

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

JOB DESCRIPTION

Designation:	Homelessness Prevention and Assessment Team Leader	Grade:	PO3
Reports to (Designation):	Homelessness Prevention and Assessments Service Manager	Grade:	SMG1
Directorate:	Housing Regeneration & Public Realm	Section:	Housing Needs and Refugee Services

Main Purpose of the job:

- To ensure the delivery of high quality, customer focused housing options service to households who have approached Lewisham as homeless, and in housing need, ensuring the provision of comprehensive advice service aimed at resolving housing problems.
- To effectively manage an assessment service for customers presenting to the Council meeting all required targets to ascertain what duties are owed to them by the authority and what alternative housing options are available to them
- To ensure the team carry out holistic assessments of housing needs, devise personalised housing plans in line with the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) and provide timely and appropriate interventions and referrals, with the aim of minimising avoidable use of higher level statutory and crisis service provision (including emergency and temporary accommodation).
- Approve decisions made under the Housing Act 1996 as amended by Homelessness Act 2002 (as amended)
- To ensure that the Council's obligations in respect of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, and council policy, are met.
- To provide effective management, development, training and support to staff and ensuring that staff meet both personal and service performance targets.
- To provide a high quality advice, tenancy resettlement/sustainment and move on service which is tenure neutral to meet the needs of the Housing Needs service that maximises the number of homeless households who are able to move successfully into good quality, affordable private rented accommodation
- To be part of a flexible and responsive supervisory team within the Homelessness Prevention and Assessment service working across the service as required to meet changing pressures and demands.
- To accurately record and report on individual and team activity.

Summary of Responsibilities and Personal Duties:

MANAGEMENT ROLES & EXPECTATIONS

As a Team Leader/Manager you will:

1. Adapt the planned delivery of services to ensure changing community and customer needs.

2. Monitor and review service outcomes ensuring effective delivery of personal and team objectives.
3. Ensure the continuous improvement in services using creative and informative inventions as well as effective performance and quality management.
4. Plan, deploy and co-ordinate people resources to meet changing operational needs.
5. Ensure services meet statutory and identified organisational standards and regulations.
6. Ensure an understanding of the impact of your service on other functions.
7. To ensure the provision of an effective, responsive and integrated housing advice and options service to potentially homeless people in accordance with the provisions of Parts VI and VII of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.
8. To promote and embed across the Homelessness Prevention and Assessment Service a proactive culture of homeless prevention and housing options as the primary method of customers resolving their housing difficulties.
9. To develop an efficient offer to increase preventions and reduce the numbers of households who need to rely on the provision of temporary accommodation.
10. To minimise the use of bed and breakfast accommodation to only those customers to whom the authority owes a statutory duty to and who have no other housing options.
11. To coordinate access to the Boroughs supported housing schemes for single applicants where relevant or to other developed schemes in the Borough designed to alleviate single non priority homelessness i.e. MAPPA and offender schemes.
12. To manage, develop and support a team of Homelessness Prevention & Assessment Officers delivering the housing advice service to households, both single and with families and to deal with contentious cases including those involving litigation, attending court if required and to ensure that all applications are dealt with in accordance with the law and Council policy.
13. To provide individual and group training to staff to ensure that they are kept up to date of legislative changes, new case law pertinent to homelessness and best practice across the service area.
14. To oversee for quality and robustness and approve decisions made by the Homelessness Prevention & Support Officers under all relevant parts of the Homelessness Legislation.
15. To ensure that the assessment service is thorough but sensitive, rigorous and subject to the highest level of public accountability in respect of fraud detection.
16. To allocate casework, set targets and monitor performance against key performance indicators and take appropriate action as necessary to meet and improve performance.

17. To authorise placements into temporary accommodation, in particular bed & breakfast ensuring that there are no other housing options available to customers thereby keeping usage and costs to a minimum.
18. To authorise payments of up to £10,000 from the Discretionary Housing Payment budget and Homeless Prevention budget in cases where a financial solution is required to secure alternative housing or prevent homelessness, having assessed the business case for making such payments in the light of any duties owed to the relevant households.
19. To monitor with the support of the Service Group Manager the budgetary spend of the Discretionary Housing Payment budget and homeless prevention budget to ensure that value for money is maximized from the available resources and that overspends are not incurred.
20. To participate in the duty rota and any out of hours service supporting the front facing customer services and pro-actively managing the public areas of the service, including managing any confrontational situations that arise to ensure that customers are dealt with swiftly and efficiently and directed to the on line services available for their assistance.
21. To advise staff on vulnerable adult and child protection legislation and ensure referrals are made to Social Care for appropriate customers when required, participating in the CAF process as needed.
22. To ensure that support needs of homeless clients are identified, risk is assessed and managed and clients referred to appropriate agencies.
23. To regularly audit case files and carry out other quality checks to ensure standards are maintained.
24. Ensure the Early intervention & resettlement officers maximise prevention & relief outcomes by procuring and securing alternative accommodation. This includes sign up and discharging of duty working very closely with the Homelessness prevention & Assessment officers.
25. To develop and maintain partnerships with internal and external stakeholders and participate in the development of policies, procedures and protocols, which promote effective joint working to meet the needs of customers.
26. To complete health & safety risk assessments for all areas of the service pertaining to the delivery of the Housing Needs Service for staff under the post holder's supervision e.g. lone working, driving at work, reception areas (Nb This is an indicative but not exclusive list)
27. To ensure that Health & Safety policies and procedures are adhered to by staff within the Service.
28. To support the review and development of all monitoring, data reporting and IT systems and to ensure the accurate reporting of performance and all other management information as required.
29. In conjunction with the Housing Needs Service's management team to contribute to the development of annual service and work-plans and the development of

divisional plans, the Council's Housing Strategy and other strategic plans as requested.

30. To be the lead officer as required for the Homelessness Prevention and Assessment Service in multi-agency groups including MARAC, MAPPA, CAF and Hospital discharge developing strategies and policies, as well as making decisions on behalf of the Service to effectively deal with the accommodation and support needs of these and other vulnerable client groups across both statutory and voluntary agencies.
31. To manage one or more housing needs projects as allocated, leading on that topic and representing the section at relevant meetings and working groups.
32. To participate in the Councils out of hours service for potentially homeless households.
33. To keep up to date with all relevant legislation, procedure and good practice and disseminate this to the service.
34. To ensure that enquiries from customers, MPs, FOI's and elected members are responded within the standard and timeframes of the Council and to draft reports and briefings to the Executive and other Council committees or management teams as required.
35. Any other duties commensurate with the post as directed by Head of Service.
36. To deputise for the Homelessness Prevention & Assessment Service Manager across the Service as directed.
37. Ensure they understand and are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Internal Contacts: These will include the Housing Benefit Service, Council Tax Service, Social Care, Education Department and Crime Reduction Service.

External Contacts: This will include the DWP, CAB, Health Services, Registered providers and all voluntary agencies associated with homelessness and welfare or financial advice

To carry out the duties of the post with due regard to the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy and core values.

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

All employees are required to comply with the Council's Health & Safety policies and procedures at all times, taking due care for themselves, colleagues and members of the public.

Assist in carrying out the Council's environmental policy within the day to day activities of the post.

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 postholder

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

Number of fully managed staff: Up to 8

Title:	Grade:	No of Posts:
Homelessness Prevention & Assessment Officers	SO2	6
Early Intervention & Resettlement Officers	SO2	1
Trainee Homelessness Prevention and Assessments Officer	Sc6	1
Move-on Officer	SO2	1

PERSON SPECIFICATION

JOB TITLE: Homelessness Prevention and Assessment Team leader
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

- Detailed knowledge of the legislation and duties owed to homeless persons by the Council under PTvii of the Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002 and Localism Act 2011 and its application
- Excellent knowledge of Suitability and affordability assessments for accommodation provided under homelessness provisions
- Demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding children & Adults.
- Detailed knowledge of the duties owed to young people under the Childrens Act 1989
- Knowledge of the Code of Guidance for local authorities 2006, relevant case law and its application
- Knowledge of Landlord and Tenant Legislation, the Housing Act 1985 and Protection from Eviction Act 1977 **S**
- Knowledge of homeless prevention initiatives and their application and effectiveness **S**
- Up to date knowledge of the welfare benefit system and its application **S**

- Good knowledge of other agencies, both statutory and voluntary providing relevant advice and assistance to customers under alternative legislation and in all forms of tenure **S**
 - A working knowledge of the application of the terms and conditions contained in the range of tenancy agreements across all tenures **S**
 - Knowledge of the housing problems faced by an inner London borough
 - A good understanding of budgetary control
- Working knowledge health & safety legislation in the workplace

Aptitude

- Passionate about the role of housing in shaping people's life chances
 - Demonstrate a positive attitude towards customer service
 - Ability to motivate individuals and a team of staff
 - Demonstrate a flexible and innovative approach to problem solving
 - Ability to deliver the Council's homeless prevention agenda
 - Proven ability to use performance monitoring and management techniques to achieve service targets
 - Ability to review service delivery, develop and implement service and training plans
 - Ability to manage, motivate and lead staff in a challenging environment
 - Ability to be pro-active and creative in preventing homelessness and resolving complex customer problems
- Ability to advocate on customer's behalf with other agencies, statutory and voluntary and other members of the public

Skills

(Skills can only be used as shortlisting criteria if the skill is to be tested)
(To Be Tested – S)

- Excellent organizational skills,
- Casework management and supervision, including multi-agency
- Ability to motivate individuals
- Team building
- Project management skills
- Management of performance and capability
- Excellent communication skills at all levels, both with internal colleagues and external agencies
- Excellent negotiating skills with varied parties, including partner agencies and internal colleagues
- Good standard of ICT skills
- Able to negotiate solutions that are commercially beneficial to the Council
- Excellent written skills to be able to produce detailed and accurate reports and letters to the public and other senior professionals

Avoidance and management of conflict and stress

Experience

- Experience of composing and issuing detailed and legally robust S184 decision letters in line with the duties owed to customers under the homelessness legislation **S**

- Experience of producing detailed and accurate reports and letters to the public and other professionals **S**
- Experience of working in a supervisory role in a demanding front line service, preferably in a housing environment **S**
- Good experience of effectively dealing with confrontational situations **S**
- Experience of setting and achieving targets and deadlines **S**
- Experience of reviewing and carrying out risk assessments **S**
- Some experience of budgetary management **S**
- Experience of working as part of a team as well as being able to work on your own initiative when dealing with your own case load **S**

General Education

- A good standard of general education (Minimum of 3 A-C GCSE or higher education attainments) **S**
- housing qualification or minimum 5 years housing or related professional experience
S

Personal Qualities

- Be self motivated and be able to work under pressure
- Be flexible in working across the wider Housing Needs Service as required

Circumstances

- Required to deliver the housing needs service at different locations and Council offices
- Required to work outside of normal office hours in times of high customer demand
- Required to deliver out reach surgeries and conduct home visits
- Required to attend evening meetings as directed
- Required to participate in the out of hours homeless service rota

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