

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

JOB DESCRIPTION

Designation:	Senior Licensing and Housing Enforcement Officer	Grade:	PO3
Reports to (Designation):	Licensing and Housing Enforcement Manager	Grade:	PO5
Directorate:	Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm	Section:	Private Sector Housing Agency

Main Purpose of the job:

To work positively and actively as part of a team to improve the standard of the private sector Housing stock in the borough.

Proactively identify and issue licenses for residential accommodation over commercial premises.

Identify and work with landlords to improve poor conditions; and enforce statutory provisions as an Authorised Officer under the Council's delegated authorities where required.

Work in conjunction with other colleagues and services both formally and informally to get the right result for the customer, being imaginative and taking risks to solve problems. To provide professional advice and support and be a role model and mentor for all Licensing and Enforcement officers that are learning on the job actively participating in their career and skills development.

Lead on the delivery of projects as required that contribute to improved standards and conditions for all customers in the private rented sector (PRS);

Summary of Responsibilities and Personal Duties:

- Deliver a programme of visits and street surveys based on key data and local intelligence to identify licensable properties, poor and unsafe conditions in the private rented sector and properties where tenants are at risk or exploited, accurately recording results, actions and outcomes;
- Undertake all duties associated with identifying and issuing licenses including assertively pursuing those landlords reluctant to engage with our service, and lead on delivering both simple and more complex enforcement cases related to housing standards in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures, council standing orders and financial regulations.
- Provide high quality, confidential and trustworthy customer focused services and relevant advice to home owners, landlords, commercial premises, tenants and lettings agencies in all aspects of improvement, enforcement and regulation; including ensuring they are aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Issue notices, including Civil Penalty notices and undertake all forms of legal enforcement action to improve private rented sector accommodation from initial complaint to successful conclusion, including presenting cases at court.

- Identify breaches of legislation in private sector properties using data held in council records or through intelligence led investigations, complaints, street surveys etc.
- Assist in accurately maintaining the database of inspected properties in the Private sector and reporting on individual and team performance.
- Identify potential licensable properties, investigate that the licensing criteria have been met and issue licenses accordingly. Where standards have not been met take the necessary action to improve the property.
- Carry out full inspections of private sector properties, respond to service requests and decide on appropriate action, with a high level of discretion, in often highly complex and contentious matters. This will be predominately in relation to the Housing Act 2004 utilising the HHSRS to evidence breaches.
- Decide on appropriate cases for prosecution from both own work but that of more junior officers, and ensure that they meet the Enforcement Concordat and Public Interest Criteria. Collate evidence, write statements and associated documentation, prepare prosecution file. Give evidence and professional opinion on behalf of the Council at Court, Public Enquiries, Ombudsman Enquiries, Residential Property Tribunals and defend appeals etc ensuring compliance with the requirements of PACE including the role of disclosure officer.
- Thoroughly investigate complaints from initial complaint to closing and respond as required to the customer;
- Work with the Private Sector Fraud and Intelligence Officers where required to support action against rogue landlords and support customers to prevent homelessness or exploitation.
- Prepare and issue work schedules required to bring properties up to standard where economically viable and monitor compliance within relevant legislation.
- Proactively manage own caseload and ensure all cases are brought to a satisfactory conclusion, problem solving where issues arise. Carry out regular case reviews and be responsible for prosecutions, appeals or default actions. Examine and comment on plans and related documents and respond to all correspondence within agreed timescales.
- Maintain accurate and detailed records of all live and historic cases and make use of new technology and specialised equipment. Provide detailed reports, statistics and performance information as required.
- Promote and market the key private sector schemes offered to landlords, lettings agents and other external partners and proactively promote the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme ensuring a full understanding of the scheme and its benefits.
- Work in partnership with a wide range of officers from across the council (Housing Benefit, Council Tax, Planning, Legal, Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Housing Needs) and externally (Police, LFB, SELPH, Empty Homes Agency, LACORs) to provide the best opportunities for making the best use of the private rented stock in the borough.
- Attend meetings internally and externally sharing best practice, working collaboratively to increase standards in the PRS and raise the profile of the work of the PSHA/Lewisham Council, being well prepared and acting professionally at all times.

- Maintain detailed up-to-date knowledge and play an active and positive role in the development and review of strategies, procedures, policies, working practices in response to changes in legislation, codes of practice, case law, Residential Property Tribunal decisions, statutory and non-statutory guidance, best practice identified by other departments or organisations etc in relation to regulation and enforcement in the private sector.
- Lead on internal audits as required for the licensing and enforcement services in the PSHA;
- Utilise communications and IT skills to promote the work of the Licensing and Enforcement service using all available media
- Attend and participate in member briefings, committees, working parties and inter-agency meetings as required.
- Work flexibly and positively as part of a team to ensure individual and team targets are met, contributing ideas and suggestions to improve service delivery.
- Provide advice, support and training to others and play a lead role in formally mentoring, training and supporting new licensing and enforcement officers and apprentices in the team to develop their skills and progress through the grades.
- Contribute to service innovation to continually improve outcomes for the residents of the borough using high levels of discretion to gain optimal results.
- Carry out customer service reviews to secure feedback on services as required and feed into service development.
- Carry out all tasks with due regard to the Councils policies and procedures with particular regard to Health and Safety and the Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Deliver relevant projects as required that assists the PSHA to achieve its goal to deliver improvements in the standards and customer services of the private rented sector.

Internal Contacts: These include officers within the Agency, technical, professional and administrative staff across the council and Council Members.

External Contacts: This will include private rented clients and their families, landlords, registered providers, charities, agents, owner occupiers, commercial, contractors, MPs, officers in other areas such as SELHP, Land Registry, Central and Local Government, utilities, Fire Service, Met Police, UKBA and professional bodies such as CIEH, CIH, ALEHM, HSE, LACCORS.

Duties are to be carried out with due regard to the Council's relevant codes, policies and procedures.

All employees are required to participate in the Performance Evaluation Scheme (PES) and to undertake appropriate training and development identified to enhance their work.

Undertake other duties, commensurate with the grade, as may reasonably be required.

Consideration will be given to restructuring the duties of this post for a disabled post holder

THIS JOB DESCRIPTION MAY NEED TO BE AMENDED BY THE DIRECTORATE TO MEET THE CHANGING NEEDS OF THE SERVICE.

Number of fully managed staff:

Title: N/A	Grade	No of posts
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Number of partially managed staff:

Title: N/A	Grade	No of posts
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PERSON SPECIFICATION

JOB TITLE: Senior Licensing and Housing Enforcement Officer **POST NO:**

DEPARTMENT: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm **GRADE:**
PO3

Note to Candidates

The Person Specification is a picture of the skills, knowledge and experience needed to carry out the job. It has been used to draw up the advert and will also be used in the shortlisting and interview process for this post.

Those categories marked 'S' will be used especially for the purpose of shortlisting.

Please ensure that Equality and Diversity issues are addressed specifically in relation to the role for which you are applying when addressing the requirements of this person specification where appropriate.

If you are a disabled person, but are unable to meet some of the job requirements specifically because of your disability, please address this in your application. If you meet all the other criteria you will be shortlisted and we will explore jointly with you if there are ways in which the job can be changed to enable you to meet the requirements.

Equality & Diversity

Awareness of and a commitment to Equality of Access and Opportunity in a diverse community **S**
Understanding of how equality and diversity relates to this post **S**

Knowledge

Working knowledge of:

- HMO Licensing
- EH residential enforcement powers
- Housing legislation, codes of practice and other statutory and non-statutory guidance relating to housing and enforcement of housing conditions in the private rented sector.
- Government policy and regulation of the private rented sector

S

Detailed knowledge of construction, building regulation, planning requirements, disrepair, property maintenance, electrical and gas safety, fire protection, means of escape, landlord and tenant rights and effects of housing conditions on health. HHSRS qualification. **S**

HHSRS qualification. **S**

Knowledge of good customer services principles **S**

Knowledge of the key services of the Council **S**

Aptitude

Ability to communicate complicated concepts clearly, concisely, sensitively and compassionately

Ability to use high levels of discretion to make decisions

Aptitude for completing work to time and quality targets and attention to detail

Ability to write well so you are clear in your communications with all customers, colleagues, senior managers or Members.

Ability to work well collaboratively as a team

Ability to use own initiative

Skills

(Skills can only be used as shortlisting criteria if the skill is to be tested)

(To Be Tested – S)

Excellent communication skills, verbal, written and specialist interview skills to gather information and evidence (PACE) T

High level problem solving skills

Analytical skills

T

ICT skills

T

Numeracy and literacy skills

T

Ability to learn new tasks quickly and efficiently

T

Ability to keep a positive outlook in a demanding environment

T

Influencing skills

T

Communication skills

T

Problem solving

Ability to work as part of a team

T

Experience

Substantial experience of Housing Act enforcement

S

Substantial experience relating to the improvement of housing conditions within the private rented sector and of undertaking property inspections, works schedules, and the full range of enforcement actions; S

Substantial experience of effectively communicating, influencing and persuading at a range of levels in order to achieve organizational and service objectives S

Experience of communicating with a range of people and dealing in often confrontational and distressing circumstances and provide quality outcomes for residents S

Experience of meeting demanding targets in a demanding environment S

Experience of managing conflicting priorities under pressure to meet service objectives S

Demonstrable experience of using a full range of Microsoft packages and with working with databases and extracting data. S

Experience of managing difficult situations in a straightforward way S

Experience of motivating, mentoring, developing and coaching staff S

Experience in explaining often difficult concepts or processes easily S

- Experience in problem solving **S**
- Experiencing of working well in a diverse team **S**
- Experience in using initiative with minimal supervision to effectively manage and organise own workload **S**
- Experience in interpreting and applying complex legislation and implementing necessary changes **S**
- Monitoring targets, performance and analyzing statistical data for the purpose of producing monthly reports **S**

General Education

Environmental Health professional qualification (substantive experience) or Environmental Health Masters degree/ or recognised housing/surveying qualification or equivalent

Certificate of competency in performing HHSRS assessments and hazard identification

Personal Qualities

- Passionate about customer care and improving housing conditions
- Excellent communicator, personable and empathetic to the needs of customers
- Excellent and flexible team worker
- Essential to have a flexible approach to the delivery of a service
- Accurate with attention to detail
- Ambitious and driven
- Intelligent and practical
- Highly motivated to support the service, providing responsive high quality work whilst meeting deadlines
- Hard working and dependable
- Integrity, honesty, creative and positive
- Solution focused mindset

Circumstances

- Must own and run a car and be able to travel throughout the borough to carry out the functions of the post
- Work outside normal office hours to get the job done as required

DBS Disclosure Required? **No** **Basic** **Enhanced**

(Tick as appropriate – guidance available from your HR Advisor)

Physical

Generally candidates must meet the standard Lewisham requirements for the post