

Job Description

Job title	Housing Options Domestic Abuse Officer
Directorate	Regeneration, Culture and Environment
Division	Housing
Range	MPR 4
Reports to	Homeless Prevention & Assessment Team Leader

Main purpose of the job:

Working as part of the Housing Solutions & Reviews Team to provide a holistic housing options service to survivors of domestic abuse, ensuring that for those seeking housing assistance, they are provided with a service which is focused upon meeting their needs and works towards minimising the impact of any disruption which they might experience

To provide a customer focused, pro-active service to help residents secure their housing choices

Liaise with stakeholders in a way that promotes the [One Medway Council Plan](#) and embeds our [values and behaviours](#).

Accountabilities and outcomes:

- < Act as domestic abuse (DA) champion and lead for Housing Services, including promoting learning and improvement across the service, disseminating good practice, feeding back information, legislation and case law developments, to section managers and staff.
- Promote safeguarding across the Service and ensuring that appropriate referrals and interventions are undertaken for vulnerable survivors of domestic abuse being assisted by the service.
- Complete assessments with clients experiencing DA that have approached the service, including risk assessments, safety plans & complete referrals to appropriate agencies as required and liaise with other services and departments to achieve the best outcome for victims.
- Ensure focused case management for DA approaches to the Housing Options Team, including carrying own DA caseload and liaising and supporting Housing Options Officers in their own DA casework management and maintaining regular contact with victims.

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Advise victims of their rights and options for seeking help and support from other agencies, making referrals and co-ordinating the provision of multi-agency support where necessary, and proactively advocate to ensure barriers to accessing support and protection are minimised.

Assess and complete referrals to Safe in Medway (SIM) accommodation where appropriate and attend regular reviews meetings to identify any risk issues and progress.

Liaise with other services and organisations, including Oasis (IDVA service), to promote and support early intervention and prevention partnership working for survivors of DA rather than crisis management.

Be required to take part in various meetings, internal and external to the Council, including representing Housing Services at MARAC and via any joint working arrangements with Early Help, Children's' and Adult Services.

Act as housing liaison with refuges, sanctuary schemes, and Social landlords.

Represent Housing Service at the One stop shop to provide advice and support to survivors of DA

At manager's discretion, other activities may be assigned that fit the job description.

Key Corporate Accountabilities:

To work with colleagues to achieve service plan objectives and targets.

To understand and actively keep up to date with GDPR responsibilities, including completing regular refresher training.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: all employees are required to act in such a way that safeguards the health and well-being of children and vulnerable adults.

As a corporate parent, all council employees are responsible for ensuring the well-being and positive outcomes of Medway's care-experienced children and young people.

To participate in the Performance Appraisal process and contribute to the identification of own and team development needs utilising the Career Progression Framework.

Work in accordance with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation. Promoting equality of opportunity, fostering good relations and improving the quality of life and opportunities for everyone living and working in Medway.

To ensure full compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Council's Health and Safety Policy and all locally agreed safe methods of work.

To fully understand and be aware of the commitment to the duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to prevent crime and disorder.

Promote the Medway Carbon Neutral by 2050 commitment; supporting the Council action plan to ensure we play our part in addressing the climate emergency.

Medway Council is a Category One responder in relation to the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) and as a result all staff working for the Authority may be asked to carry out Category One response duties or stand in the role of another member of staff who is responding to a Major Civil Incident.

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Organisation:

This role reports to the Homeless Prevention & Assessment Team Leader

The post holder will not be required to line manage others but may be required to direct, coordinate or train other employees.

The post holder will need to liaise with all stakeholders both internal and external to the organisation.

Working Style:

HYBRID - a flexible working arrangement whereby an employee can undertake their work either in the office and/or partially or mainly from home on a temporary or permanent basis.

Person specification

All criteria at level A should be considered essential requirements.

Qualifications

Level A

- A good standard of general education (e.g. Level 2, GCSEs) including Maths and English or
- Equivalent housing qualification at Level 2

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

- Completion of role specific training as identified during Performance Appraisal Review

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

- Completion of role specific training as identified during Performance Appraisal Review

Knowledge

Level A

- Working knowledge of the duties owed to homeless persons under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities
- Knowledge of Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Knowledge of best practice in supporting victims and survivors of domestic abuse
- A general understanding of the impact of DA on individual victims, their families and the community.
- Knowledge of FGM; Forced Marriage and so called 'honour' based violence.
- An excellent working knowledge of housing needs of abuse survivors
- Up to date knowledge of welfare rights, benefits and how it relates to domestic abuse.
- An excellent working knowledge of key issues faced by people Domestic Abuse victims and survivors
- Understanding of domestic abuse and its effects on diverse groups and children
- An understanding of the link between violence, abuse, exploitation and homelessness, and a willingness to develop this knowledge particularly around domestic abuse, other forms of violence against women and girls, hate crime and youth violence.
- Good working knowledge of the principals of confidentiality and to be able to apply them to complex practical situations
- Practical understanding of diversity and experience of applying its principles in the workplace

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

- Good knowledge of the criminal justice system and civil and legal orders available to victims of domestic abuse
- Extensive knowledge of the housing and homelessness system and pathways and resettlement opportunities for survivors of domestic abuse
- Detailed and extensive knowledge of the current Code of Guidance for Local Authorities, Relevant Case Law and its application.
- Working knowledge of homeless prevention initiatives and their application and effectiveness
- Knowledge and understanding of the Housing Department's objectives and policies and the ability to communicate these to colleagues and customers to help them understand decisions and service practises

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

- Knowledge of housing policies, regulations and case laws including Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended)
- Knowledge of trauma informed practice

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- Understanding of relevant associated statutory guidance, legislation and regulations that impact homelessness prevention e.g. Children's Act
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Experience

Level A

- Proven experience of working with homeless or vulnerably housed women experiencing multiple disadvantages
Experience of working with and advocating for survivors of domestic abuse.
- Experience of managing a caseload of individuals facing severe and multiple disadvantages.
- Experience of coping under pressure and dealing with difficult situations.
- Experience of partnership and collaborative working across a broad system.
- Experience of managing risk and safety planning.
- Evidence of working at a professional level
- Experience of completing SaveLives DASH assessments and making referrals to MARAC.
- Experience of writing letters and reports to customers, professionals and partner agencies
- Experience of working in a demanding environment with the public
- Experience of keeping good and accurate records

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

- Experience of working in a housing service preventing homelessness
- Experience of conducting in-depth interviews to obtain relevant information and validate evidence to complete accurate assessments
- Experience of managing a complex caseload
- Experience of gender and trauma informed approaches.
- Experience of representing teams at multiagency risk management meetings

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

- Experience of developing and delivering training programmes for professionals in a multi-agency setting with reference to key areas that impact domestic abuse survivors
- Experience of developing and maintaining effective strategic and operational partnerships across both statutory and voluntary organisations.
- Experience of successfully undertaking research, preparing reports and undertaking bids for funding.
- Proven experience of successfully providing a high performing service that demonstrate effective employee behaviours
- Demonstrable experience of initiating, building relationships with and working positively in partnership with a range of statutory and voluntary agencies

Skills

Level A

- Able to work on own initiative
- Able to prioritise workloads and meet deadlines
- Excellent communication skills at all levels
- Developed negotiating skills
- Good written and oral communications skills
- Be confident and competent with standard IT packages
- Proven decision-making skills
- Good numeracy skills

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- Able to work as part of a team and share/learn best practice, knowledge and expertise with/from colleagues
- Able to show a commitment to a high level of customer care and the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy
- Develop the ability to cope with and control confrontational situations
- Able to take responsibility for your own development
- Able to manage a caseload
- Competent user of standard ICT packages, e.g. Word, Excel, Outlook and PowerPoint
- Friendly, tactful, approachable, non-judgemental, empathic and customer focused.

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

- Ability to work within legal, political and policy constraints and to follow internal procedures
- Demonstrable ability to use well developed communication skills to present complex/sensitive information in an understandable way, to a range of audiences
- Demonstrable ability to handle and process cash/documentation relating to small financial amounts (i.e. up to £250 per day)
- Ability to deal with high levels of work-related pressure, for example from deadlines, interruptions or conflicting demands.
- Demonstrable ability to analyse and interpret complex information and situations

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

- Demonstrable ability to work independently within defined procedures, and work outside of procedures, making decisions without referring to a line manager, where necessary.
- Adopts an imaginative and innovative approach.
- Demonstrable ability to supervise, co-ordinate or train other employees where required
- Promote good performance, developing clear, structured and efficient ways of managing workload and delivering results, challenging themselves and others to perform well, and to adhere to the Council's performance management systems
- Demonstrate the effective and efficient use of the full range of training resources for self-development and efficiency within the role