



Role Profile

Job Title: Housing Options Officer	Grade: M1 - 5	Post Number: P/A
Directorate: Commissioning	Job Family: Housing & Community Safety	Date Prepared: March 2015

Role reports to: **Housing Options Manager**

Job Purpose:

- Responsible for providing advice and assistance to applicants who are, or are about to, become homeless.
- Preventing homelessness, whenever possible, by negotiating with statutory, voluntary and other bodies.
- Investigate and assess applicants under Homeless legislation under the 1996 Housing Act, Part VII as amended in the Homelessness Act 2002.

Key Accountabilities:

1. Empower applicants to be able to solve their housing issue or problem.
2. Ensure that all advice given is legal as per Homelessness Legislation under the 1996 Housing Act, Part VII as amended by The Homelessness Act 2002, as amended by The Homelessness reduction Act 2017.
3. Investigate and pursue all avenues open to prevent homelessness, including liaising with the courts, landlords, family members, solicitors, mortgage lenders, supported housing providers etc. Make payments from the Homelessness Prevention fund where appropriate.
4. Assist and advise clients and landlords on the principles of landlord and tenant legislation, including notice to quits, Possession Orders, illegal evictions etc.
5. Liaise with other teams at Swindon Borough Council, including Residential Services, Landlord Services, Customer Services and Anti-Social Behavior Investigation Officers.
6. Adopt a multi-agency approach by liaising with statutory and voluntary bodies including The Police, other Local Authorities, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Drug and Alcohol agencies, Mental Health Services, Wiltshire Law Centre and The Citizens Advice Bureau to assist applicants with their housing issues.

7. Refer vulnerable people to supported housing or for appropriate floating support.
8. Advise and refer, where appropriate, any applicants for whom a Deposit Guarantee Bond may assist in the prevention of homelessness or in securing an alternative property in the private sector.
9. Record accurately the information required by the Homeless Operations Manager and Housing Options Manager so that statistical information can be extracted.
10. Initiate and reply promptly and efficiently to letters, emails and phone calls or matters relating to the homelessness function as required

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: No & type of jobs Managed: Not applicable. Typical tasks supervised/allocated to others: Not applicable.</p>	<p>Job Scope: Budget: £100 per prevention Assets: Not applicable.</p>
<p>Knowledge & Experience:</p> <p>Minimum.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ GCSE's or equivalent including English Language and Maths. ➤ Experience in dealing with the public, including handling own caseload. ➤ An understanding of Housing Law and Legislation ➤ To be able to work in a busy environment under pressure. ➤ Excellent verbal and written communication skills. ➤ Good IT skills. <p>Preferred:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Knowledge of Homeless Law, Welfare Benefits, Landlord and Tenant Law and Environmental Health implications for Housing. ➤ Knowledge of Immigration and Asylum legislation/eligibility criteria. ➤ Knowledge of Marital & Family Law ➤ Knowledge of The Children Act. ➤ Experience in a Homelessness Section. ➤ Knowledge of Care Leavers Act and associated legislation and case law. 	
<p>Decision Making:</p> <p>Make decisions under 1996 Housing Act, Part VII as amended in Homelessness Act 2002, as amended by The Homelessness reduction Act 2017, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cases for acceptance, refusal or referral to other authorities ➤ Responsible for decisions that directly impact upon the lives of people presenting as homeless, including their future housing provision. ➤ Provide written decisions that will stand up to legal scrutiny. ➤ Whether to place a household in temporary accommodation, including Bed & Breakfast ➤ Make judgements in relation to recommendation of use of the Prevention fund. 	
<p>Contacts and Relationships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Carry out visits to clients' homes, private addresses, hospitals ➤ Liaise with other agencies and authorities to investigate cases ➤ Attend Case Conferences representing the department with other organisations ➤ The postholder will have to assist in maintaining close and regular liaison with senior and principle officers in other groups, eg, solicitors etc. 	
<p>Creativity & Innovation: Offer solutions in order to prevent homelessness, ie use of prevention fund.</p>	

Job Specific Competencies:

- Interview applicants who have housing problems, who are homeless or likely to become homeless and commence investigation of the case.
- Keep up to date with legislative changes, case law etc
- Advise applicants on the operation of the Council’s housing allocation policy, ensuring best, consistent advice is given to individual circumstances.
- Deal with difficult working conditions and situations which may render personal hazards through dealing with difficult clients and situations.
- In cases of emergencies, be prepared to work outside of normal working hours including evening/nights, weekends and Bank Holidays.
- The postholder must have the capacity to work under pressure and without close supervision. They must also have the ability and presence to relate directly to members of Council on a variety of housing issues.
- The postholder will occupy a position in a very busy and progressive department which expects a high level of commitment, self-motivation and personal initiative from its officers.
- The requirement to drive and have a car available will be an essential feature of the performance of the above duties. As will the requirement to participate in an ‘out-of-hours’ call-out service on a rota basis.

Values and Behaviours

We strive to underpin our culture of being ‘At our Best’ through strong management and authentic leadership. This means getting the management basics right. We own and demonstrate accountability, both individually and collectively, and aim to get things right first time. Building on this we also expect everyone at SBC to demonstrate and live our organisational values and behaviours, by displaying:

- Accountability at all levels
- Customer care and pride in what we do
- Continuous learning and evaluation
- Valuing one another and the contribution each of us makes

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: