

Job Description

Department:	Place & Economy
Division/Section:	Housing Needs
Job Title:	Housing Early Help/Prevention Officer
Grade:	9
Reports to:	Team Leader – First Contact & Early Help / Team Leader - Prevention
Organisation Chart: Show immediate manager and any jobs reporting to this post.	<pre> graph TD TL1[Team Leader - First Contact & Early Help Grade 12] --> FCO[First Contact Officers x 4 FTE Grade 5] TL1 --> EHO[Early Help Officers x 8 FTE Grade 9] TL2[Team Leader - Prevention Grade 12] --> PO[Prevention Officers x 7 FTE Grade 9] EHO --> EHA[Early Help Assistants x 5 FTE Grade 7] PO --> PA[Prevention Assistants x 3 FTE Grade 7] </pre>
CRB Check applicable?	Enhanced <input type="checkbox"/> Standard <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Is post exempt under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 in respect of declaration of spent convictions?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>
Line Management responsibility for:	<p>No. of direct reports: 0</p> <p>No. of indirect reports: 0</p>
Size of budget:	<p>Staff Budget: 0</p> <p>Service Budget: 0</p>
Job Purpose:	<p>To provide robust and meaningful front-line advice with reference to housing solutions to customers, with a primary focus on preventing and relieving homelessness.</p> <p>This is a specialist role that will be at the forefront of the prevention of Homelessness and at the cutting-edge helping households as crisis occurs and where required in accordance with the Homelessness Act 2017.</p> <p>To provide an effective, professional homelessness service on behalf of the Council</p>

Main Duties & Responsibilities

Early Help Officers

1. The postholder will require to have specialist knowledge of the 1996 Housing Act, the homelessness act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, combined with detailed understanding of the welfare reform act.
2. To support customers who may be threatened with homelessness at the earliest stage to prevent them from reaching crisis.
3. Assessing the customers housing and wider health and welfare needs in order to inform robust personalised housing plans and where required in accordance with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
4. Ensure a collaborative approach in tackling potential homelessness. A high percentage of customers presenting as homeless will be vulnerable and it is essential to assess the customer's needs accurately with the support of the agencies that are, or may need to be, working with the customer.
5. Offering options to customers to prevent homelessness where possible through negotiation with private sector landlords, homeowners, mortgage companies, friends and family, registered social housing providers and other accommodation providers to offer housing solutions. Including, but not limited to:
 - a. use of homelessness prevention funds
 - b. rent deposits,
 - c. mediation, between landlords and tenants or parents and children.
 - d. negotiation and problem solving with housing associations and private sector landlords to prevent evictions for rent arrears,
 - e. anti-social behaviour cases and,
 - f. seeking out new housing opportunities for our customers.
6. Utilise a strength-based approach to achieve successful outcomes in relation to personalised housing plans with customers and supporting agencies following processes to ensure customers are informed and motivated to engage with the process.
7. To make homelessness the unacceptable outcome no matter how challenging the circumstances presenting the Council and partners.
8. To prevent homelessness with all presenting households through creative negotiation, mediation, challenge and financial commitment in accordance with the Homelessness Reduction Act, and other relevant legislation and case law including tenancy management and eviction legislation.
9. Agree personal housing plans with all presenting households and partner agencies and then monitor the progress with the sole aim of preventing and relieving homeless. In limited circumstances when this is not possible to make relevant enquires and keep records to inform the final decision making.
10. To maintain thorough notes and explain decision making in relation to decisions made as required by the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), including producing decision letters.
11. Build relationships with partners and stakeholders to create a one team approach with solution-based actions to encourage partners to use non housing legislation routes when perceived appropriate to do so through agreed protocols.
12. This position is complex with the postholder being required to liaise with customers, statutory organisations, advocates and third sector providers to arrive at a sustainable housing solution for customers with complex and multiple needs for example mental health combined with drug and or alcohol addiction.
13. Ensure a multi-agency approach to preventing homelessness on cases where other agencies are involved.
14. Ensure that all housing options are considered and facilitate appropriate applications and referrals to ensure clients are considered and prioritised for consideration. i.e. The Housing Register.
15. To work effectively with the pathway team to find suitable alternative accommodation, where the household is unable to remain in their current home, before crisis occurs.
16. Effectively direct and utilise the support of the assistant officer where necessary to support with the administration of the function.

Prevention Officers

1. The postholder will require to have specialist knowledge of the 1996 Housing Act, the homelessness act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, combined with detailed understanding of the welfare reform act.
2. To support customers who are homeless or threatened with homelessness within 28 days.
3. To liaise closely with the Early Help Officers to ensure effective transfer of cases where early help has been unsuccessful in preventing homelessness prior to the client being threatened with homelessness within 28 days.
4. To be responsive and work quickly to intervene with clients who are homeless or threatened with homelessness within 28 days to minimise the use of temporary accommodation.
5. Assessing the customers housing and wider health and welfare needs in order to inform robust personalised housing plans and where required in accordance with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
6. Ensure a collaborative approach in tackling potential homelessness. A high percentage of customers presenting as homeless will be vulnerable and it is essential to assess the customer's needs accurately with the support of the agencies that are, or may need to be, working with the customer.
7. Offering options to customers to prevent homelessness where possible through negotiation with private sector landlords, homeowners, mortgage companies, friends and family, registered social housing providers and other accommodation providers to offer housing solutions. Including, but not limited to:
 - a. use of homelessness prevention funds
 - b. rent deposits,
 - c. mediation, between landlords and tenants or parents and children.
 - d. negotiation and problem solving with housing associations and private sector landlords to prevent evictions for rent arrears,
 - e. anti-social behaviour cases and,
 - f. seeking out new housing opportunities for our customers.
8. Utilise a strength-based approach to achieve successful outcomes in relation to personalised housing plans with customers and supporting agencies following processes to ensure customers are informed and motivated to engage with the process.
9. To make homelessness the unacceptable outcome no matter how challenging the circumstances presenting the Council and partners.
10. To prevent homelessness with all presenting households through creative negotiation, mediation, challenge and financial commitment in accordance with the Homelessness Reduction Act, and other relevant legislation and case law including tenancy management and eviction legislation.
11. Agree personal housing plans with all presenting households and partner agencies and then monitor the progress with the sole aim of preventing and relieving homeless. In limited circumstances when this is not possible to make relevant enquires and keep records to inform the final decision making.
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16. Ensure that all housing options are considered and facilitate appropriate applications and referrals to ensure clients are considered and prioritised for consideration. i.e. The Housing Register.
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Generic Responsibilities:	<p>To carry out all responsibilities with regard to the Council's Equalities Policy and Procedures and Customer Care Policy.</p> <p>To comply with all Health & Safety at work requirements as laid down by the employer.</p> <p>The council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.</p>		
Flexibility Clause:	<p>Other duties and responsibilities express and implied which arise from the nature and character of the post within the department (or section) mentioned above or in a comparable post in any of the Organisation's other sections or departments.</p>		
Variation Clause:	<p>This is a description of the job as it is constituted at the date shown. It is the practice of this Authority to periodically examine job descriptions, update them and ensure that they relate to the job performed, or to incorporate any proposed changes. This procedure will be conducted by the appropriate manager in consultation with the postholder.</p> <p>In these circumstances it will be the aim to reach agreement on reasonable changes, but if agreement is not possible the Head of Service reserves the right to make changes to your job description following consultation.</p>		
DATE:	5/10/22	COMPLETED BY:	Sarah Hebblethwaite

Person Specification

JOB TITLE:	Prevention Officer – Early Help and Prevention	POST NO:	TBC
GRADE:	9	DEPARTMENT:	Housing Needs
HOURS	37		
DIVISION:	Housing Needs	DIRECTOR:	Adrian Chapman
DATE:	5/10/22	COMPLETED BY:	Sarah Hebblethwaite

ATTRIBUTES	ESSENTIAL CRITERIA	DESIRABLE CRITERIA
KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A specialist working knowledge of Part VI & VII of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (A&I) • An understanding of current issues affecting social housing and private housing provision in inner city areas (A&I) • A working knowledge of legislation on lettings, homelessness, security of tenure, tenant's rights including codes of guidance, case law and good practice. (A&I) • Knowledge of full range of housing options and effective and evidence-based homelessness prevention approaches. (A&I) • An understanding of the reasons for homelessness and the wider system of support services (A&I) • Customer focussed with an understanding of the need to respond holistically to the needs of vulnerable clients (A&I) 	Experience of using Housing Partners Jigsaw application.
SKILLS & ABILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective interpersonal skills to communicate effectively face to face, orally and in writing with a range of people including homeless persons, landlords, GP's, social workers, probation, police. • Effective interviewing skills including being able to ascertain facts. • Effective negotiation skills and ability to develop creative solutions to prevent and relieve homelessness. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to deal sensitively with people who are in difficult or stressful situations. • Administration skills. Ensuring that keeping accurate, confidential records and compiling clear and concise reports on homeless cases. • Able to act on own initiative and be committed to working in a team environment and providing support for team members. • Ability to motivate customers to take responsibility for their Personal Housing Plans. • Ability to work co-operatively in a team to achieve prescribed objectives. • Strong self-motivation and an ability to work with a minimum of supervision to tight deadlines. • Ability to work co-operatively in a team to achieve prescribed objectives. • Willingness to visit clients in their home where appropriate and when risks have been assessed and mitigated 	
EXPERIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in a housing association or local authority housing options/homelessness team. • Dealing with customers in difficult situations. • Working in within the parameters of the Housing Act 1996 Part VII • Monitoring and maintaining computer records. 	
QUALIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 X GCSE's Grade C and above or equivalent 	
PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to work outside of normal office hours including occasional weekends and bank holiday (A&I) • Willingness and ability to travel in line with the requirements of the post (A&I) 	
EQUALITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates must demonstrate understanding of, acceptance and commitment to the principals underlying equal opportunities. (A&I) 	

CUSTOMER CARE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Knowledge and understanding of effective customer care (A&I)	
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[At the end of each criteria the following codes are used to indicate how the criteria will be assessed: (AI) Application / Interview, (P) Presentation,(W) Written Test.]