

Job Profile comprising Job Description and Person Specification

Job Description

Job Title: Homelessness Prevention and Solutions Officer	Grade: PO1
Section: Housing Assessment and Adaptation	Directorate: Housing and Regeneration
Responsible to following manager: Deputy Manager: Homelessness Prevention and Solutions	Responsible for following staff:
Post Number/s:	Last review date:

Working for the Richmond/Wandsworth Shared Staffing Arrangement

This role is employed under the Shared Staffing Arrangement between Richmond and Wandsworth Councils. The overall purpose of the Shared Staffing Arrangement is to provide the highest quality of service at the lowest attainable cost.

Staff are expected to deliver high quality and responsive services wherever they are based, as well as having the ability to adapt to sometimes differing processes and expectations.

The Shared Staffing Arrangement aims to be at the forefront of innovation in local government and the organisation will invest in the development of its staff and ensure the opportunities for progression that only a large organisation can provide.

Job Purpose

- To work proactively and collaboratively with households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness to assist them to sustain their current housing where possible, or otherwise to secure alternative, suitable and affordable accommodation.
- To hold a personal caseload of households, to agree practical and reasonable steps for the Council and the household to take to prevent and/or relieve homelessness. Households will include private or social tenants, home owners, those evicted by family members or facing relationship breakdown, and may be vulnerable and/or have complex needs.
- To provide a flexible and responsive service for applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness by delivering services from Wandsworth Council

offices and community based locations, ensuring comprehensive housing advice is available for customers, staff and partner agencies. To carry out home visits to assess homelessness and the sustainability of the applicant's current housing.

Specific Duties and Responsibilities

1. To provide comprehensive advice and information covering a range of housing issues including:
 - Housing and tenancy rights in both the private and social rented sectors, and for home owners
 - Financial advice including welfare benefits, maximising income and tackling debt
 - Housing options including private rented sector, housing register, specialist accommodation such as refuges, low cost home ownership
 - The Council's statutory duties under the homelessness legislation
2. To triage homeless applications made to Wandsworth, assessing priority for further action and making appointments for an assessment of housing need as necessary.
3. To assess the housing and associated needs of individuals and households, including by face to face interview in and across the borough to find tailored solutions to meet their immediate and longer-term housing needs in a manner which is considerate and empathetic towards the applicant's perspective.
4. To understand the resources that are available in Wandsworth for meeting the needs of applicants who may require specialist housing and/or support services, making referrals where appropriate
5. Work with Social Services, the Police, Probation and other agencies across the Wandsworth boroughs to enable applicants to access the services needed to meet their support needs and enable them to live independently.
6. To take the Homelessness Preventions and Solutions Service out into the community by providing housing surgeries in for example the Job Centre Plus, Children's Centres and other locations as required.
7. To visit applicants in their homes in and across both boroughs to mediate and negotiate with the home owner/housing provider to prevent homelessness wherever possible
8. To use the Homelessness Prevention budget to provide innovative and cost-effective housing solutions to prevent and relieve homelessness.
9. To assist with the continual improvement of the housing service across the SSA through:
 - the development of the information available for customers including personal housing plans, advice leaflets, website content
 - Identifying opportunities to work with new service providers
 - Involvement in projects or new initiatives to prevent or relieve homelessness

10. To represent the Housing Assessment Service at internal and external meetings and case conferences across the SSA as relevant to the role.
11. To undertake homelessness investigations, create and seek the applicant's agreement to a bespoke and scenario specific personal housing plan, to issue statutory decisions and to discharge/end duties in accordance with the homelessness legislation
12. To manage a caseload of applicants who have approached the Council for assistance under the Homelessness Reduction Act, keeping your caseload under review and taking timely action to minimise the time in temporary accommodation and ensuring the Council's duties are met within statutory timescales.
13. To undertake comprehensive casework such as negotiating with landlords/family members, completing referrals to support agencies, helping to address problems with benefit claims and advising on options to maximise income, reviewing progress against Personal Housing Plans, making home visits where necessary/beneficial.
14. To work with Managers and Deputy Managers in the Housing Assessment Service to ensure that appropriate service cover is always provided across both housing offices and to promote and develop the highest customer care standards. To assist with the training and induction of newly appointed colleagues as directed.
15. To participate in the operation of a duty rota system for reception interviews and telephones in and across both boroughs. and to ensure its effective operation. To be available to interview customers as directed across both boroughs.
16. To work as part of a team with colleagues, sharing knowledge and experience to ensure continuous development and improvement across the SSA.

Generic Duties and Responsibilities

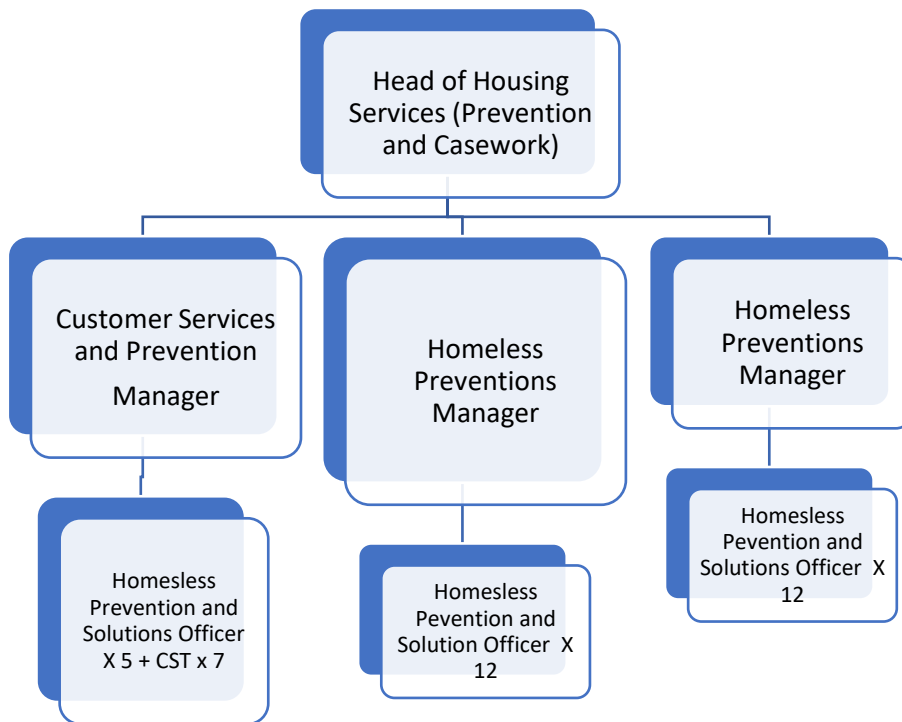
- To contribute to the continuous improvement of the services of the Boroughs of Wandsworth and Richmond.
- To comply with relevant Codes of Practice, including the Code of Conduct and policies concerning data protection and health and safety.
- To adhere to security controls and requirements as mandated by the SSA's policies, procedures and local risk assessments to maintain confidentiality, integrity, availability and legal compliance of information and systems
- To promote equality, diversity, and inclusion, maintaining an awareness of the equality and diversity protocol/policy and working to create and maintain a safe, supportive and welcoming environment where all people are treated with dignity and their identity and culture are valued and respected.

- To understand both Councils' duties and responsibilities for safeguarding children, young people and adults as they apply to the role within the council.
- The Shared Staffing Arrangement will keep its structures under continual review and as a result the post holder should expect to carry out any other reasonable duties within the overall function, commensurate with the level of the post.

Additional Job role specific requirements.

- To regularly travel, within and/or outside of the boroughs in the performance of the duties of the post.
- Attends large scale emergency responses as directed e.g. urgent temporary rehousing scenarios and/or other civil contingencies.

Team structure



Person Specification

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Our Values and Behaviours

The values and behaviours we seek from our staff draw on the high standards of the two boroughs, and we prize these qualities in particular:

Being open. This means we share our views openly, honestly and in a thoughtful way. We encourage new ideas and ways of doing things. We appreciate and listen to feedback from each other.

Being supportive. This means we drive the success of the organisation by making sure that our colleagues are successful. We encourage others and take account of the challenges they face. We help each other to do our jobs.

Being positive. Being positive and helpful means we keep our goals in mind and look for ways to achieve them. We listen constructively and help others see opportunities and the way forward. We have a 'can do' attitude and are continuously looking for ways to help each other improve.

Person Specification Requirements			Assessed by A/I/T/C (see below for explanation)
Knowledge	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
Knowledge of the causes of homelessness, the impact of homelessness on households	Y		A/I
Knowledge of relevant Homelessness and Housing Act legislation including security of tenure and private tenants' rights		Y	A/I
Knowledge of relevant case laws and Codes of Guidance		Y	A/I
A good knowledge of services, benefits and support available to applicants experiencing housing problems		Y	A/I
Experience	Essential	Desirable	Assessed

Experience of working in a busy public facing service, e.g. a customer service, housing or lettings service	Y		A/I
Experience of carrying out interviews, investigations, negotiations	Y		A/I
Experience of effective record keeping, including electronically held information	Y		A/I
Experience of working with people who are homeless or in other stressful situations		Y	A/I
Experience of working successfully to performance targets and deadlines	Y		A/I
Skills	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
To be able to have honest conversations with customers about their housing options and support their decision making while managing expectations	Y		A/I
Excellent interpersonal skills including active listening and negotiating	Y		A/I
Excellent communication skills including the ability to write detailed case notes and technical letters	Y		A/I/T
Ability to work unsupervised, prioritise workloads and achieve targets and deadlines	Y		A/I
Ability to gather information and interpret complex issues eg. Case law and legislation quickly, to think creatively about problems and identify solutions	Y		A/I
Ability to work effectively with people from diverse backgrounds and circumstances.	Y		A/I
Qualifications	Essential	Desirable	Assessed
Minimum of 2 A Level grade C and above or equivalent	Y		C

A – Application form / CV

I – Interview

T – Test

C - Certificate