

GLPC Job Description

	Job Title	Single Homelessness Prevention and Relief Officer
	Directorate	Resident Services
	Department	Housing Needs Service
	Grade	SO2
	Reports to	Single Homelessness Prevention and Relief Team Leader
	Staffing Responsibility	None

Job Purpose:

The post holder will be responsible for the effective delivery of the Council's duty to prevent and relieve homelessness for households who approach the Council in housing need. This will involve delivering intense specialised support to single individuals and households without dependant children who are in housing need. We will explore potential pathways and present a range of tailored housing options to resolve their housing needs to avoid the experience of temporary accommodation or street homelessness.

The postholder will work closely with supported accommodation providers, private sector landlords, Single Homelessness Prevention Service, statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure best outcomes are achieved for the individuals.

The postholder will deal with a range of cases, including complex cases which may be subject to judicial review and ombudsman enquiries. The postholder will be responsible for conducting statutory homelessness assessments, supporting households to sustain their tenancies and ensuring they are settled into their new accommodation.

Principal Accountabilities and Responsibilities

1. Manage a caseload of people who are currently experiencing a housing crisis, and provide a service that seeks to minimise the duration of that crisis;
2. Understand the complex, multiple needs as well as strengths of those individuals; and develop trusting, non-dependent relationships to improve their confidence and motivation to progress towards their next step in housing
3. Create individual Personal Housing Plans (PHPs) for everyone in housing need to sustain existing accommodation and/or find new housing, taking account of their personal circumstances and keep the plan under review.
4. Carry out all agreed actions in the PHP that the Council is to take in a timely manner and update the plans promptly.

5. Help people to understand the rented housing market, keeping up-to-date with Local Housing Allowance, benefit changes, and opportunities;
6. Provide some support for individuals through the resettlement process when moving to a new home;
7. Ensure all applicants who approach the Council in housing need are supported to sustain their tenancies and to resolve the threat of homelessness or to secure suitable and affordable accommodation based on their vulnerability and needs.
8. Facilitate the relationship between tenants and landlords/agents, secure the letting and ensure that Housing Benefit / Universal Credit is in place.
9. Achieve and exceed challenging, individual and team targets to achieve measurable outcomes.
10. Deliver the Housing Needs Out of Hours Service on a rota basis as required.
11. Interview all applicants who approach the Council in housing need, to determine what actions can be taken to resolve any threat of homelessness, to secure their continued occupation of their current accommodation. If this is not possible, or appropriate, to explore what other options are available to them to prevent them from becoming homeless.
12. Conduct home visits to appropriate locations both inside and outside of the borough, as and when is necessary, to assist in the investigation of households circumstances. This could be achieved through some use of public transport, however it is desirable that the postholder has access to some form of their own transport.
13. Have good understanding of the issues affecting affordability of housing including accurate understanding of benefits, benefit tapers, welfare reforms (current and proposed), and geography.
14. Maintain a detailed knowledge of homelessness legislation, case law and government guidance concerning the Council's statutory duties and maintain a working knowledge of related housing legislation.
15. Maintain up to date knowledge of the different housing options available to service users seeking accommodation and systems of access to housing of all types including; the private rented sector, intermediate housing schemes, and hostels.
16. Maintain accurate written and computer records, reports, & other monitoring information as required in connection with the various duties undertaken, and keep other records necessary to provide an adequate management information data base.
17. Conduct outreach work aimed at promoting the work of the Housing Needs Service, preventing future homelessness and promoting alternatives to social housing, as required.
18. Organise and administer a case load, identifying priorities and deadlines and ensuring systematic progress is made on each case.
19. Carry out a statutory assessment of homelessness dictated by legislation including eligibility, homelessness, local connection, priority need and intentional homelessness to determine what duties are owed to those in housing need.

20. Write and issue notification letters, outcome of interview letters, including statutory S184 decision letters, statutory response to requests for accommodation pending review (a.k.a. Mohammed letters), letters of referral to other authorities where an applicant's local connection lies elsewhere, and outcome letters, to advise the applicant of the outcome of their initial interview.
21. Make all necessary referrals to relevant services or departments, including the Council's medical officer, social care services and other relevant departments, and investigate high need or exceptional cases. This may include preparing reports for the allocations and social panels where required.
22. Deal with enquiries, complaints and correspondence from clients and their advocates, including solicitors, councillors, MPs, the ombudsman and other housing providers, in line with the Council's complaints and enquiries procedure.
23. Undertake project work around new initiatives and priorities that the Council or Government may develop, including targeted housing support, special viewings or lettings schemes and research on housing needs.
24. Develop and maintain a positive relationship with customers, tenants, resident organisations, other housing providers, council officers, contractors, elected members and other agencies to ensure high quality service standards are maintained.
25. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all employees are required to act in such a way that at all times safeguards the health and well-being of children and vulnerable adults.
26. Carry out duties with due regard to the Council's Customer Care, Equal Opportunities, Information Governance, Data Protection, Health and Safety and Emergency Planning & Awareness (including to provide assistance where available) policies and procedures.
27. Undertake any other duties commensurate with the general level of responsibility of this post.
28. Employees should embed environmental sustainability into their work, actively contributing to Brent becoming a carbon-neutral borough in 2030.

DBS Status	Basic
Politically Restricted (delete as appropriate)	No

Person Specification

<i>Specify the qualifications, experience, skills and abilities required on the basis of the Job Description.</i>	<i>To be identified by:</i> Application Form(A) Test/assessment (T) Interview (I) (Please indicate all that apply)
Qualifications and Professional Membership requirements:	

Knowledge (please specify all essential criteria):	
Some knowledge and a keen interest in legislation such as the Housing Act 1985, Housing Act 1996 as amended by Homelessness Act 2002, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, housing needs issues, related legislation and case law.	A/I/T
Some knowledge and an interest in the supply and demand issues related to public sector and private housing in an inner London borough.	A/I
Some knowledge of available tools and options to prevent and relieve homelessness	A/I/T
An understanding of potential pathways for single individuals with varying levels of needs	A/I

Experience (please specify all essential criteria):	
Strong and effective experience in provision of exceptional customer services.	A/I
Some experience of a household experiencing a housing crisis and the provision of advice and assistance	A/I
Experience of negotiation/advocacy/mediation.	A/I
Experience of and an aptitude for giving advice and information	A/I

Skills and abilities (please specify all essential criteria): • Ability to organise own workload and prioritise competing demands. • IT literate, including use of word processing, spreadsheets, databases and e-communication. • Ability to deal with difficult customers and maintain positive working relations. • Ability to achieve targets and methodically respond to changing demands and priorities. • Excellent inter-personal skills, with an ability to develop a rapport with and guide residents towards sustainable outcomes. • Ability to negotiate with households in housing need and influence outcomes • Commitment to motivating and empowering people to succeed and providing excellent customer service • Ability to communicate well, in writing and in person. • Ability to maintain high levels of motivation and demonstrate flexibility when things don't go according to plan • Demonstrate commitment to and comfort with the Council's equalities and diversity policy through all aspects of service delivery.	A/I A/I A/I A/I A/I A/I A/I A/I A/I A/I
List desirable criteria: • Outstanding customer service skills, including an ability to explain technical information simply • A deep understanding of national and local welfare and housing systems • Detailed knowledge of homelessness policy and practice • Strong IT skills • Diligent, motivated and resourceful	A/I A/I A/I A/I A/I