



## Job Description and Person Specification

<b>Job Title</b>	Housing Options Advisor (2 posts)	
<b>Post Number</b>	P1243, P1244, P1245, P1538, P2518	<b>JE Ref:</b>
<b>Grade</b>	Grade 5	
<b>Other Payments</b>	Essential Car User Allowance	
<b>Job Family</b>	Community Support and Development	
<b>Service</b>	Housing	
<b>Progression</b>	Progression through the grade is dependent on performance against delivery targets, value and behaviours	
<b>Hours per week</b>	37	
<b>Accountable to</b>	Principal Strategic Housing Officer	
<b>Date created/ reviewed</b>	August 2020/Updated February 2022/March 2023/March 2026	

### JOB DESCRIPTION FOR HOUSING OPTIONS ADVISOR

#### Job Purpose

To provide a high standard of housing advice, homelessness prevention, housing support and housing options to customers or their representatives requesting housing assistance.

To ensure that the Council complies with its statutory duties in providing homeless prevention advice, ensuring that the Council acts in accordance with legislation.

#### Accountabilities

1. To provide a bespoke and tailored advice service to people leaving Care, Prison, Hospital and the Armed Forces, and to those fleeing Domestic Abuse, in line with the new Section 179 duty in the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homeless Reduction Act 2017. To provide advice on homelessness, security of tenure, public and private sector tenancies, housing and welfare benefits, income maximisation, arrears, harassment, unlawful eviction, home ownership and relationship breakdown.
2. To perform a regular triage duty in providing a front line housing advice service, offering support and signposting to appropriate services as required. This will include assessing whether an interim accommodation duty is owed to applicants who are homeless on the day of approach.
3. To work in partnership with the Homeless Assessment Advisors during a homeless application, to successfully prevent and relieve homelessness through

<p>the appropriate assessment of viable housing options for applicants. This will involve mediation with families and friends, conducting referrals to various housing support organisations around the County, and working with other key stakeholders to prevent eviction.</p>
<p>4. To keep accurate and up to date records of all meetings and actions on an applicant's Personalised Housing Plan. To carry out appropriate case work. This could include home visits, mediation, liaising with partners and stakeholders, co-location at other locations, attending meetings and interviews on behalf of the applicant, and to advocate on the applicant's behalf in an effort to prevent eviction or find alternative accommodation pathways.</p>
<p>5. To provide support to the Homeless Assessment Advisor in regards to the Personalised Housing Plan and the agreed outcomes in order to prevent and or/relieve homelessness.</p>
<p>6. To operate a regular phone duty and to work closely with other internal departments to respond to any internal or public enquiries regarding housing and homelessness.</p>
<p>7. To detect and report any incidents of suspected fraud and to liaise with other departments such as Housing Benefit, Internal Audit and Legal.</p>
<p>8. To follow safeguarding procedures and policies to ensure vulnerable children and adults with housing difficulties receive the right services at the right time, including attendance at Case Conferences and to report incidents of suspected abuse or neglect of children or vulnerable adults to the designated officer.</p>
<p>9. To support customers who are vulnerable due to mental or physical ill health and to liaise closely with the appropriate key workers in other agencies such as Mental Health, Social Services, Probation, Police and Refuges.</p>

## **Demands**

### **Physical**

Ability to work within an office environment and to carry out off site visits and attend meetings several times a week. To be able to attend applicant's homes and access sometimes restrictive locations.

### **Mental**

Ability to provide comprehensive housing advice on a daily basis and ensure that proper procedures are followed.

Ability to undertake basic investigations relating to potential homelessness. To be able to ask appropriate open questions to gather relevant information on an applicant, and to

make quick and accurate decisions on the appropriate course of actions, with frequent interruptions.

Ability to plan own work to meet the day-to-day requirements of the service as well as unanticipated events and departmental/corporate deadlines.

To be able to understand and analyse information and to effectively communicate with customers (whose first language may not be English) or their representatives

To be able to complete accurate case notes and enquiries, using relevant IT Systems as well as making full use of Microsoft Office

### **Emotional**

Ability to manage daily exposure to regular and diverse emotional issues presented by customers in the course of dealing with their housing need such as sexual abuse, domestic abuse, physical and mental health issues, and those individuals presenting complex and challenging behaviour due to alcohol or substance misuse.

## **Working Conditions**

### **Environment**

The post holder will be working in an office environment but is likely to be exposed to unpleasant working conditions as they will be required to carry out visits to customers' homes which may have restricted access, involve climbing stairs and be dirty or infested. Home visits could take place several times per week and last up to one hour.

### **People related**

The post holder may encounter verbal abuse and aggressive behaviour from customers on a weekly basis (up to 30 minutes at a time).

## **Other Employment Requirements**

Participation in the Out of Hours rota subject to service delivery.

Willing and able to work from home as part of hybrid working arrangements.

A clean driving licence and access to a vehicle, taxed and insured for business use is desirable.

Basic Disclosure check required.

To be available to assist with departmental responsibilities in accordance with the corporate Emergency Planning and Business Continuity arrangements.

<b>ROLE SPECIFIC PERSON SPECIFICATION HOUSING OPTIONS ADVISOR</b>			
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
<b>Values and Behaviours</b>			

	We are Customer Driven	X		I, T, R
	We Care	X		I, T, R
	We are Confident	X		I, T, R
	We Work Together	X		I, T, R
	We are Trusted	X		I, T, R
<b>Qualifications</b>				
Q1	GSCE or equivalent in Maths and English	X		A, D
Q2	Education: NVQ Level 3 or equivalent qualification in relevant subject <b>and / or</b> at least one year's relevant work experience (2 years' experience if no relevant qualification)	X		A, D
<b>Knowledge</b>				
K1	Broad knowledge of private rented sector, affordable home ownership, affordable rented housing or similar areas of housing.	X		
K2	Good knowledge of Microsoft Office, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook with a willingness to learn and work competently with specific software.	X		
K3	Good oral and written skills in order to condense complex information into simple, clear terminology.	X		
K4	Commitment to and clear understanding of equal opportunities.	X		
K5	Knowledge of relevant Housing legislation such as the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the Homelessness Act 2002.		X	
K6	Knowledge of related legislation such as immigration and welfare benefits.		X	
<b>Experience</b>				
E1	The ability to demonstrate a total commitment to high quality customer care, equality and diversity, both internal and external, and to demonstrate how this should be applied throughout the duties required of this post. This includes doing so in customers' homes.	X		

E2	Experience of negotiation and influencing skills to achieve effective outcomes that prevent homelessness.	X		
E3	Ability to resolve difficult and confrontational situations.	X		
E4	Logical and structured approach to problem solving.	X		
E5	Experience of working with an elderly or vulnerable client groups within the community.	X		
E6	Experience of liaison with a range of agencies.	X		
E7	Experience of maintaining accurate case notes ensuring they are completed in a timely manner within target timescales and to maintain information on databases.	X		
E8	Good interpersonal and listening skills.	X		
E9	Ability to write formal correspondence.	X		
E10	Experience of working in a people orientated customer support role.	X		
E11	Ability to comply with data protection, security and confidentiality standards of the Council.	X		

### Method of Assessment Codes

A	Application Form	T	Tests (online / at interview)	R	Reference	D	Documentary Evidence	I	Interview	O	Other
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*For further information on the scope of accountabilities when working at this level please see the generic job description/person specification [here](#)*