

Job Description

Job title	Private Rented Sector Officer
Directorate	PLACE : Regeneration, Culture and Environment
Division	Strategic Housing
Range	MPR 4
Reports to	Housing Options Team Leader

Main purpose of the job:

To help source accommodation in the private sector for households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. To create and develop positive relationships with local landlords and letting agents, negotiating the use of accommodation.

Aim to reduce the demand on the Council's emergency homeless accommodation by increasing the availability of accommodation in the private sector. Working to prevent families having to experience homelessness, and assist homeless families into new homes, alongside the Housing Options and Temporary Accommodation teams

Be able to promote One Medway Lettings as well as negotiate financial packages with potential Landlords and process payments. Maximise income by effective and efficient recovery of debt owing to the Council via the Rent in Advance and Deposit Loan Scheme and by undertaking inspections of properties to verify claims made by Landlords/Agents against deposit bonds at the end of tenancies

Match up prospective tenants with suitable accommodation, including completing with them an affordability assessment. Assist them to secure such accommodation by negotiating financial packages with the Landlord/Agent, preparing and processing payments to secure that accommodation, and assisting to complete any required paperwork.

Work with households assisted under the scheme to sustain and manage their tenancies, including proactively seeking to establish and foster good relationships between parties, and being available to assist the household or Landlord/Agent to resolve any issues arising which might jeopardise the tenancy.

Ensure that the properties meet the Councils required standards by carrying out Housing inspections in accordance to the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS). Reporting on its condition and following up with Schedule of Work recommending appropriate action to be taken.

To provide a customer focused, pro-active service to help homeless applicants to secure suitable accommodation to prevent or relieve their homelessness.

Medway Council Job Profile

Alongside their main duties, the post holder may also be required to carry out any other duties that are consistent with their grade and which might reasonably be asked of them.

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

Accountabilities and outcomes:

Provides advice and assistance to landlords, lettings agents or property owners, regarding the council's Homelessness Prevention Fund and Bond Guarantee Scheme.

Responsible for producing and regularly reviewing publicity material associated with the schemes.

Administers the council's Homelessness Prevention Fund and Bond Guarantee Scheme in accordance with approved policy and procedure, negotiating with regard to rent levels and applicable terms under the schemes.

Ensures that all associated records are updated promptly.

Recommends revised or new policies and procedures to the Homeless Team Leader to improve service delivery.

Inspects properties provided under the schemes, maintaining a written and photographic record throughout the term of the arrangement, carrying out sign ups and exit visits at the property where necessary.

Ensures that the private rented accommodation provided under the council's Homelessness Prevention Fund and Bond Guarantee Scheme meets the appropriate standards in accordance with legislation, seeking guidance from the council's Private Sector Housing Team where the property condition and/or landlord's conduct gives cause for concern.

Maintains regular contact with the landlord, letting agent or property owner and the tenant during the term of the tenancy and liaises with other statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure that there is on-going advice and support for tenants, to resolve welfare benefit problems and to mediate between landlord and tenant where appropriate, in order to sustain tenancies and prevent homelessness.

Maintain thorough financial records with an audit trail of the Rent Deposit Bonds, Rent in Advance loans and Rent Arrears and Damages Guarantee issued by the Council including maintaining payment spreadsheets and property register. Ensure monies owed by customers through the schemes are monitored and collected.

Assesses claims from landlords, letting agents or property owners against the Bond Guarantee Scheme, including the recovery of funds in accordance with approved policy and procedure.

Develops initiatives which improve access to the private rented sector and further enhance partnership working with the sector, to provide a wider range of housing solutions for households in housing need in the district.

Contributes to private sector housing events and meetings, including the Landlords Forum, raising awareness of the council initiatives, to ensure on-going engagement to increase the supply of private rented accommodation.

Provides a single point of contact for landlords, letting agents and property owners, offering advice on tenancy agreements, landlord/tenant mediation, Notice to Quits, Possession Proceedings and welfare benefits.

Liaises closely with the Housing Options Officers where tenants are threatened with eviction from private sector tenancies, to ensure that all reasonable efforts are undertaken to prevent homelessness.

Works in a proactive and positive way to market the benefit of private rented accommodation to homeless households residing in the council's full range of temporary accommodation.

Medway Council Job Profile

Liaises with the Temporary Accommodation Officers to identify barriers that are preventing households in the council's full range of temporary accommodation from moving into private rented accommodation, such as a previous poor tenancy history and ensures that support is provided to address these barriers, working in partnership with other statutory or voluntary agencies where necessary

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.

Medway Council Job Profile

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

Good General Education, including GCSE Grade C or above in English and Maths or Equivalent housing qualification at Level 2

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

Evidence Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

Completion of relevant Level 3 Chartered Institute of Housing qualification or equivalent qualification e.g. CIH Level 3 Certificate in Letting and Managing Residential Property

Evidence Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

Knowledge

Level A

- A good understanding of homelessness legislation and the Homelessness Code of Guidance especially as it relates to the private rented sector
- A good understanding of the law relating to landlord and tenant legalisation as it affects the private rented sector.
- A good understanding of housing problems in Medway, with emphasis on the private rented sector.
- Working knowledge of landlord and tenant issues and best practice in resolving them
- Knowledge and awareness of current issues, best practice and developments affecting the delivery of housing services to residents.
- Working knowledge of homeless prevention initiatives and their application and effectiveness
- Knowledge of Safeguarding, Safety planning, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Exploitation

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

- A good understanding of the remedies for harassment and illegal eviction.
- Detailed understanding of the private rented sector market conditions
- Understanding of current central Government policy, legislation and processes relating to housing, homelessness, and private sector tenancies.
- Understanding of current best practice in preventing homelessness
- Knowledge of the criteria used to assess applicants' affordability including eligibility and entitlement to means-tested benefits and tax credits.
- Knowledge in property lettings and management in the private rented sector
- Understanding of housing standards health and safety, and legislative HMO licensing requirements

Medway Council Job Profile

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

- A good knowledge of county court possession proceedings, civil proceedings and criminal proceedings.
 - Extensive knowledge and understanding of the workings of the housing market in Medway and how regulatory measures such as licensing property may impact on the key stakeholders particularly landlords and tenants.
 - Thorough 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
 - Awareness of Disabled Facilities Grants, eligibility criteria regarding the applicant & grant eligible works.
 - Extensive knowledge of all Parts of the Housing Act 2004 & the enforcement options available.
-

Experience

Level A

- At least 12 months experience of working in housing advice, options, lettings or management at a local authority, housing association, lettings agency or voluntary agency.
- Experience of working successfully with private sector landlords and tenants to provide housing solutions for customers.
- Experience of dealing with members of the public both face to face and over the phone
- Experience of working in a demanding frontline facing service

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

- Experience of procuring properties and negotiating with private sector landlords
- Experience of inspecting properties, identifying defects and advising and supporting private sector landlords or compliance with appropriate regulations
- Experience of working with vulnerable individuals / households in their homes.
- Proven experience of successfully negotiating with private sector landlords or letting agents to procure properties.

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

- Experience of communicating detailed technical and legal information so that it is easily understood by service users and staff.
- Experience in processing and implementing grants and grant applications.
- 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 resolve sensitive issues using tact and calm to mediate and resolve problems.
- Ability to work in partnership with and provide support for volunteers and interpreters as appropriate
- Good negotiating skills for working with a wide range of voluntary and statutory agencies.
- Able to work on own initiative
- Able to prioritise workloads and meet deadlines
- Excellent written and oral communication skills at all levels
- Developed negotiating skills
- Proven decision-making skills
- Good numeracy skills
- 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
- Able to develop the ability to cope with and control confrontational situations
- Able to take responsibility for your own development
- Able to manage a caseload
- Friendly, tactful, approachable, non-judgemental, empathic and customer focused.
- Competent user of standard ICT packages, e.g. Word, Excel, Outlook and PowerPoint

Level B (in addition to level A criteria)

- Ability to work within legal, political and policy constraints and to follow internal procedures
- Ability to use well developed communication skills to present complex/sensitive information in an understandable way, to a range of audiences
- 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.
- Ability to analyse and interpret complex information and situations

Level C (in addition to levels A and B)

- Ability to work independently within defined procedures, and work outside of procedures, making decisions without referring to a line manager, where necessary.
- Ability to adopt an imaginative and innovative approach.

Medway Council Job Profile

- 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