

## Job Description

### Homeless Prevention Officer

<b>Service:</b>	Children and Young People's Service	<b>Team:</b>	Leaving Care Service
<b>Location:</b>	Bexley Civic Centre		
<b>Reports to:</b>	Team Manager	<b>Staff responsible for:</b>	None

#### Job Purpose

To work with Bexley's Leaving Care Service and its partners to provide additional support to young adults leaving our care to improve housing and accommodation outcomes, promote housing stability, and reduce homelessness. To help further develop joint working arrangements between the Leaving Care Service, Bexley Housing services, multi-agency partners, and other supported housing providers.

The purpose of this role is to help vulnerable young people who have experienced past abuse and neglect, often experiencing the effects of trauma, be able to develop their life skills, find and sustain suitable housing, and be supported to achieving their life goals.

#### Responsibilities

- To work with our young people in our care and young adults leaving our care to support their housing and support needs.
- Create and facilitate tenancy ready courses, support with tenancy related issues, housing and tenancy applications, effective preventative work and intervention to avoid eviction and homelessness
- Work alongside the Leaving Care personal advisors and Looked After Children social workers in supporting the housing needs of young people in our care and young adults leaving our care
- Provide housing advice and solutions for young people transitioning to independence or living independently.
- Work in partnership with the allocated personal advisors of young people and young adults to address key areas of the Independence Toolkit related to housing and preparation for independence in order to help sustaining a tenancy.
- Work in collaboration with partner agencies to support care leavers into accommodation, identify areas of support, challenge and assist with appeals where housing and tenancy rights are not being followed, and overcome barriers to accommodation and housing pathways for our young adults.
- Collate, record, maintain and understand relevant data to support the accommodation and housing pathways of our young adults.
- To mediate where difficulties with tenancies, landlords, housing, or neighbours to help find solutions that help young adults maintain their housing and successfully resolve differences.

- Work alongside the Leaving Care personal advisors and Looked After Children social workers in supporting the housing needs of young people in our care and young adults leaving our care
- Promote equality and diversity to make sure that all children young people and families are treated with dignity and respect when receiving support from Housing and Children's Services.
- Keep abreast with relevant housing and leaving care legislation and statutory guidance as it applies to the housing and care leaver entitlements for young adults leaving our care.
- Commitment to learn and work within our Signs of Safety practice framework, with is a strengths and solution focused based way of working to supporting children and families.

### Core Tasks:

- Support young adults leaving our care to gain knowledge around tenancy management and their rights and responsibilities as a tenant by delivering tenancy ready courses to individual young people or in a group setting
- Hold regular housing advice drop-in for personal advisors and social workers
- To maintain accurate records and oversee required data reports that allows oversight of young people preparing for independent living, their housing requirements, their housing or tenancy application status, types of tenancies and accommodation, and those at risk of housing breakdown or eviction
- To have a good understanding of housing legislation and statutory guidance
- To have experience supporting young people and young adults with housing, homelessness, and independence skills
- To assist allocated personal advisors and young people/adults with the expectations, readiness, and process relating to housing applications, private rented accommodation search, tenancy agreements, and rent guarantor schemes
- Work with young people, their allocated social workers and personal advisors who have been referred for housing support due to homelessness
- Work with young people to prevent future housing issues or eviction and prepare them to manage and make a success of their tenancies
- Engage with housing providers and landlords to explore and seek local housing options for young adults leaving our care
- Keep up to date records of interventions and support provided
- Work in partnership with young people, young adults, their families, their carers, other agencies who provide them with support
- An understanding of Data Protection legislation and guidance and the need to seek consent from young adults when working with other professionals or housing providers
- To identify any barriers to good housing options, support, and stability for young adults leaving our care and share these with line managers along with suggestions for how to overcome these and improve our housing options, support, and ways of working together

### Equal Opportunities

We are committed to achieving equal opportunities in the way we deliver services to the community and in our employment arrangements. We expect all employees to understand and promote this policy in their work. We welcome applications from diverse backgrounds and those who meet the criteria of the person specification will be given an interview.

### Health and safety

All employees have a responsibility for their own health and safety and that of others when carrying out their duties and must help us to apply our general statement of health and safety policy in order to meet our duty of care responsibilities.

### Customer Focused

We put our customers' needs and expectations at the heart of all that we do. We expect our employees to have a full understanding of those needs and expectations so that we can provide high quality, appropriate services at all times.

### Travel

Travelling is an integral part of this role. Drivers must hold a full driving licence, which allows them to drive in the UK and Class 1 Business Use Insurance and must abide by the Use of Private Vehicles for Company Business Policy at all times. Non-drivers must be able to arrange the necessary travelling, considering the needs of the role and the incompatibility of public transport in certain areas.

### Our Bexley Values

- **Open and accessible** – be honest and accountable, use straightforward language, be approachable, strive to understand needs and respond clearly.
- **Innovation** – champion new ideas and ways of working, take time for creative thinking, embrace challenges, learn from mistakes, actively listen and share insights.
- **Listening and responding** – create opportunities for feedback, be open – take time to understand, reflect, take action – do what you say you'll do.
- **Leadership** – recognise we're all leaders, be confident, inspire others with your passion, nurture an open and inclusive environment, invite challenge, be there for others, facilitate innovation, be a role-model for workplace wellbeing.
- **Collaborate** – work together for the greater good, value everyone's contribution, share knowledge across teams, encourage clear, straightforward communication, contribute positively to the Bexley story.
- **Impact** – strive to make a genuine difference, be proud – celebrate our achievements, create a buzz, take pride in others' success, share your learning, aim to make things better.

Requirements	Essential (E) or Desirable (D)	Identified by Application Form (A) or Interview (I)
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<b>Qualifications</b>		
Professional and/or academic level 3 qualification or equivalent or substantial experience in a relevant technical, specialised or operational field	E	A
<b>Experience</b>		
Experience of, or the ability to demonstrate the competence to, work directly with individual young people and young adults with complex needs as well as families to identify, assess their needs and make appropriate planned responses which seek to improve outcomes.	E	A/I
Experience working in housing department or as a housing officer working in accordance with housing legislation and statutory guidance.	E	A/I
Experience working with young people and young adults who have faced difficulties, such as addiction, mental illness, trauma, abuse, disabilities, and exploitation an asset.	D	A/I
Experience of working with young people and young adults within a supported housing or advocacy related environment an asset.	D	A/I
Experience of working with relevant IT systems for recording information, performance data, sharing, and process information.	E	A/I
Experience with software such as Microsoft Word, Teams, Outlook, and Excel.	E	A/I
<b>Knowledge and Skills</b>		
A good understanding of legislation, policies and procedures relating to young people in care and young adults leaving care an asset.	D	A/I
A thorough understanding of current housing legislation and statutory guidance.	E	A/I
Empathy and sensitivity to the needs arising from young people and young adults experiencing abuse, trauma, and crisis.	E	A/I
Ability to build and maintain effective networks and relationships with service users, colleagues, and other professionals.	E	A/I
Ability to work independently and as part of a team.	E	A/I
Ability to work without close supervision and take initiative where appropriate.	E	A/I

Experiencing developing and delivering training.	D	A/I
<b>Other (including special requirements)</b>		
1. Commitment to equality and diversity.	E	I
2. Commitment to health and safety.	E	I
3. Commitment to uphold the Bexley Council Values and Behaviours at all times and actively promote them in others.	E	I