



## Housing Options- Initial Assessment Officer

<b>Reports to:</b>	Team Leader- Homelessness Prevention and Relief		
<b>Department:</b>	Housing Needs and Support	<b>Grade:</b>	Scale 6
<b>DBS Status:</b>	Standard	<b>Politically restricted:</b>	No
<b>Job Purpose:</b>			
<p>The post holder will be part of the busy Housing Options Service, providing a proactive service and giving advice to families and pregnant people with housing related problems in accordance with current legislation and code of guidance, identifying those who are already homeless or at risk of homelessness within 56 days.</p> <p>We are looking for a dynamic, self-motivated individual who can adapt to the changing needs of the service. As an Initial Assessment Officer, you will have a keen eye for detail and will take every opportunity to prevent homelessness.</p>			
<b>Values</b>			
<p>Collaborate proactively.  Lead inclusively.  Embrace change.  Be bold and curious.  Celebrate and share our success.</p>			
<b>Job specific roles and responsibilities</b>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To be the first point of contact for all new enquiries into the service and to conduct an initial assessment of the approaching household.</li> <li>2. To ascertain a household's risk of homelessness at first point of contact</li> <li>3. To provide early intervention assistance to those at risk of homelessness but not within 56 days</li> <li>4. To undertake case work as necessary to complete triage assessment of cases</li> <li>5. Seek information from landlords/lenders/relatives and other agencies to assist the Housing Options Officers in preventing or relieving homelessness</li> <li>6. Support the Housing Options Officers in monitoring Personal Housing Plans, including contacting customers for updates.</li> <li>7. To co-ordinate and provide responses to all general housing queries including emails</li> </ol>			

8. To provide general advice and assistance in the following areas: homelessness, security of tenure, harassment and illegal eviction, disrepair, money management, benefits, relationship breakdown
9. Empowering individuals to find their own solution to their housing crisis, drawing on the assistance provided by the Housing Options Team
10. Helping people to understand the rented housing market, keeping up to date with Local Housing Allowance, benefit changes and opportunities
11. Conducting home visit to appropriate locations both inside and outside of the borough, as and when is necessary, to assist in the investigation of household's circumstances
12. Having good understanding of the issues affecting affordability of housing including accurate understanding of benefits, benefit tapers, welfare reforms (current and proposed) and geography
13. Maintaining 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 and intermediate housing schemes
14. Maintaining 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 database.
15. Organising and administering a case load, identifying priorities and deadlines and ensuring systematic progress is made on each case
16. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all employees are required to act in such a way that all times safeguards the health and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults
17. Carry out duties with due regard to the Councils Customer Care, Equal Opportunities, Information Governance, Data Protection, Health and Safety and Emergency Planning Awareness (including to provide assistance where available) policies and procedures
18. Employees should embed environmental sustainability into their work, actively contributing to Brent becoming a carbon-neutral borough in 2030
19. Undertake any other duties commensurate with the general level of responsibility of this post

**Essential Requirements (key skills & qualifications)****Knowledge and Qualifications**

- 1) Knowledge of Housing and Homelessness Services and Legislation is desirable but not essential
- 2) Knowledge of prevention services and tools available to assist people in housing need is desirable but not essential
- 3) Some knowledge of available tools and options to prevent and relieve homelessness
- 4) An understanding of housing options for families and pregnant people with varying levels of needs
- 5) Understanding of homelessness and housing supply issues, both locally

**Experience**

- 1) Experience of working with the public in a face-to-face environment
- 2) Experience of giving advice and information to vulnerable customers and working in a busy front line customer focused environment.
- 3) Strong and effective experience in provision of exceptional customer services.
- 4) Experience of negotiation/advocacy/mediation.
- 5) Demonstrable experience of improving service delivery to customers.
- 6) Willing to develop a good understanding of the current homelessness legislation

**Skills and Abilities**

1. Negotiating and influencing skills.
2. Excellent organisational skills.
3. Good report writing skills
4. Able to accurately complete various forms relating to the recording of personal and statistical information and possessing a thorough
5. Good problem-solving, negotiation, interviewing and IT skills
6. Excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to be empathetic and understanding in challenging situations and able to embrace change for continuing service improvement.
7. Ability to prioritise, work under pressure to tight deadlines and good organisational skills.
8. Excellent customer service skills and the ability to work as part of a team
9. A non-judgmental attitude with empathy for people who find themselves in a housing crisis
10. Clear understanding of issues relating to equalities and diversity.
11. Excellent interview and communication skills and the ability to adapt your style to communicate with a wide variety of audiences
12. Written skills to write concise and accurate case notes, detailed decision letters and any other correspondence
13. Ability to work in a pressurised and fast paced environment being flexible to meet the changing requirements of the Housing Options service



14. Excellent organisational and administrative skills to be able to plan, prioritise and organise workload and meet deadlines when working under pressure.
15. The ability to travel around the borough and outside of the borough if necessary.
16. Effective and clear written and verbal communication skills.
17. Strong IT skills, including use of databases.
18. Ability to share knowledge, skills and good practice within the service area to ensure continuous improvement and effective service delivery.
19. Ability to effectively plan, organise and manage conflicting priorities.
20. Ability to contribute to the longer-term development of the service area.
21. Ability to prioritise own workload and that of a team.
22. Ability to consistently achieve performance and quality standards.
23. Evidence of a proactive approach to improving the service to customers.
24. Must have a commitment to and understanding of the principles of Customer Care in both employment and service delivery

*Within reason these key deliverables may evolve to meet service need and it is expected that the postholder will be flexible and adaptable in their delivery to meet both service and council wide needs*