

Job Profile comprising Job Description and Person Specification

Job Description

Job Title: Homelessness Prevention and Solutions Officer	Grade: PO1 (£38,976 - £45,852)
Section: Preventions & Casework	Directorate: Residents Services
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 Better Service Partnership

We're Richmond & Wandsworth Better Service Partnership, the shared public service team for Richmond and Wandsworth Councils. Like any local authority, our role is to deliver the agenda of our elected members on behalf of the people who live and work in our part of the world. We deliver key services to our communities including social care, public health, children's services, housing and regeneration and environmental and community services.

Our joint workforce creates efficiency and resilience by bringing more creativity to the way we work, more objectivity and adaptability too, helping us deliver better services for all our residents.

We're here to help our communities thrive in a changing world, and to be there for the people who need us most we believe we need to keep adapting. That's why, at Richmond & Wandsworth Better Service Partnership, you'll be at the forefront of innovation in local government, and we'll invest in you and offer you opportunities to grow in a way only our unique organisation can.

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, homeowners, 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 homeowners
 - 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 homeowner/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.

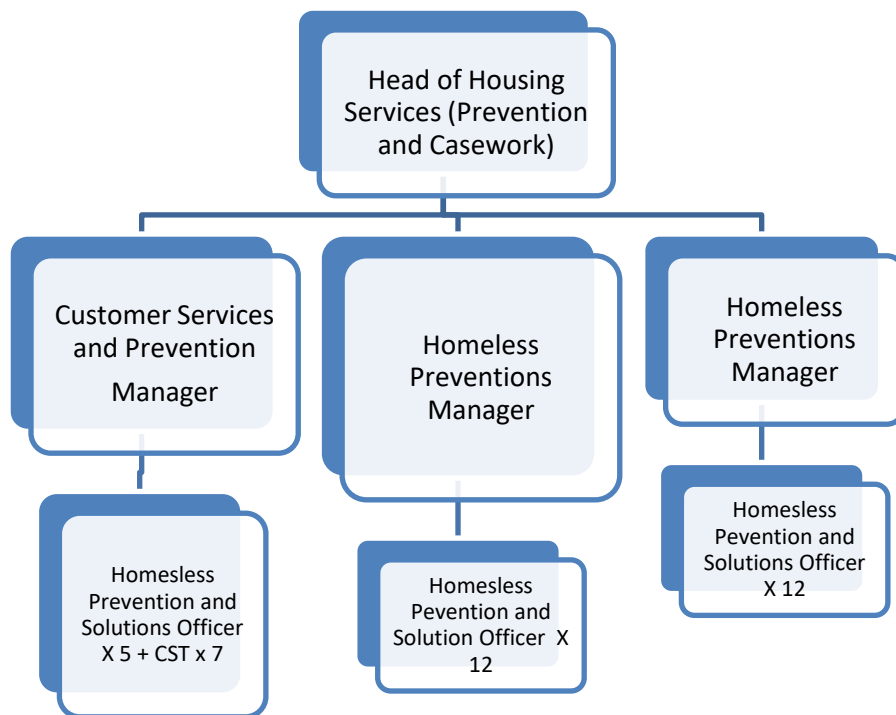
Generic Duties and Responsibilities

- To contribute to the continuous improvement of the services of Richmond & Wandsworth Better Service Partnerships.
- To comply with relevant Codes of Practice, including the Code of Conduct and policies concerning data protection, handling complaints and health and safety.
- To adhere to security controls and requirements as mandated by Richmond and Wandsworth 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 roles within the Councils.
- The profile is not intended to be an exhaustive list of the duties the post holder will carry out. Other reasonable duties commensurate with the level of the post, including supporting emergency and priority situations, will form part of the role.

Additional Information

- 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

THINK BIGGER

EMBRACE DIFFERENCE

CONNECT BETTER

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

PUT PEOPLE FIRST

Our Values are embedded across Richmond & Wandsworth Better Service Partnership and throughout all roles and responsibilities at all levels of the organisation. Please [familiarise yourself with our values](#) as they are an integral part of our recruitment and selection process.

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