

Job Description

Management Group:	Place
Department/Section:	Housing
Job Title:	Assessment & Relief Officer
Reports to:	Housing Options Manager
Grade:	Bexley10
Working Hours:	Monday to Friday 36 hours per week

Purpose of the job

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

You will be responsible for the effective delivery of the Council's statutory duty with reference to the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and Parts VI and VII, the Housing Act (as amended) considering the relevant codes of guidance and case law.

You will be passionate about delivering a professional customer centred high quality housing service that consistently impresses our customers whilst enhancing our reputation.

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.

You will ensure appropriate performance management is in place to achieve all key indicators including high levels of customer satisfaction.

You will be highly motivated, ambitious and ready for a new challenge.

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 contribute to preparing and implementing the housing strategy, homelessness strategy, as it relates to housing need, and to undertake projects related to the development of the service area.

You will contribute to identify and develop accommodation solutions to address housing need.

With infectious and unwavering levels of enthusiasm, inspiration and motivation you will be part of a team that is responsible for the day to day delivery of the: -

- Assessment & Relief Service

Principle Accountabilities & Responsibilities

You will interview, advice and deal with applications from potentially homeless clients both at the office and by home visiting to ascertain why they are threatened with homelessness and discuss all the options available to them.

You will undertake and conduct all appropriate investigations necessary into homelessness to determine any duties owed towards potentially homeless applicants, reaching statutory determinations and notifications as required under the relevant legislation.

You will deal with written and verbal homelessness enquiries from the public, statutory agencies, other sections of the Council and other bodies relating to homelessness and temporary accommodation and give advice where appropriate.

You will assess if the Council owes a relief duty to provide interim accommodation following recommendations from your team.

You will undertake detailed investigations of cases under Part V11 of the 1996 Housing Act and other relevant legislation by establishing eligibility, homelessness, assessing priority need, and determining intentionality and local connection.

You will identify any care and support needs that cannot be met by the housing authority; or which require health or social care services to be provided alongside help to secure accommodation.

You will conduct further interviews if necessary and recommend a decision.

You will make enquiries with third parties such as medical professionals, Police, Probation, Social Services etc in order to establish if the Council has a legal obligation to the client under Part V11 of the 1996 Housing Act.

You will complete detailed section 184 notices.

You will complete Members' Enquiries and responses to solicitors and other statutory agencies as necessary.

You will assess an applicant's case and develop a personalised plan to provide a framework for the Council and the client to work together to identify appropriate actions to prevent or relieve the applicant's homelessness, adopting a positive and collaborative approach toward the client, taking account of their particular needs and making all reasonable efforts to engage their cooperation.

You will deal with referrals of clients from other service providers, both statutory and non-statutory, including public authorities with a statutory duty to refer people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and where necessary supplement the information provided within a referral with our own investigations.

You will have an in-depth knowledge of the duties under the Care Act 2014 including those relating to assessment and adult safeguarding; and the use of Care Act powers to meet urgent care and support needs where an assessment has not been completed.

You will have an in-depth knowledge and working experience of Part V11 Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002, HRA 2017, Code of Guidance guidelines and determine the Council's statutory duties.

You will ensure you maintain a high standard of accurate written records and reports in connection with the various duties undertaken, issue relevant decision letters as legally required and keep other records necessary to provide an adequate management information database.

You will prioritise your workload in order to meet specified performance targets.

You will liaise with and maintain and develop effective working links with other departments in the Council and external agencies as needed.

You will keep up to date with changes in state benefits, landlord and tenant law and have a working knowledge of Court procedures.

You will keep abreast of homelessness and other relevant legislation (e.g. The Children's Act 1989 and the Asylum and Immigration Act 2006) and case law by reading updated legislation, case law and attending training courses to be familiar with the Code of Guidance and be aware of the latest initiatives for dealing with homelessness.

You will investigate allegations of harassment / illegal eviction and recommend action including prosecution under the Protection from Eviction Act (1977) and other relevant legislation.

You will promote the prevention service through outreach work in partnership with other agencies. You will work closely with internal & external partners to identify appropriate accommodation solutions to housing need and preventing homelessness.

You will maintain and manage a detailed, extremely sensitive case load in relation to sex offenders, drug abusers, victims of domestic violence, child abuse etc and always maintain confidentiality, liaise with Probation and Public Protection Unit regarding appropriate offers of accommodation.

You will be responsible to monitor and manage caseload in line with the housing improvement plan and performance measures.

You will follow up initial interviews undertaking further enquiries, writing reports, compiling statistics. Deal with the welfare aspects of homeless cases, referring applicants to other agencies on the client's behalf where necessary and attend case conferences and ad hoc meetings as required.

You will assist in the development of computerised records and management systems.

You will contribute to developing new homelessness initiatives and develop procedures and processes to monitor outcomes and budget implications

You will give advice, assistance and clear information to homeless households and those in housing need to whom the Council has no legal obligation to provide emergency accommodation.

You will work proactively and collaboratively with the temporary accommodation and allocations teams to develop and implement effective procedures and monitoring systems for ensuring that all temporary accommodation that is provided on an interim basis is withdrawn as soon as the Council has discharged its duty to provide the accommodation. You will continue to monitor your teams caseloads once applicants have been placed in TA and keep up to date accurate records of those households until the Councils housing duty is discharged ensuring that placements and allocations are aware of any changes to contact details, households circumstances etc .

You will ensure you meet key performance indicators in respect of reducing numbers of households in temporary accommodation through robust and pro-active homeless prevention work.

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

You will ensure service level agreements both internally and externally are adhered to, liaising with partners to better manage transitions between services where there is a high risk of homelessness.

You will attend and coordinate where necessary multi agency case conferencing and meetings with relevant partners to prevent homelessness and manage risk.

You will contribute to developing new homelessness initiatives and develop procedures and processes to monitor outcomes and budget implications.

You will be responsible when required for representing the Council and team as liaison officer with external/internal agencies/departments to develop and maintain effective protocols, service level agreements and ensure they are maintained.

You will assist 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.

You will undertake the duty rota when requested.

You will contribute to the implement of a programme of corporate change aimed at taking a more pro-active and preventative approach to housing need.

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

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: Assessment & Relief Officer

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	<p>High level of educational attainment</p> <p>Evidence of continued personal development</p>	Educated to degree level
	Significant and working and up to date knowledge of Part V1 and V11 of the Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002, case law and Code of Guidance	Membership of a professional body (CIH) or other relevant body
Knowledge	<p>Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of legislation, policy and practice relating to homelessness in England, including strong expertise in how various accommodation options are developed, funded and delivered.</p> <p>Significant and working and up to date knowledge of statutory and regulatory requirements relating to the portfolio including landlord and tenant law.</p> <p>Excellent knowledge and understanding of local government, key partners and stakeholders, their roles and interests and the operational and political context in which services are provided to people at risk of homelessness.</p>	

Experience	<p>An expert in the field of homelessness, with an understanding of the factors that contribute to individuals and families becoming homeless and a proven track record in developing and delivering services which effectively prevent homelessness and support vulnerable people.</p> <p>Proven experience of shaping services and delivering change in an environment of change.</p>	
	Experience of housing and of managing budgets, including the ability to undertake financial planning, financial analysis and budgetary control.	
	Proven experience of collaborative working and how to build effective partnerships.	
	Experience of working effectively with elected Members and in partnership with other agencies including the voluntary sector and private landlords	
	Relevant experience of working in a local authority or social/private housing sector environment	
	Excellent time management skills and the ability to prioritise workloads and meet deadlines with the ability to prioritise conflicting demands	

	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 member in a fast pace environment.	
	Excellent and effective communication (verbal and written) and negotiation skills at an internal and external level	
	Ability to analyse and interpret a range of financial, legislative, statistical and complex information	
	Committed to producing sound evidence-based strategies within the team	
	Customer orientated in the delivery of the housing service.	
	Ability to communicate ideas and issues effectively to a number of stakeholders in a range of circumstances.	

Expected Behaviours & Values

Manage the performance of teams to reach high performance

Role model performance management, identify and develop talented people.

Seek, encourage and recognise ideas, initiatives and improvements to deliver better services. Encourage and support 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. Continually reinforce a culture of inclusive decision making and shared leadership Honestly reflect on my personal style and its impact on others and develop my skills so I can adapt my style as appropriate

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

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High Performance Indicators

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

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