



SWINDON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Job Title: Allocations Officer	Role Profile Number: SBC_12131
Level: CFL 6	Date Prepared: Autumn 2023
Directorate/Group: Housing	Reporting to: Allocations Manager
Structure Chart attached:	No

Job Purpose

Responsible for the assessment of housing applications in line with Swindon's Housing Allocations Scheme; carrying out checks to verify circumstances and eligibility prior to acceptance onto the Housing Register.

To provide specialist advice and support to customers on the Choice Based Lettings scheme and assist vulnerable groups with accessing the service.

To maintain the Housing Register ensuring applications are updated with any change in circumstances and carrying out periodic reviews.

Key Accountabilities

- Verifying, assessing and determining eligibility, qualification and priority for the Council's Housing Register.
- Use specialist knowledge to assess the eligibility of housing applications by demonstrating an understanding and implementation of Housing legislation (The Housing Act 1996 and the Localism Act 2011), and to authorise or refuse the applications based on legal grounds.
- Analyses, verify and process applications to the Housing Register in accordance with the Council's Allocations Scheme; to exercise careful decision-making and discretion in applying both the Allocations Scheme and the Housing Legislation to the assessment process.
- 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.
- Interpreting personal, technical and circumstantial data to assess relevant housing needs, local connection and housing register eligibility.

- Identify relevant complex housing support needs and safeguarding issues and signpost and deal with referral to the relevant officer or agency as appropriate.
- Reach final statutory determinations on an applicant's housing needs and priority for accommodation through reference to statutory reasonable preference criteria, the Council's scheme of allocations and relevant working protocols.
- Provide technical advice and guidance on social housing availability and lettings to a wide range of customers with diverse needs through personal interviews, web messaging, telephone calls and correspondence.
- Provide detailed follow-up work and support for vulnerable / complex cases as required (such as assisted bidding) for vulnerable applicants.
- Collaborate with colleagues across the Council to collectively achieve corporate objectives – including homelessness prevention, environmental health, benefits, community safety and fraud.
- Interrogate relevant internal housing systems in order to carry out all necessary investigative checks including the verification of tenancy type, the household composition and the applicants' conduct of current tenancies. Request and review tenancy references for applicants from other Social Landlords; identify suitability and any tenancy breaches.
- Identify applications where debt approval is necessary
- 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, equalities, homeless, immigration, health and safety and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults)'.
 - 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.
 - 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
 - Prepare and supply appropriate advice & information for applicants, ensuring it is reviewed regularly and updated. Provide advice over the phone or via email on how to apply for social housing with particular emphasis on encouraging the use of online methods.
 - 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 mentor and train new starters in the team.
 - 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.
 - Deal with applicants, often with complex and high needs such as mental health issues, substance misuse, alcohol dependence, offending and violent behaviour.
 - Responsible for presenting case reviews to the barring and housing review appeal panel.

- Liaise with other agencies regarding housing applications, which would include Mental Health Services, Adult and Children Services, Citizen Advice, Debt Management agency, Police, Probation Services and Healthy Neighbourhood.
- 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.
- Identify clients who may require adapted housing and make recommendation to the Lettings Manager.
- 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 test upgrades and new IT and working with IT to continually improve the IT system to provide an efficient and effective service.
- 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.
- 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.
- Any other duties commensurate with the post and needs of the business.
- To carry out relevant checks on all housing applications to identify eligibility in line with Swindon's Housing Allocations Scheme; gathering information from the application and in-house database systems to establish any discrepancies and request any further information required for assessment purposes.
- To re-assess applications where there has been a change in circumstances and amend priority as necessary.
- To assist clients with accessing the service recognising equality and diversity needs; advising on the application and bidding process and identifying vulnerable applicants who may need further assistance with the process.
- Working with the Tenant Academy Team to ensure pre-tenancy assessment tools are explained and form part of the ongoing application process.
- To respond to telephone and on-line enquiries within service level agreements; giving explanation of the Allocations Scheme and the Choice Based Lettings scheme and how this applies to a customer's application. To identify ways to improve the service by identifying lessons learnt from enquiries and making required changes to customer information.
- To identify and prioritise urgent applications; making necessary referrals to other services such as Social care services, homelessness prevention services and domestic abuse services.
- To contact Landlord and support agencies for information in relation to applications for housing.
- To identify clients with vulnerability and support needs and assist in the application or bidding process.

- To advertise Registered Social Landlord properties on the Housing Portal, carrying out necessary checks to ensure adverts are created correctly.
- To provide cover for the Allocation Nomination Officer, to support to Registered Social Landlords in enquiries relating to nominations, supporting partners with the IT module and to refer/log any issues with the IT module to IT support for action. Ensure partners are updated on progress and action any nominations requests within service level agreements.
- To review data held within Allocations IT module to ensure information correlates with data held within other sectors such as homelessness and tenancy information. To run reports for management as required.
- To maintain the Housing Register through a periodic review.
- To ensure lettings enquiries are responded to within service level agreements and correspondence is accurate in line with Swindon's Housing Allocations Scheme and processes.
- To provide cover in busy periods and absence of other Voids and Lettings Team officers.

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 or on council sites.
- 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

- Proven experience of working with customers face to face and over the telephone; being able to demonstrate excellent customer handling skills and dealing courteously and in a professional manner, speaking clearly and showing patience towards others; being able to gather information and give support and assistance.
- Experience of working in a busy environment and working to tight deadlines
- Flexible and works collaboratively
- A problem solver who can use their own initiative.
- Able to work under own initiative and managing caseload
- Excellent IT skills, and a good knowledge of Microsoft Office.
- Ability to maintain and update databases with high levels of accuracy.
- Ability to understand financial information
- 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 but not essential
- Currently working in a housing related field or similar is preferred but not essential
- An understanding of the Data Protection Act and the safeguards against disclosing information to a person other than the data subject.
- 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 Maths
- NVQ Level 3 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 joining the Councils housing register.
- 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 application will be eligible or ineligible.
- 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).
- Ability to work under pressure and without supervision, making on the spot decisions.
- Making decision to refer a case of domestic abuse cases to Domestic Abuse Team
- Prioritising applications for assessment where there is a high priority need or whereby applicants could be successful in social housing in the short term
- Referring cases to Social Care teams or Managers due to vulnerability, medical or welfare need
- Referring cases to the Tenant Academy Team for pre-tenancy advice and/or assistance
- Referring cases to Manager for debt approval
- Final approval or rejection of the Council's housing applications.
- Decision made can have financial consequences.
- Referring urgent priority cases to management for discretionary/urgent approval or direct match

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

<u>Job Scope</u>	Budget Holder	No
Number and types of jobs managed None	Responsibility	N/A
Typical tasks supervised/allocated to others N/A	Asset Responsibility:	N/A

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.

- Members of the public, requiring a service
- Housing Associations, Private Landlords, Lettings Agents
- Other Local Authorities
- MPs, Councillors
- Internal: Housing Officers, Environmental Services, Fraud, Tenancy Services, Homeless, Domestic Abuse Officers, Social Care,
- External: Probation, Police, Refuge, Hostels

Values and Behaviours

At Swindon what we do really matters

We love 'our' Swindon. We want the best for it. We turn up each and every day to have impact, a place and people to be proud of.

At Swindon we do things right

We are accountable to our residents and ourselves to make the best decisions we can, to try new things to make Swindon thrive now and in the future.

At Swindon we make it happen together

We work together, with our communities, across the Council and with our partners to get the best we can collectively for Swindon.

Delivering Performance and Results

- Being determined to achieve our outcomes by committing to the highest standards of individual and collective performance.
- Holding purposeful conversations which challenge, recognise contribution, giving and receiving relevant feedback.
- Being responsible for delivering my results. Results that contribute to the wider outcomes for Swindon Borough

Collaborating and Innovating

- Taking a Swindon wide view. Understanding the impact of the political landscape for our organisation.
- Looking for appropriate opportunities to work internally and externally in partnership to find new and sustainable ways to do things.
- Being bold, willing to learn in order to meet the needs of our residents.
- Being proactive and accountable – making a difference.

Leading Self and Others

- Acting in a fair, ethical and authentic way, demonstrating mutual respect and treating one another as professionals.
- Fostering trust, developing ability and accountability.
- Developing the conditions for ourselves and others to thrive to create a one team spirit that we are proud of.

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.

Employee Signature:	Print Name:
Date:	
Line Managers Signature:	Print Name:
Date:	