

Job Description

Job title	Assistant Housing Options Officer
Directorate	PLACE : Regeneration, Culture and Environment
Division	Strategic Housing
Range	MPR 2
Reports to	Housing Options Team Leader

Main purpose of the job:

Under the direction of the Housing Options Team Leader, the post holder will be responsible for delivering a holistic approach to finding ways of solving our customers housing need by giving housing advice, by telephone and face to face.

Providing initial advice on a range of housing issues including housing options, social housing, homelessness and private sector housing issues in line with law, legislation, policy and local initiatives.

To support the Housing Options Team Leader to administer an excellent frontline service homelessness preventions and options, which meets the needs and aspirations of our customers and ensures quality standards are achieved and maintained.

To support the Housing Options Team Leader by undertaking monitoring and evaluating of service reviews, customer satisfaction, performance indicators (national and local) relevant to the housing options team.

To provide ideas and develop new initiatives with line managers and other seniors in Housing Options

Offering initial advice to customers and other organisations on:

- a. All aspects of Housing services i.e. Housing Options, Private Sector Housing, HomeChoice and Strategy and signposting clients where appropriate.
- b. Prevention schemes - PRS, Sanctuary, Debt Impact Funding, Mortgage Rescue, Advocacy Services, mediation, welfare benefit advice and practical assistance to access housing.

Collation of evidence to support the Housing Options Officers when undertaking their enquiries regarding homelessness applications

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

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

Accountabilities and outcomes:

Manage the housing inbox and respond to enquiries from the public, key stakeholders, internal and external partners senior managers and elected members, signposting or escalating to Seniors where appropriate responding within departments and corporate timescales

Manage the housing line (332277) Responding to calls and voicemails Providing practical support and guidance to clients and professionals and keeping an accurate record of the calls within departments and corporate timescales

To accurately collate and analyse initial information and documentation relating to a client's circumstances and upload to case management system.

Responding to housing emergencies and raising this with a Senior Officer.

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 various duties undertaken, and keep other records necessary to provide an adequate management information system. Including collating weekly/Monthly data reports and recording daily approaches and placements.

To use relevant identity/credit software and/or programs that enables the service to check and verify the accuracy of a homeless approach or application, and the circumstances affecting the service user on behalf of Housing Options Officers, Seniors or Manager Including for example approach checks, police checks, Home office checks & land registration.

Establish, develop and maintain key contacts with joint working partners to provide and effective day to day working relationships, resolving problems and monitoring the service provided eg. Pre-Release Team, Social landlords.

Action and respond to all duty to refer submissions from public and no public body organisations.

Responsibility for booking necessary appointments for clients that are homeless or threatened with homelessness through the appointment booking system.

Monitor and respond to all housing call backs through the relevant system ensuring they are noted and escalated if required to the relevant person.

To complete regular quality checks on appointments conducted recording outcomes and escalating any issues to Senior Management.

Minute take for all meetings as directed by the senior management team.

Complete administrative tasks such as printing letters and uploading of documents for the Housing Options Officers or as directed by Senior Management.

Maintain awareness and knowledge of Safeguarding issues and as per the service procedures complete referrals and or escalate as appropriate.

Support the rehousing team in the delivery of the social housing register by effectively applying the allocation policy to banding requests for clients owed homeless duties.

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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 <Homeless 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 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 in line with the requirements of the service.

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)

- Past experience supporting a front-line service in admin functions or

Knowledge

Level A

- Understanding of the Council's 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
- An understanding of data protection
- Understands their role in the context of safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults
- Understanding of the differing needs of customers who face sometimes difficult and stressful situations

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

- A good knowledge base of the law in relation to a broad range of housing and benefit issues such as homelessness legislation, landlord and tenant law, private sector issues, court processes etc
- 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
- Knowledge of community-based supports that are available

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

Knowledge

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

Experience

Level A

- Working in a high-pressured environment
- Delivering excellent customer service
- Supporting vulnerable people

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- 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.
- Providing comprehensive advice and assistance
- Assessing applications for social housing
- Dealing with challenging issues in temporary accommodation
- 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
 - Experience of negotiating with other statutory, community-based and advocacy organisations to find solutions to complex housing situations
 - Experience of successfully managing rent accounts and undertaking related enforcement
 - Understanding of good housing standard and how it relates to accommodation provision regarding homelessness duties
 - 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
- 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.
- Non judgement with excellent active listening ability

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 and verbal information in a clear and concise manner
- Proven ability in brokering and leading partnerships internally and externally
- Excellent customer services