accordance with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and all relevant housing legislation,
5. To complete the Personalised Housing Plans following a detailed assessment with all customers and to ensure this Personalised Housing Plan is kept up to date and implemented effectively.
6. To provide an effective homeless prevention service for single applicants and where appropriate to those whom the council may not have a statutory duty by providing advice and assistance towards helping them prevent homelessness.
7. To provide support to clients in temporary accommodation, maximise the efficient use of such placements and assist with move on.
8. To collate and analyse initial information and documentation relating to a client's circumstances using available prevention tools and deciding in line with legislation when to move an application from prevention to relief stage and to the final duty the Council may owe the applicant
9. To write and issue statutory S184 decision letters, letters of referral to other authorities where an applicant's local connection lies elsewhere, and outcome letters, to advise the applicant of the outcome of their initial interview
10. The post holder will be required to have specialist knowledge of the 1996 Housing Act, Homelessness Prevention Act 2002, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, welfare benefits expertise and adult and social care knowledge.
11. To comply with all relevant statutory requirements, Government Guidance and Codes of conduct, Burnley Council policies and procedures, professional and performance standards and homelessness prevention practice.
12. To ensure full and accurate records of all clients, all advice and support provided. To maintain accurate written and computer records, reports, & other monitoring information as required in connection with the duties undertaken, and keep other records as necessary to provide an *adequate* management information data base
13. To develop effective working relationships with internal colleagues within Burnley, other Local Authorities and statutory services the voluntary sector, private sector landlords and all other housing providers to ensure effective service delivery.
14. The post holder being required to liaise with customers, statutory organisation, advocates and third sector providers to arrive at a sustainable housing solution for customers with complex and multiple needs.
15. To advise clients of available tenancy support services including income maximisation, Discretionary Housing Payments, debt and rent arrears advice and rent support.
16. To provide locally based advice services to clients through face to face or telephone interviews, correspondence, advocacy, home visiting, to engage in effective information sharing and consultation with agencies and forums as appropriate.

17. To assist in developing a full range of information and publicity for all clients. To understand the value of information to the council and to contribute to good information governance by keeping information safe, accurate and up to date and available to those who need it. The officer is required to abide by the council's information governance policies.
18. The post holder will be responsible for all budgets under the post holder's control, ensuring compliance with income and expenditure targets at all times.
19. The post holder is required to act in the absence of the Housing Needs Manager in conjunction with other team members, as appropriate.
20. The post holder is required to prepare written and verbal reports as required.
21. The post holder is required to organise and participate in the Council out of hour's homelessness service.
22. To attend training identified as necessary to undertake current and future job requirements.
23. The post holder is required to work actively to promote community cohesion, good race relations and equality of opportunity.
24. The post holder is required to undertake such other duties as may be required from time-to-time and which are commensurate with the salary grading of the post.

Health & Safety

Employees are required to work with their employer to ensure a working environment that is safe and without risks to the health, safety and welfare of employees and others who may be affected. This is in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act, associated regulations and the Corporate Health and Safety Policy.

FOOTNOTE

This Job Description summarises the major responsibilities of the post. It is not intended to exclude other activities, nor future changes from the postholder's responsibilities.

Equality Act 2010

If you are a disabled applicant or an employee who has become disabled and this will affect your ability to do any of the above duties the Council will consider making some changes it thinks are reasonable.

Examples of changes may include providing equipment, making alterations to the workplace or changing some parts of the Job Description.

Person Specification

POST: Housing Needs Officer

POST NOS: HH1232, HH1240 - HH1243

Selection Criteria:	Essential/ Desirable E/D	Means of Assessment: Application/Interview/Test/ Presentation/ Production of Certificates A/I/T/P/C
QUALIFICATIONS		
1. Chartered Institute of Housing qualification	D	A/C
EXPERIENCE		
1. Experience of assessing need and offering housing advice to the public to achieve effective solutions to housing problems	E	A/I
2. Experience multi-agency and multi-disciplinary working in relation to housing need	E	A
3. Experience of carrying out housing needs interviews, investigations and negotiations.	E	A/I
4. Experience of provide support to households who are homeless or in housing need.	D	A/I
5. Experience of working with private landlords to prevent unlawful evictions and to enable clients to access good quality private rented accommodation.	D	A
SKILLS		
1. Ability to deal with customers in a caring, sensitive and tactful manner	E	A/I
2. Ability to manage a caseload and work under pressure to meet deadlines	E	A/I
3. Ability to work in demanding situations with customers in difficult and stressful circumstances	E	I
Ability to provide support to households who are homeless or in housing need	E	I
4. Ability to gather information and interpret complex issues quickly, to think creatively about problems and identify solutions	E	A/I

Selection Criteria:	Essential/ Desirable E/D	<u>Means of Assessment:</u> Application/Interview/Test/ Presentation/ Production of Certificates A/I/T/P/C
5. Ability to work effectively as part of a team	E	A/I
6. Ability to work on own initiative with minimal supervision	E	A/I
7. Effective verbal and written communication skills including the ability to write detailed letters, Personal housing plans, support plans and reports	E	A/I
8. IT literate and able to use computer software effectively	E	A
KNOWLEDGE		
1. Working knowledge of relevant lettings, homelessness and housing act legislation, including security of tenure and private tenants' rights	E	I
2. Working knowledge of Homelessness Code of Guidance and relevant case law	E	I
3. A good knowledge of services, welfare benefits and support available to applicants experiencing housing problems	E	I
OTHER		
1. To demonstrate a professional commitment to the promotion of community cohesion, good race relations and equality of opportunity	E	I
2. To demonstrate commitment to best practice in customer care	E	A/I
3. Possession of full driving licence and willingness to travel to various locations both within and outside the borough	D	A/C
4. Ability to participate in the out of hour's homelessness service	E	I
The Burnley Way		
<p>Burnley employees are expected to be role models the organisation's TEAM values and behaviours which are: Together, Enterprising, Ambitious and Meeting Customer Needs. Our organisational leaders and managers are expected to strive to create a culture of openness and trust, where people are led and managed in line with TEAM values acting as role models for working collaboratively to drive efficiency and service improvements in order to deliver the Council's vision and objectives.</p> <p>Further details are contained in the Behaviour Framework</p>		