

Job Description

Management Group:	Place
Department/Section:	Housing
Job title:	Temporary Accommodation Visiting Officer
Works Across:	Temporary Accommodation Placement Team, Resettlement Team, PSL/Street Team

Purpose of the Job

We are transforming our homeless service to improve homelessness prevention, reduce temporary accommodation and end street homelessness

As a Temporary Accommodation Support Officer, you will support applicants in our emergency and temporary accommodation and those living within our community.

You will pro-actively assess applicants for moving on from homeless accommodation into private sector accommodation and social housing accommodation.

You will assist applicants with benefit claims and working across housing services and other teams and agencies to sustain their accommodation.

You will be part of a transitional change to staff working in an agile manner and to implement the housing services approach to agile working ensuring that housing services are delivered effectively.

You will be an energetic and an excellent communicator who works as part of a team that always seeks to understand first and create simple ways to keep people informed about things that are important to them.

You will apply huge personal integrity coupled with resilience to be part of a team that is known for delivering and keeping its promises. Your team will get things done on time, to the highest standards and learn quickly when things go wrong.

With infectious and unwavering levels of enthusiasm, inspiration and motivation you will work across: -

- Temporary Accommodation Placement Service
- Re-Settlement Team
- PSL/Street Team

Principle Accountabilities and Responsibilities

You will be the central co-ordinator working across housing services to ensure that those households placed in temporary accommodation are supported and continually reviewed for

moving onto private sector or social housing when ready as a discharge of the Councils' housing duty.

Whilst in temporary accommodation you will promote independent living skills to households to support them to maintain their tenancies/licence agreement/occupancy agreement, leasehold agreement.

You will identify, monitor and review the care and support needs of service users by participating in care and support planning and making regular face to face or verbal contact in accordance with agreed procedures.

You will make referrals to the appropriate statutory or voluntary agencies on behalf of the applicant, liaising with the residents, families, carers and professionals, to ensure that appropriate support is provided to the household as necessary including attendance at case review meetings.

You will advise and assist households with enquiries about rent payments, service charges and support charges. Advise and assist with claims for housing and other benefits available to them.

You will manage resident / occupant conflicts and anti-social behaviour, make referrals to relevant agencies and internal teams when appropriate and monitor ASB activities where required.

You will carry out assessments for all services, identifying support needs and the suitability of potential new households including working with allocations and the re-settlement team regarding pre-tenancy assessments for private sector or social housing.

You will ensure appropriate support is put into place to sustain tenancies/ licences/occupancy and leasehold agreements and attend housing panel meetings.

You will visit those households to verify their occupation and contact details including when they are ready to be made an offer in discharge of our housing duty.

You will maintain a working knowledge of all housing options and give advice and support to applicants.

You will support and co-ordinate move on arrangements for people following termination of tenancy, licence and occupancy processes in accordance with timescales provided.

You will take ownership of complaints and councillor enquiries, taking appropriate actions to resolve issues and provide full case details to responding managers as required.

You will work effectively to manage transfers within the temporary accommodation stock available to the housing service to ensure that the supply is maximised to its full potential and is being used in the most effective manner.

You will when approval has been given by the team leader arrange removals and storage for an applicant's personal belongings, and promptly arrange for the closure of any storage units when the applicant is moved out of temporary accommodation.

You will work with the temporary accommodation placements team to ensure all housing benefit and other welfare forms are completed.

You will work with the temporary accommodation placement team to provide a comprehensive tenancy sign up and sustainment service to ensure temporary accommodation placements are successfully signed up and sustained.

You will work with the rent accounting team to ensure that rent accounts are set up and applicants are provided with rent account details with a full explanation of what is expected in terms of their rental payments for their accommodation before any household is placed in temporary accommodation.

You will work with the temporary accommodation placement team to ensure that the temporary accommodation units are closed promptly when you are advised that the housing duty has been discharged, or there has been verification that the unit has been abandoned, or there is a significant anti-social or illegal behaviour or rent arrears that warrants the closure of the unit.

You will maintain accurate written and electronic records/information regarding properties, landlords including general contact information and any other relevant information associated with delivering a seamless procurement and letting service, keeping this information up to date always, and providing detailed reports as requested by management.

You will provide expert advice to applicants on all aspects of letting including but not limited to universal credit, overall benefit caps, welfare reforms, property standards, various letting schemes that Bexley Council operates and general tenancy management, encouraging good practice.

You will act as the first point of contact for landlords and tenants who are experiencing difficulties in sustaining tenancies, including acting as a negotiator and or mediator between disputing parties to resolve contractual issues to ensure compliance with the legal framework to sustain tenancies.

You will be responsible for ensuring all landlords and tenants comply with their respective contractual agreements.

You will understand and keep up to date with local and national policies affected by legislation regarding welfare reforms and housing as well as changes in state benefits, landlord and tenant law and other relevant legislation and guidance relating to the service area.

You will liaise with colleagues within the team and the wider Housing Options service to provide a stream lined and seamless service to customers in temporary accommodation to ensure a smooth transition into the private rented sector or social housing.

You will develop and maintain close working relationships with other Council services and a wide range of other stakeholders in order to facilitate the flow of information, encourage joint working and co-operation, achieve the prompt resolution of complex problems and ensure that, even where an input is required from a number of teams, service delivery is properly co-ordinated and the service user is kept fully informed of developments.

You will deliver a stream lined high quality customer focused service ensuring telephone calls, emails, letters and complaints are fully responded to promptly and to the highest possible standard in compliance with corporate guidelines or as instructed by the service manager.

You will promote the use of the private rented sector as a viable alternative to social rented housing, in order to encourage independence, prevent homelessness, provide sustainable housing solutions and reduce the Council's use of temporary accommodation.

You will ensure appropriate performance management systems are in place to effectively report, as required, on performance, against local and corporate targets.

You will contribute to develop and review policies and procedures in line with the policy framework to ensure that they meet legal requirements and best practice.

You will identify issues and improvements surrounding ICT and system management and to highlight and assist in the areas of development.

You will be responsible for the security and safe keeping of information data bases, and to use the lap top for out of hours home working.

You will contribute and adhere to LBBs financial regulations, standing orders, policies and procedures.

Undertake any other appropriate duties as required by the service or instructed by the Service Manager.

This job description sets out the main result areas of the post at the date when it was drawn up. Such duties may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the post or the level of responsibility. Such variations are a common occurrence and cannot in themselves justify a reconsideration of the grading of the post.

Person Specification

Management Group: Place

Department/Section: Housing

Job title: Temporary Accommodation Visiting Officer

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	Good education Evidence of continued personal development	Educated to degree level
Knowledge	Working and up to date knowledge of statutory and regulatory requirements relating to housing, homelessness, landlord and tenant law and other relevant legislation relating to the portfolio. Sharing knowledge, being approachable and flexible to support the service and colleagues	Membership of a professional body (CIH) or other relevant body
	Ability to work collaboratively with a range of stakeholders within the housing team as well as across the council and other agencies and departments	
Experience	Proven experience of shaping services and delivering change in an environment of change.	
	Recognises responsibility for ensuring appropriate use of resources and challenges appropriately and ensures financial activity is in accordance with the Council's policies, procedures and regulations.	
	Proven experience of collaborative working and how to build effective partnerships.	
	Experience of working effectively with elected	

	Members and in partnership with other agencies.	
	Relevant experience of working in a local authority or social/private housing sector environment	
	An ability to be part of a productive working environment where staff are clear about expectations and committed to the vision, goals and expectations of the organisation and service.	
Aptitude & Skills	Ability to work effectively both individually and as a team member in a fast pace environment.	
	Excellent and effective communication (verbal and written) and negotiation skills at an internal and external level	
	You will be open and honest follow things through to the end taking ownership of situations and escalating where appropriate and keeping applicants informed.	
	Remaining calm, emphatic and professional, respecting applicants' differences and their home providing a quality service within professional boundaries.	
	Committed to being performance driven and able to meet targets as well as producing sound evidence-based strategies within the team	
	Customer orientated in the delivery of the housing service and the ability to be pro-active and go the "extra mile"	

	Ability to develop and maintain effective partnerships with a wide range of stakeholders as well as communicate ideas and issues effectively to several stakeholders in a range of circumstances.	
Expected Behaviours & Values Organised and target driven. Be able to set and maintain the highest standards in professional relationships and behaviour with customers, colleagues and other external contacts. Flexible and proactive with a commercially-minded approach to developing services and sustain relationships with landlords and letting agents. Seek, encourage and recognise ideas, initiatives and improvements to deliver better services. Encourage and support themselves and others to think differently, to question and to try new ways of doing things. Lead from the front, ensuring visibility, communicating in a straightforward open way. Build a strong network of collaborative relationships internally and externally. Take quick confident decisions, to move things forward to meet organisation goals. Honestly reflect on my personal style and its impact on others and develop my skills so I can adapt my style as appropriate Willingness to undertake home visits which are effective and take into account health and safety requirements.		
Equal Opportunities	Equal Opportunities Understand and demonstrate a willingness to promote positively Equal Opportunities	
Training	Training Undertake all mandatory training relevant to the role and be responsible for your own Continuing Professional	

You will assist colleagues with induction, training and development of new staff and the section by training on I.T. systems and through mentoring, job shadowing and/or presentations.

High Performance Indicators

Values	Behaviours for staff	Behaviours for managers
Innovation	I respond flexibly and adapt to changing demands I am prepared to take managed risks to achieve better outcomes I ask 'What if...?' to develop fresh thinking and innovative approaches to generate and implement solutions to improve performance and challenge the status quo	I routinely look for innovative and cost-effective ways to improve performance and customer service I champion change and deal successfully with ambiguity, enabling people to see positive and exciting possibilities for the future I take calculated risks based on available evidence and my professional judgement to learn and try new things
Leadership	Can demonstrate a clear sense of purpose and direction, in line with organisational objectives I am willing to take difficult decisions My personal actions promote a positive image of Bexley	I take responsibility for my service and for making things happen to make a difference to my service users I create an environment where staff can thrive and show I value and trust staff, give praise and recognise good work I inspire, lead and encourage staff to move forward
Collaboration	I show respect for others and value contributions from internal and external partners and customers I recognise the right solution, regardless of who initiated it I seek out and work with partners who can help me achieve the outcomes and objectives I need to deliver	I encourage the feeling that the team is a collective unit with shared goals I engage with service partners and other areas of the Bexley organisation to understand the demands on others and seek solutions as One Council I network internally and externally
Listening and Responding	I acknowledge other people's viewpoints and work with them to find a win-win solution	I seek regular service user feedback and review customer data to shape service improvements

	I prepare and present information anticipating questions and problems I adapt my style to the audience and their needs, using the most appropriate communication channels	I ask staff for ideas on how to improve our service and how I can improve as a manager, listen to them and act on them I empower staff to make decisions and changes to improve value for money, customer service and productivity
Open and Accessible	I see issues from the customer / user perspective I monitor customer feedback and level of satisfaction with the service they receive, and use this to improve and pre-empt customer needs I seek to build and maintain positive relationships with customers and partners	am accessible to my service users, customers, staff and Members I communicate and share a clear vision for the bigger picture as well as specific service areas I outline what is expected of individuals and their contribution to the whole, and am consistent in my expectations
Impact	I prioritise my activities and resources to focus on those which have the most impact for residents I take responsibility for making things happen and achieving my objectives I make decisions and clear recommendations based on my professional opinion and experience, informed by a range of information and evidence	I design services that provide value for money and deliver our outcomes, informed by evidence I produce, prioritise and adapt plans to meet changing requirements I set interim goals to achieve notable wins on the way to larger objectives I am able to deal with poor performance