Epsom & Ewell Borough Council
Role Profile Template

Role Title:	Housing Options (Prevention) Officer
Job Family:	Supervisor / Professional Support
Service:	Housing and Environmental Services
Location:	Town Hall. The Parade, Epsom, Surrey. KT18 5BY
Reporting To:	Housing Options Manager

Role Purpose: ***Why the role exists and its contribution***	This role will be working within our Housing Options Team, primarily dealing in homelessness prevention through a pro-active and innovative approach to problem solving. This includes assessing the needs of these clients, devising Personal Housing Plans and providing further support by assisting clients to proactively find and secure alternative accommodation either in supported or private rented accommodation (with the assistance of our Rent Deposit Scheme). To assess applications for assistance from homeless households in accordance with the 1996 Housing Act, as amended and extended by the Homelessness Act 2002, and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and to use all available resources to discharge the councils' statutory responsibilities. As a member of the council's team, contribute to the achievement of the Council's corporate vision, behaviours and priorities and the development of the Council's positive high performing culture.

Main Duties and accountabilities

Service Specific	**Referral and Assessment** Carry out a comprehensive assessment with clients of their social, welfare and housing needs, identifying any risks in the process. Draw up, implement, monitor and review Personal Housing Plans to meet the clients' identified needs. Work with the ESOS outreach team and the Council's Housing Options team in a co-ordinated approach. Undertake welfare checks and safeguarding referrals where required. **Securing accommodation**

	Proactively assist the client to find and access private rented and supported accommodation. Give information, advice and guidance to clients to enable them to find suitable private rented accommodation. Motivate and help clients to search for their own accommodation. Provide information, advice and assistance on welfare benefits to help clients secure accommodation. Foster and develop proactive working relationships with supported accommodation providers to identify move-on options and make referrals to identified properties. Build effective working relationships with private sector landlords and letting agents in order to increase access to the private rented sector for single homeless clients. Support clients to attend property viewing and encourage the clients to represent themselves through coaching. Work with the Council's Rent Deposit Officer to coordinate the rent deposit scheme administration, deposits, rent in advance and incentive payments. Support client to undertake e-learning pre-tenancy training. **Tenancy and housing related support** Provide support to clients to sustain current tenancies who may have a range of needs, including high, complex and multiple needs through signposting/referral to appropriate agencies Provide support to enable clients to successfully move into supported or private rented accommodation, ensuring that clients understand their license/tenancy agreement, accessing furniture projects, setting up utilities, claiming welfare benefits etc. Mediate between tenants and their landlords/agent and provide information, advice and guidance to both parties regarding tenancy and management issues. Refer tenants who need additional support to appropriate agencies. Work with these agencies to help support and sustain the tenancy and to ensure longer-term support network are created around the client. Help clients with support around health and wellbeing, including issues of social isolation Assist clients in accessing specialist help and support, as appropriate (drug and alcohol, health, mental health, welfare benefits). Provide a flexible approach to solving housing problems. **Housing Options/ Homelessness Assessments**

	Provide comprehensive housing advice on a range of housing related issues. Where homelessness cannot be prevented, ensure homeless applications are taken, investigated and determined appropriately under the terms of the Housing Act 1996 as amended, Homelessness Reduction Act, code of guidance and case law. Carry out follow up casework, enquiries and negotiation, including contact with third parties to resolve housing problems and ensure tenants' rights are met. Issue written decisions on completion of enquiries into the homeless application. Assist with the allocation for homeless households to interim/temporary accommodation. Use the council's IT packages to maintain records for applicants, which accurately reflect their current situation and housing needs, the advice provided to them and the outcomes. To ensure correct statistical reporting. Work closely with all colleagues within the Housing Services team, ensuring that all necessary applicant/casework information is shared to enable efficient working across the team. This will involve close liaison with those responsible for the housing needs register, temporary accommodation, private sector housing, and housing support colleagues. Provide an efficient and high-quality customer based service at all times, within the framework of equal opportunities. Maintain awareness of council's key priorities for the housing service. Contribute ideas towards continual improvement of the service.
Generic Duties	**Professional Support** • Provide support to a technical and professional service to help ensure council statutory obligations are adhered to through investigations, inspections and enforcements in accordance with relevant legislation, codes of practice and other regulatory instruments. • To act as first point of contact for customers and resolve straightforward queries. . • Support and assist with project work. • To collate and present relevant data/information to enable the

	organisation to make informed decisions. • To seek, build and maintain good relationships with senior managers, business partners, other Councils and all levels of staff. • To manage processes within the service to ensure smooth delivery of services.

The key decision making areas in the role
Makes enquiries and decisions regarding Council's obligations under 1996 Housing Act (as amended by Homelessness Act 2002) & Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Gives professional advice and housing options to households threatened with homelessness. Gives advice on legal issues relating to security of tenure and housing rights to clients and/or third parties
Customers and contacts
Knowledge of other service areas within the Council/Authority Contact with clients/customers The needs of clients/customers for whom responsible Knowledge of EEBC structure, policies and targets. Knowledge of Housing Service policies, procedures and documentation. Knowledge of Housing Services computer and performance management systems. Development of contacts with council staff, members and partner organisations. Familiarity with corporate policies, and HR procedures. Knowledge of local housing conditions, profile of temporary accommodation stock, general housing market.

Dimensions of the role	
Financial	**Non-financial**

Person Specification

Qualifications and training	E/D	AP	AS	INT
A good standard of general education including 5 A - C GCSE, including maths and English, or equivalent.	E	AP		INT
Experience				
Experience of working in a local authority housing department, Registered Social Landlord or other housing role.	E	AP		INT
Experience of interviewing members of the public, dealing with vulnerable and challenging clients.	E	AP		INT
Experience of providing housing advice or tenancy support	E	AP		INT
Experience of advising on welfare benefits.	E	AP		INT
Experience of liaising with statutory, non-statutory and voluntary agencies such as Police, Probation, Mental Health Teams, social services, drug treatment services and CAB	E	AP		INT
Knowledge/ skills / attributes				
Understanding of Part VI and VII of the 1996 Housing Act, Homelessness Act 2002, Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, Code of Guidance and case law.	E	AP	AS	INT
Ability to relate to households from a variety of backgrounds and the ability to work with vulnerable individuals under stress.	E	AP		INT
Ability to evaluate an individual's circumstances and explain complex information to them.	E	AP		INT
Ability to remain calm and work effectively under pressure.	E	AP		INT
Good organisational skills and experience of following policies and procedures.	E	AP		INT
Strong interpersonal, communication and administration skills, including the ability to: • deal with vulnerable and difficult customers in stressful circumstances • Establish effective negotiation skills and working relationships throughout the organisation and with partners, suppliers and contractors.	E	AP		INT
Ability to record, collate and interpret statistical	E	AP		INT

data.				
Excellent written and verbal communication skills with the ability to produce reports, letters and other information for a variety of audiences	E	AP	AS	INT
IT literate with ability to use a range of IT packages and able to help develop systems.	D	AP		INT
Ability to negotiate, think, plan and act with a creative approach to problem solving and innovation.	D	AP		INT
Good effective time management with the ability to prioritise tasks and manage own workload in demanding circumstances and with competing priorities.	E	AP		INT
Be self-motivated and have the ability to work on own initiative with minimum supervision.	E	AP		INT
The ability to work with others, displaying a strong sense of team cohesion.	E	AP		INT
Displays commitment to a one council way of working.	D	AP		INT
Commitment to equal opportunities, customer care and confidentiality.	E	AP		INT
Special requirements				
DBS holder	E	AP		INT
Ability to work flexibly on occasion including working after 5pm as necessary, attend occasional evening meetings and respond to out of hours calls.	E	AP		INT
To carry out visits when required to applicants throughout the borough and neighbouring areas as part of the duties.	E	AP		INT
Must be legally entitled to work in the UK.	E	AP		INT