

Job Title: Accommodation Officer	Grade/ Level: M	Post Number: HG3002v3
Directorate: Adult Social Care	Job Family: Housing and Communities	Date Prepared: August 2020
Role reports to : Temporary Accommodation Manager		

Job Purpose:

- Manage properties let to residents who are owed a homeless duty by Swindon Borough Council.
- Support tenants, often with complex high needs to make a success of their tenancy and move on to longer term accommodation.
- Work with private landlords to ensure our leased properties are of a good standard and are safe and suitable homes for our residents.
- Ensure tenancy agreements are adhered to and take the necessary legal steps if any breaches take place.

Key Accountabilities:

1. Support tenants to apply for entitled benefits including Universal Credit and Housing Benefit.
2. Deal with tenants, often with complex and high needs such as mental health issues, substance misuse, alcohol dependence, offending and violent behaviour.
3. Multi-agency working including Mental Health Services, Social Services, Citizen Advice, Debt management agency, Probation Services and Healthy Neighbourhood to help tenant maintain their tenancy.
4. Support tenant to settle into temporary accommodation by sourcing any necessary furniture, apply for Swindon Emergency Fund, set up utility accounts and ensure Housing Benefit/Universal Credit in payment.
5. Represent the Council at Child Protection meeting and Professionals meeting.
6. Ensure all tenants have an effective plan to move them on to long term accommodation.
7. Provide support to those who have lived precariously housed lifestyle to enable them to regain stable and sustainable accommodation.
8. Carry out rent arrears recovery in accordance with the councils rent arrears recovery policy and procedures and meet your individual performance targets in order to maximise rent income.
9. Deal with breaches of tenancy conditions including investigating cases of anti social behaviour,

neighbour nuisance, racial harassment and any other form of harassment.

10. Carry out inspections prior to letting and during tenancy for defects and repairs, order works, evaluate standards of workmanship and liaise with private Landlords. Inspect improvements and alterations requested by tenants to ensure the proposed works are carried out to a satisfactory standard of workmanship.
11. Carry out regular inspections of properties, communal areas and Housing owned public open spaces to ensure that they are maintained and kept to a reasonable standard.
12. Support tenants if difficulties arise with their landlord or if they breach tenancy agreements or do not keep the property in good condition.
13. Ensure all property safety paperwork is kept up to date, including Gas Safety Certificates, Electrical Safety Certificate, Energy Performance Certificates and Building Insurance.
14. Process Deposit Guarantee Scheme claims.
15. Ensure the recovery of all debts incurred for those clients previously provided with temporary accommodation.
16. Raise invoices and liaise with Credit Control and outside collection agencies regarding the recovery of money owed to Swindon Borough Council.
17. Ensure lone working and policies and procedures are followed at all times.
18. Identify suitable properties for the need of the prospective tenant and manage portfolio of temporary accommodation.
19. Liaise with the Landlord to report repairs, resolve any tenancy disputes and get the property ready for let as quickly as possible.
20. Offer tailored support to each individual tenant to help sustain tenancies by ensuring the support is in place by working with other departments in the Council as well as external partners such as Social Services, the Police, Mental Health Services, Citizen Advice and Wiltshire Law Centre.
21. Have a thorough understanding of and keep up to date with housing and other related legislation including homelessness, allocations, landlord and tenant legislation, welfare benefits and other matters of a similar nature.
22. Ensure the Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults is identified and make referrals in line with Safeguarding policies and procedures for housing and tenancy support.
23. Recommend cases for Court Action where a breach of tenancy has occurred in accordance with policies and procedures

Property and Tenancy Management

24. Carry out property inspections of Private Sector Leased temporary accommodation ensuring that it is to the required standard.

25. Deal with reports of anti-social behavior, squatting, illegal subletting and abandoned properties. Attend as a witness and/or represent the Council at Court as required.
26. Complete sign-up procedures for new tenants when required.
27. You may be required to attend evictions.
28. Arrange and deal with the clearance and storage of belongings following evictions or absconds.

Rent

29. Monitor all rent accounts regularly using the computerised records and decide on the appropriate recovery action. Pursue and interview tenants regarding their rent arrears preferably through personal contact such as telephone and home visits.
30. Serve the legal notices on tenancies as necessary. Recommend, prepare and refer all documentation to the Legal Dept for Possession Proceedings in the county court.
31. Assist tenants to apply for benefits. Give general benefit and debt advice to tenants and liaise with and refer to other appropriate advice staff and agencies.
32. Liaise with the Support staff in relation to tenants paying their rent by direct payments, e.g direct debits, to ensure rent accounts are kept clear of arrears. Assist with year-end activities as requested.
33. Take rent payments.

Supplementary Accountabilities:

1. Participate in equality and diversity training, information briefings and events as and when required as part of continuous professional development.
2. Promote equality and diversity best practice in all areas of work.
3. Ensure that any identified personal training needs are discussed with the immediate supervisor including being appraised in accordance with the Council's development and appraisal scheme and to undertake a programme of continuous development.

4. In accordance with the provisions of the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations 1999 you must take reasonable care so as not to endanger yourself or other persons whilst at work. You must also co-operate with the Council to enable it to comply with its statutory duties for health and safety.

You must work in accordance with training or instructions given, make proper use of any personal protective equipment provided and inform your manager of any hazardous situations or risks of which you are aware.

You must ensure you undertake responsibilities relating to your position as detailed within your Directorate Health and Safety Policy.

5. Undertaking any other duties that can be accommodated within the grading level of the post.

Housing is committed to working in a manner, which does not discriminate against any individual or group regardless of ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, religion or gender.

NOTE:

This job description is intended as a general guide to the duties attached to the post and is not an inflexible specification. It may therefore be altered from time to time to reflect the changing needs of the department, always in conjunction with the post holder.

<p>Job Scope:</p> <p>No & type of jobs Managed: Not applicable.</p> <p>Typical tasks supervised/allocated to others:</p>	<p>Job Scope:</p> <p>Budget:</p> <p>Assets:</p>
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Knowledge & Experience:

Minimum

- Dealing with the public, including handling own caseload
- Excellent communication skills
- Excellent negotiation skills
- 2 GCSE's or equivalent including English Language and Maths
- Full current driving licence and access to a vehicle

Preferred

- Knowledge of homeless legislations, Welfare Benefits, Landlord & Tenant Law and Environmental Health implications for Housing
- Computer experience
- Detailed knowledge or experience of diagnosing repairs
- Experience of working with tenants
- Experience of working with vulnerable individuals
- Knowledge of the Allocation Policy

Decision Making:

Postholder will decide:

- Make financial arrangements on a regular basis with tenants to clear arrears, recommend cases for legal action, deposit claims.

Contacts and Relationships:

Housing Officers; Environmental Health, Landlords. Tenants, Housing Benefit, Councillors, Police, Probation, Social Workers, Mental Health teams.

Postholder will communicate both verbally and written (reports, standards letters etc).

Creativity & Innovation:

- Continually amend team procedures with other colleagues to ensure that they work to their maximum efficiency.
- Finding solutions to complicated tenancy issues needs officers to think outside normal procedures and tools available.

Job Specific Competencies:

Postholder must have the capacity to work under pressure, without close supervision

The position may expose the postholder to difficult working conditions and situations that may render personal hazards through dealing with difficult clients and situations.

Problem-solver; self-motivated; good communicator.

In accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998, jobholders should take reasonable care to ensure that personal data is not disclosed outside the Council procedures, or use personal data held on others for their own purposes. In accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, ensure requests for non-personal information are dealt with in accordance with the Council's written procedures.

Employee Signature:

Print Name:

Date

Line Manager's Signature

Print Name:

Date: