

# JOB DESCRIPTION

<b>POST TITLE:</b>	Housing Options officer
<b>POST REFERENCE:</b>	H00017
<b>DEPARTMENT:</b>	Regulatory Services, Housing & Wellbeing
<b>LOCATION:</b>	District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield
<b>RESPONSIBLE TO:</b>	Housing Options Manager
<b>RESPONSIBLE FOR:</b>	n/a
<b>SALARY BAND:</b>	Band G

## PURPOSE OF JOB:

To provide a professional, effective and efficient, customer focused housing options service to people approaching the council for housing advice by looking at all housing options available and preventing homelessness wherever possible either by supporting them in keeping their current home or in accessing a new home in the public or private housing sector.

This position is fundamental to the provision of services to vulnerable people who may approach the council for assistance with housing. This is a specialist role that will be at the forefront of the prevention of homelessness following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

## RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. To undertake a comprehensive assessment of an applicant's circumstances including reasons for homelessness, their housing needs and their support requirements. A high percentage of applicants presenting as homeless will be vulnerable and it is essential to conduct an empathetic and accurate assessment of the applicants' needs.
2. To collate and analyse initial information and documentation relating to an applicant's circumstances and identify actions to be undertaken to prevent or relieve their homelessness. The post holder will be required to be innovative, dynamic and solutions focussed to prevent and relieve applicants from becoming homeless.
3. Develop, update and review Personalised Housing Plans for applicants in light of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This Plan will ensure that homelessness is prevented or relieved through active engagement with the Council and any other relevant services/organisations.
4. To maintain regular contact with applicants to ensure that all actions within the Plan are complete, that any difficulties in doing so are identified and resolved and that the agreement of the applicant with this process is maintained.
5. To make appropriate temporary housing arrangements for those that the Council has a statutory duty for and to make arrangements for their personal belongings where necessary, to comply with the relevant legislation.

6. Where an applicant's homelessness cannot be prevented or relieved, make any necessary enquiries and investigations to the point where a decision on homelessness can be made, in accordance with the Homelessness Reduction Act.
7. To advise applicants of all available tenancy support services including income maximisation, Discretionary Housing payments, debt and rent arrears advice, mutual exchange schemes and housing benefit support etc.
8. This position is complex with the post holder being required to liaise with applicants, statutory organisations, advocates and third sector providers to arrive at a sustainable housing solution for applicants with complex and multiple needs for example mental health combined with drug and or alcohol addiction.
9. To develop effective working relationships with colleagues in other Council departments, other councils, statutory services, external bodies, social and private landlords and voluntary sector organisations.
10. To update the appropriate computer systems regularly, to ensure that all personal records concerning housing enquiries and homeless applications are accurate and that statistical information, relating to them is maintained throughout the year.
11. To assist in developing a full range of information and publicity for all applicants as well as internal procedures. To understand the value of information to the council and to contribute to good information governance by keeping information safe, accurate and up to date and available to those who need it.
12. To ensure that an appropriate and timely response is given to all routine correspondence, telephone calls and personal visits from members of the public, enquiries from Members of the Council, MPs and representatives of other authorities and organisations, concerning homelessness and housing advice and that clear concise records of all communications are maintained.
13. To liaise with organisations, groups and voluntary bodies, in order to promote good working relationships with the Council and to help prevent homelessness wherever possible.
14. To develop, design and implement new operating environments to develop the wider housing options service.
15. To provide guidance and professional support to administrative support staff in the team and customer services staff.
16. To assist in the preparation of statistics and the monitoring of performance as required by statute and the Council's own policies.
17. To keep up to date with case law and changes in legislation that may affect the way in which the Council administers the homelessness and housing advisory services.
18. Embrace and promote the values of the organisation and ensure that the highest standards of conduct and behaviour in line with Council's Code of Conduct, including maintaining awareness and taking action wherever necessary to contribute to the safeguarding of vulnerable people.

19. Ensure that service provision respects and reflects the needs and diversity of communities residing within the District and decisions are taken with full regard to the Council's policies on equality and diversity, whilst visibly demonstrating a commitment to the principles, aims and objectives of such.
20. Ensure a positive and proactive approach to the management of health and safety across all areas of responsibility.
21. Participate as required in the Council's corporate resilience, emergency planning and ensure appropriate business continuity arrangements are in place for the service.
22. This post is covered by Part 7 of the Immigration Act (2016) and therefore the ability to speak fluent English is an essential requirement for this role.
23. Any other duties commensurate with the grade of the post.
24. The Council reserves the right to vary the content of the job description, after consultation, to reflect the changes to the job without changing the general character of the post or the level of responsibility.

**CONTACTS:**

Housing Options team

Lichfield Connects

Revenues and Benefits team

Private Sector Housing team

# PERSON SPECIFICATION

**POST TITLE:** Housing Options Officer

**POST REFERENCE:** H00017

Criteria Requirement: E=Essential, D=Desirable

Method of Assessment Key: A=Application, I=Interview, T=Test, P=Presentation.

<b>KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE</b>	<b>REQUIREMENT</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
Awareness of housing issues affecting local government and the social and private rented housing sectors including welfare reform	E	A,I
Detailed knowledge of relevant homelessness and housing legislation including security of tenure and private tenants' rights including the 1996 Housing Act, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, Children Act 1989 and the Care Act 2014.	E	A,I,T
Knowledge of relevant case law and codes of guidance	E	A,I
A good knowledge of services, benefits and support available to applicants experiencing housing problems	E	A,I
Experience of providing an effective advice service to members of the public	E	A,I
Experience of working in a team	E	A,I
Experience of carrying out interviews, investigations, negotiations	E	A,I
Experience of effective record keeping including electronically	E	A,I
Experience of successfully working to meet performance targets and deadlines	E	A,I
Must be able to demonstrate previous experience of partnership working	D	A,I
Must be able to demonstrate previous experience of dealing with applicants with complex needs, for example mental health combined with drug and or alcohol addiction.	D	A,I
<b>SKILLS AND BEHAVIOURS</b>	<b>REQUIREMENT</b>	<b>ASSESSMENT</b>
Excellent interpersonal skills including active listening, advocacy and a win-win approach with all stakeholders	E	A,I
Excellent communication skills including the ability to write detailed technical letters and reports	E	A,I
Ability to work unsupervised, prioritise workloads and achieve targets and deadlines	E	A,I
Ability to gather information and interpret complex issues e.g. legislation and case law quickly, to think creatively about problems and identify solutions	E	A,I,T
Ability to work effectively and even-handedly with people from diverse backgrounds and circumstances	E	A,I
IT literate and able to use computer software effectively	E	A,I

OTHER FACTORS	REQUIREMENT	ASSESSMENT
Must have a full car driving licence and access to a vehicle	E	A