



<b>Job Title:</b> Lettings Officer	<b>Role Profile Number:</b> SBC_11972
<b>Grade:</b> CFL 7 <b>Salary:</b>	<b>Date Prepared:</b> October 2023
<b>Directorate/Group:</b> Housing	<b>Reporting to:</b> Lettings Manager
<b>Structure Chart attached:</b>	No

### **Job Purpose**

Provide a flexible, effective and positive letting experience for clients moving in and out of social housing homes, and other accommodation, across the borough, working closely with colleagues to ensure homes are let appropriately and voids times and rent loss are kept to a minimum.

Take ownership and responsibility for the issues under your control and prioritise workloads or resources to deliver quick solutions to our clients. Work collaboratively across teams, departments and external partners to deliver the highest standards of service.

Ensure that the shortlisting of our social housing stock is done accurately, and clients are verified in line with the Councils Allocation Scheme. Managing confidential data supplied, in line with GDPR, and carry out robust financial and affordability assessments to determine that a prospective client is able to afford and sustain a tenancy.

Identify and deal with any concerns, in relation to your offer or applicants on the housing register, with the relevant professionals, which would include Safeguarding Team and Fraud.

Being aware that decisions made within this role can have financial consequences, both positive and negative, to other service areas within the Council.

### **Key Accountabilities**

- Effective management and accountability of lettings casework, ensuring clear, concise and accurate communication with the client/s throughout the whole letting process. Maximise customer satisfaction and minimize complaints.
- Working closely with the Void Team to ensure effective management of all void properties, and that they are let within the agreed SLA, to ensure that loss of rental income and Council Tax income are kept to a minimum.

- Collaborate with colleagues across the Council to collectively achieve corporate objectives – including homelessness prevention (reduce the cost of using temporary accommodation, etc.), Social Care (reduce the cost on the social care expenditure), Downsizing (best use of social housing stock, to reduce housing register list for family accommodation), environmental health, benefits, community safety and fraud (identify and reporting all alleged fraud activity).
- Liaise with other agencies on issues relating to clients in relation to sustainability and household issues including Mental Health Services, Adult and Children Services, Citizen Advice, Debt Management agency, Police, Probation Services and Healthy Neighbourhood.
- Dealing with a wide range of clients, often with complex and high needs such as mental health issues, substance misuse, alcohol dependence, offending and violent behaviour.
- 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.
- Attend and participate in case conferences with statutory agencies when required to ensure appropriate support packages are in place at the start of tenancy.
- Provide detailed follow-up work and support for vulnerable / complex cases as required (such as assisted bidding and direct matching) for vulnerable applicants.
- To evaluate client/s medical and/or welfare condition/s in relation to their current housing accommodation. Make decision on each individual case, to determine whether a medical award complies with the criteria set out within the allocation scheme.
- Responsible for presenting case reviews to the medical appeal panel.
- Carry out pre-tenancy checks on clients, prior to being shortlisted, to ensure that they are tenancy ready and verify that they still meet the eligibility criteria set out in the allocation scheme.
- Shortlist Council social housing stock, to ensure that it is fair and transparent and complies with the Council's Allocations scheme.
- Responsible for the assessing, investigating, interviewing and approval of the client/s eligibility for housing in line with the Allocations scheme and relevant legislation. This can be carried out in the client/s own homes, via telephone or within a Council premises.
- Undertaking necessary supporting, investigative and liaison work with range of relevant agencies and sources in connection with housing register applications and interpret technical information accordingly. This would include working with corporate fraud team to protect our housing stock and public funds.
- Undertake detailed financial and affordability assessments to determine that a prospective client/s is able to afford a tenancy. Referrals to Greenlight to Housing programme, Tenant Money Advisors, Swindon Emergency Assistance Fund and Citizens Advice Bureau. Signposting those who are affected by benefits changes such as Universal Credit and Benefit Cap.
- In line with Councils Risk assessments and lone working policies, to carry out viewings of vacant properties ensuring that the property is safe and ready to let in line with the Councils voids policy. To raise any issues or concerns and liaise directly with the Voids Manager to resolve accordingly.
- Responsible for creating, updating and maintaining case notes and supporting evidence onto Housing Management Systems ensuring it complies with GDPR legislation.
- Responsible for creating, updating and maintaining the housing systems attributes, to ensure records are updated accurately for reporting purposes.

- Create and analyses reports for performance monitoring on lettings times and extracting reports from the system to monitor those on the waiting list for shortlisting and pre-assessment.
- Identifying potential hard to let properties and making recommendations for multiple viewings, open days and being innovative in ways of letting harder to let properties
- Identify clients who may require adapted housing and make recommendation to the Lettings Manager.
- To process SBC management transfers and carry out all verification checks. Make decisions on whether client/s will be direct matched or allowed to bid in a priority band. Liaise with relevant external partners and carry out face to face interviews to ascertain if they meet any specific criteria for a property, such as a sensitive let.
- To carry out move on assessments from supported housing, care leavers and/or any other relevant care supported accommodation and monitoring bids accordingly in line with the Allocations scheme.
- To make decisions on whether to refuse or accept offers of SBC social housing accommodation in line with the Allocation Scheme and legislation. To inform the client/s and/or supporting professionals of their decisions, verbally and in writing and explain the reason why.
- Manage and execute the creation of new tenancy sign-up packs (digital and paper) for new tenants once properties are ready to let; operate in a time-sensitive environment and manner to reduce void times and maximise rental income; use the newly-implemented digital document/signature system (DocuSign) for new tenancy sign-ups and carry out in person sign-up where necessary.
- Responsible for the counter-signing of legal documents such as tenancy agreements, Additional Tenancy Conditions and disclaimers, thereby creating legally binding contracts between the tenant and the Council.
- To assist with the Allocation team in carrying out reviews of the whole housing registers, to make sure that those accessing social housing still have a need and meet the eligibility criteria.
- Reach final statutory determinations on an applicant's housing needs and priority for accommodation through reference to statutory reasonable preference criteria in accordance with Housing Act 1996 and relevant working protocols.
- To ensure that service delivery complies with current regulations, accepted professional standards, the council's policies and procedures and appropriate legislation (including legislation on data protection, homeless, immigration, equalities, health and safety and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults)'.  
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- Knowledge of Housing related policies and legislation specific to letting homes, including an understanding of tenancies and safety legislation with a focus on compliance within all activities undertaken.
- Ensure lone working and policies and procedures are followed at all times
- To have a working understanding of The Homelessness Act 2002, as Amended by The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Assist with Housing Options Team to reduce those clients in high cost temporary accommodation to reduce the financial burden on the general fund and to ensure tenants are moved on efficiently to permanent social housing accommodation.
- Respond to general correspondence as per policy and procedures, and assist in dealing with, and replying to, Councillors, Residents and MP's enquiries. Escalating any lessons learnt to teams and initiating any changes to customer information to improve the service.

- Responding to residents via SBC Corporate social media, which will include posting updates on the service and holding Q&A sessions when applicable.
- To ensure compliance with all corporate targets relating to good customer service, including responding to correspondence, answering the telephone and face-to-face contact with customers.
- To test upgrades and new IT and working with IT to continually improve the IT system to provide an efficient and effective service.
- To ensure the completion and accuracy of the local authority's CORE returns to the Central Administrative Team.
- To mentor and train new starters in the team.
- Responsible for writing and updating procedure guides, accommodating significant and ever-changing work practices and officer responsibility.
- Achieve performance targets for your areas of responsibility and ensuring that overall objectives for the service area and wider priorities for the Council vision and priorities are met.
- Ensuring services are positively focused on customers, communities, and neighbourhoods.
- Develop own capability through continual personal and professional development that will assist in improving own performance in the role, ensuring all core and mandatory training is completed and kept up to date.
- Any other duties commensurate with the post and needs of the business.

### **Supplementary Accountabilities**

- 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.
- In accordance with the provisions of Health & Safety, take reasonable care so as not to endanger yourself or other persons at work; co-operating with the Council to enable it to comply with its statutory duties for health and safety
- To ensure that Data Protection policies are adhered to, safeguarding that disclosure of information is not made to the person other than the data subject unless approval is given by the person or whereby there are relevant disclosures in place.
- To keep abreast of changes in Government policy through liaison with managers and of evolving good practice in relation to housing & social care, and to recommend/implement change as required.
- 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.
- To participate in equality and diversity training, information briefings and events as and when required as part of continuous professional development.
- To carry out all essential e-learning and attend any necessary training as directed by the Council.
- To meet with customer's face to face on council sites or at their home.
- To adhere to lone working procedures for home visits and viewings.

- Ensure that any identified personal training needs are discussed with the immediate supervisor/Manager including being appraised in accordance with the Council's development and appraisal scheme and to undertake a programme of continuous development
- Undertake any other duties that can be accommodated within the grading level of this post.

### **Knowledge & Experience**

- Considerable experience of customer service and resolving problems and queries - face to face, over the telephone and written communication
- Excellent organisational and administration skills and able to schedule and complete own caseworks to strict timescales.
- Ability to write effective and coherent reports
- Ability to understand financial information including budgeting
- Ability to maintain and update databases with high levels of accuracy.
- Excellent IT skills, and a good knowledge of Microsoft Office especially Excel.
- Excellent communicator, keeping client/s, colleagues and professionals fully informed.
- Flexible and works collaboratively
- A problem solver who can use their own initiative.
- Experience of working under own initiative and managing caseload
- Ability to follow processes and policies to ensure compliance.
- Ability to extract information from policy and interpret and apply accordingly without supervision
- Knowledge of Housing policy and relevant legislation (The Housing Act 1996, The Localism Act 2011, The Homelessness Act 2002, as Amended by The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and Social Care Act 2014) is preferred
- Currently working in a housing related field or similar is preferred
- Experience of representing an organisation at meetings is preferred
- Lone working experience is preferred
- Experience of working with vulnerable clients preferred
- Experience of presenting cases at multi agency meetings is preferred
- Full current driving licence and access to a vehicle to visit clients and sites throughout the borough
- Must be fluent in the English language (as requirement of Part 7 of the Immigration Act – for the effective performance of a customer-facing role)
- Willing to embrace change.

### **Qualifications**

- GCSE Grade A-C, or equivalent in English and Math
- NVQ Level 4 or HNC in Housing or related fields or relative social housing experience (Preferred)
- Member Chartered Institute of Housing (Preferred)

- Willingness to study towards a Housing qualification

**Decision Making**

- Assessing housing applications in line with the Council’s Allocation Scheme and national Housing legislation (The Housing Act 1996 and The Localism Act 2011) in order to determine eligibility to proceed with offers.
- Demonstrate decision-making and discretion in applying both the Allocations Scheme and the Housing Legislation to the lettings process.
- Understand and apply housing legislation (as above) in order to decide on whether an offer will be approved or rejected.
- Deciding on a need for a contract of support or additional tenancy conditions.
- Assess when the Council may owe a statutory homeless duty and refer to the homeless prevention or options team (The Homelessness Act 2002, as Amended by The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017).
- Considering direct match when applicants have had time to exercise their right bid through choice-based lettings and action as per procedures in place.
- Identify properties to direct match clients in urgent cases.
- Priority need on case of welfare and medical grounds and discretionary approval.
- Identifying properties suitable for adaptation.
- Ability to work under pressure and without supervision, making on the spot decisions.
- Decision made can have financial consequences.

**Creativity and Innovation**

- Continually amend team procedures with other colleagues to ensure that they work to their maximum efficiency.
- Finding solutions to complicated housing issues, needs officers to think outside normal procedures and tools available.
- To suggest ideas for improving services to customers.
- Presentation of communication documents for customers and partners
- Identifying ways of promoting hard to let properties through advertising, viewings, open days

<p><b><u>Job Scope</u></b></p> <p><b>Number and types of jobs managed</b></p> <p><b>Typical tasks supervised/allocated to others</b> None</p>	<p><b>Budget Holder</b></p> <p><b>Responsibility</b></p> <p><b>Asset Responsibility:</b></p>	<p>No</p>
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## **Contacts and Relationships**

- Written: Standard letters, non-standard letters, writing reports, completing forms and composing emails.
- Verbal: Giving specialist and general housing advice to clients and colleagues.
- Team: Work closely and collaborate with other officers, internal departments, social landlords and other partner organisations.
- General public
- Housing Associations, Private Landlords, Lettings Agents
- Other Local Authorities
- MPs, Councillors
- Police, Probation, Women's Refuge
- Social Care Teams (Adults & Children), Mental Health Services, GPs
- Internal: Housing Officers, Environmental Services, OTs
- External: Voids Contractors

## **Other Key Features of the role**

Occasionally the post-holder will be expected to attend pre-arranged meetings in the evening or at the weekend.

Note: This job description is intended as a general guide to 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 consultation with the post holder.

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.