



Social Housing Assessment and Lettings Officer

Reports to:	Social Housing Assessment and Lettings Team Leader		
Department:	Housing Needs and Support	Grade:	S02
DBS Status:	Standard	Politically restricted:	No

Job Purpose:

1. To investigate and assess all households who apply for housing under the Housing Act 1985 and Housing Act 1996 (Part VI). This includes registering new and general housing applicants; undertaking verifications, including home visits and organising medical assessments; notifying applicants of their housing assessment priority and management and administration for existing applications.
2. The post-holders will also support the management and administration of the choice-based lettings service, including prioritisation of applicants for viewings/offers, dealing with customer enquiries and organising the advertisement of properties.
3. Contribute to meeting the Council's best use of its stock objectives as well as managing the applicants' expectations for social housing.

Values

Collaborate proactively.
Lead inclusively.
Embrace change.
Be bold and curious.
Celebrate and share our success.

Job specific roles and responsibilities

1. To investigate and assess all applicants under the Housing Act 1985 and Housing Act 1996 (Part VI), Localism Act 2011 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 to assess whether housing is required. This may include interviewing applicants to determine their eligibility, making detailed enquires to other organisations to verify information, and carrying out home visits in order to confirm/evaluate housing circumstances.
2. To prioritise all applicants in the appropriate category and banding in line with the Council's allocation policy and other guidelines. To write and serve decision letters on all applications, explaining the reasons for their decision and advising them of their right to review.
3. To work closely with the Housing Management Team to ensure that mutual exchanges, successions, tenancy assignments, management transfers and tenancy terminations are dealt with efficiently and in accordance with legislation and Council policy and procedures.

4. To investigate cases of racial or sexual harassment or other forms of unacceptable behaviour in accommodation and take appropriate action.
5. To contribute to the maintenance of the choice based letting system which enables applicants to bid for properties, including the advertising and marketing of available properties.
6. To make appropriate nominations and allocations to all social housing accommodation that the Council owns or has nomination rights to. To do so within agreed timescales to minimise voids periods and potential financial loss to the Council.
7. To provide accurate advice to households regarding their offer and consequences of refusals.
8. To develop and maintain a detailed knowledge of complex legislation, case law and government guidance concerning the Council's statutory duties and maintain a working knowledge of related housing, property, immigration and family legislation.
9. To make all necessary referrals to relevant services or departments, including the Council's medical officer, social care services and housing options services, and investigate high need or exceptional cases. This will include preparing reports for the allocations and social panels where required.
10. To amend and update cases, properties and schemes on the LOCATA system and advise applicants on the use of the service. This will include monitoring and identifying any anomalies in bidding patterns and taking action to address issues, such as non-bidding or inappropriate bidding.
11. To deal with enquiries and complaints and correspondence from clients and their professional advocates, including solicitors, councillors, MPs, the ombudsman and other housing providers, in line with the Council's complaints and enquiries procedure. This may include preparing information to support court cases for which the post-holder is responsible.
12. To identify cases of fraud and misrepresentation and take appropriate action in conjunction with senior officers in the accommodation services team.
13. To provide telephone and reception services as needed for customers with rehousing enquiries, including participation in section rotas.
14. To 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.

15. To provide a comprehensive casework service to customers to assist them in responding their housing and related issues. This will include organising and prioritising a caseload to meet deadlines, updating a variety of IT systems, including LOCATA, Vision, Northgate, and providing performance and other information on casework to managers as requested.
16. To 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.

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.

Undertake any other duties commensurate with the general level of responsibility of this post.

Essential Requirements (key skills & qualifications)

Knowledge and Qualifications

- Good standard of literacy and numeracy
- Knowledge of core legislation such as the Housing Act 1985, the Housing Act 1996 (Part VI), Homelessness Act 2002, Localism Act 2011, Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, related rehousing issues and case law.
- Knowledge of supply and demand issues related to social housing in an inner London Local Authority
- Knowledge of legislation and best practice relating to the letting of social housing and the use of choice based lettings systems.

Experience

- Understanding of housing need and homelessness issues in the Borough.
- Experience of giving advice to customers and working with vulnerable groups.
- Experience of effective joint working (both internally and externally).
- Experience of assessing Housing Waiting List applications and applying the terms of current legislation and Council policy and procedures.

Skills and Abilities

- Ability to communicate well, in writing and in person.
- Ability to plan and prioritise a diverse workload and meet tight deadlines in a pressurised environment.
- Ability to work interpret policies and apply to the work environment.
- Ability to work on own initiative but also as part of a team.

- Ability to achieve targets and methodically respond to changing demands and priorities
- IT literate, including use of word processing, spreadsheets, databases and e-communication.
- Manage competing work demands methodically to achieve targets and meet changing demands and priorities.
- Ability to negotiate and resolve problems effectively while sustaining positive working relationships.
- Demonstrate commitment to and comfort with the Council's equalities and diversity policy through all aspects of 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