

Job Description

Job title	Accommodation Assistant
Directorate	PLACE : Regeneration, Culture and Environment
Division	Housing Needs
Range	MPR 2
Reports to	Senior Officer

Main purpose of the job:

Ensure a high-quality advice and assistance is given to customers in Temporary Accommodation and those seeking social housing through Medway Council's Kent Homechoice Choice Based Lettings Scheme. Respond compassionately to enquiries through various media, providing guidance and support to Medway residents and other stakeholders and ensure compliance with relevant policies and regulations.

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

Accountabilities and outcomes:

Provide a comprehensive service for housing applicants and households in temporary accommodation, including case assessment, investigation, decision making and maintenance of individual records on the computer system.

Assist customers to complete relevant forms, including applications for Kent Homechoice, Housing Benefit and assistance to access other voluntary and statutory services to providing rehousing support.

Assist with the efficient and effective running of the Kent Homechoice and delivery of the objectives and outcomes in the Council's allocation policy.

Support efficient and cost-effective allocation and use of temporary accommodation working closely with various other officers and teams as required

Make regular visits and inspections to of accommodation to ensure that it is safe and facilities are in good order, to take full inventories and to arrange for necessary repairs, decoration and ground maintenance work to be carried out.

Support temporary accommodation residents to adhere to their licence conditions and deal with problems relating to tenure, including the prevention and recovery of rent arrears, property condition etc

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Ensure all applicants complete a Housing Benefits application before entering temporary accommodation, except in emergencies where it must be completed on the next working day.

Liaise with housing providers to ensure the availability and suitability of accommodation.

Provide support and guidance to service users regarding their housing options.

Collaborate with internal teams to ensure a seamless service delivery.

Ensure that systems are kept up to date with accurate record keeping.

Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation and council policies.

At the discretion of the Head of Service, such other activities as may from time to time be agreed consistent with the nature of the job described above.

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 into the role of another member of staff who is responding to a Major Civil Incident.

Organisation:

This role reports to the appropriate Senior Officer

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

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The post holder will be required 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 are considered essential unless stated otherwise.

Qualifications

Level A

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

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

None

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

None

Knowledge

Level A

- Understanding of the Council's general obligations to those who are homeless
- An understanding of the issues faced by households who are homeless
- An understanding of the social housing and the challenges with allocating social housing
- Understanding of the range of housing options and support services available
- An understanding of excellent customer service and best practice
- An understanding of equality and diversity, data protection
- Understands their role in the context of safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

- Understanding of temporary accommodation, especially suitability
- An awareness of all the services and support available to residents seeking help and accommodation including those beyond housing such as health and well-being, employment and education

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

- Knowledge of Part VI and Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), the Homelessness Act 2002, Homelessness
- Reduction Act and any other relevant legislation as applicable
- Knowledge of statutory guidance for allocation of social housing and homelessness
- Knowledge of statutory guidance for allocation of social housing and homelessness

Experience

Level A

- Of being in a high-pressured environment
- Of delivering excellent customer service
- Of supporting vulnerable people
- Of working within a team

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

- Dealing with a wide range of people who may present complex and challenging behaviour.

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- Of providing comprehensive advice and assistance
- Of assessing applications for social housing
- Dealing with issues in challenging issues in temporary accommodation
- Of effective joint working and successful multi agency working

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

- At least 12 months experience of working in a local housing authority or Registered Housing Provider in a customer service or Housing capacity
 - Negotiating with other statutory, community-based and the advocacy organisations to find solutions to complex housing situations
 - Successfully managing rent accounts and undertaking related enforcement
 - Understanding of good housing standard and how it relates to accommodation provision regarding homelessness duties
 - 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
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Skills

Level A

- The ability to undertake a range of processes and procedures involving workflow systems and maintenance of database information
- Have a level of numeracy sufficient to give basic money and housing advice using available tools
- Excellent IT skills, with the ability to use a range of databases and MS Word and EXCEL to produce a wide range of letters and documents and MS Outlook to process the full range of email and diary functions
- Appreciation of the differing needs of customers who face sometimes difficult and stressful situations
- Ability to remain calm and able to make accurate and timely decisions whilst under pressure
- Good interpersonal skills and a proven ability to communicate effectively
- Empathic and able to deal with customers in a sensitive and appropriate manner in a demanding and challenging environment.

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

- Ability to remain calm and able to make accurate and timely decisions whilst under pressure and to maintain control of challenging situations
- Ability to represent the service by developing and maintaining effective relationships with internal and external representatives

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

- Ability to interpret legislation and law and how it impacts customer service deliver.
- The ability to work across boundaries in partnership with all housing sectors and partner agencies.
- The ability to develop and present written or verbal information in a clear and concise manner
- Proven ability in brokering and leading, partnerships internally and externally