

Job Description

Job Title: Specialist Housing Advisor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital Discharge; • Ex-Offenders • Children & Families • Singles 	Service Area: Homelessness Prevention & Advice	
Directorate: Inclusive Economy & Housing	Post Number:	Evaluation Number: 6697
Grade: PO2	Date last updated: February 2023	

People at the heart of everything we do

We are committed to putting people – Newham residents and Council staff – at the heart of all we do. Our approach is a collaborative joint enterprise between residents, the Mayor, Members, Council staff and the Corporate Management Team.

Equality and diversity

We are committed to and champion equality and diversity in all aspects of employment with the London Borough of Newham. All employees are expected to understand and promote our Equality and Diversity policy in the course of their work.

Protecting our staff and services

Adherence to health and safety requirements and proper risk management is required from all employees in so far as is relevant to their role. All employees are expected to understand and promote good health and safety practices and manage risks appropriately.

Corporate parent

We believe that every member of staff working for Newham Council should understand and fulfil our corporate parenting responsibilities for our looked after children that we have under the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

Overall Purpose of Job

To work with a specific cohort of vulnerable and complex needs clients, who are either threatened with homelessness or already homeless, and whereby the impact of that homelessness is going to have a disproportionate impact on them and/or the services they are associated with (see **Job Summary**).

To work in collaboration with Senior Manager (Pathways) and across services and agencies developing homelessness prevention and assessment pathways relating to the specific cohort with the sole intention of reducing the threat of homelessness, giving housing options and supporting long-term and sustained housing.

To assess people’s housing need, reflecting their specific circumstances, creating tailored Personal Housing Plans to either prevent or relieve homelessness and with a full understanding of the vulnerabilities and complexities presented by individuals

To manage a complex and demanding case load in a busy and often challenging environment, ensuring all options are thoroughly explored.

To undertake the assessment and investigation of homeless applications under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) where prevention/relief is not possible, and inform clients and key stakeholders of their assessment outcome and alternative options which will prevent or relieve homelessness.

To maintain high levels of good customer care and empathy throughout. We may not always be able to give people what they want, but we should always be honest and treat them with respect, in consideration of their situation.

Job Summary

Working closely with key stakeholders, to make every conceivable effort to prevent homelessness where possible through the provision of tailored advice, advocacy, negotiation, mediation and exploration of all suitable options. To assess complex and vulnerable individuals and families, based on their housing need and make appropriate decisions in accordance with the appropriate legislation (eg Housing Act 1996 (as amended), Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, Children’s Act 1989, and Care Act 2017.

To support stakeholders and Senior Manager (Pathways) in developing new and innovative work practice targeting a specific cohort who present with complex requirements, and who, as result may be disproportionately impacted should they become homeless. Although role is broadly generic, the complex aspect of each Specialist Pathway Coordinator is broken down below:

Hospital Discharge	Ex-Offenders	Children & Families	Singles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People leaving hospital who are likely to be homeless upon discharge • People leaving mental health institutions who are likely to likely to be homeless upon discharge 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single ex-offenders who meet the criteria for AfEO • Single ex-offenders who make an application on leaving custody/probation/Approved Premises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless 16/17 year olds • 18-20 year olds who after 16 but before 18 were housed by social services • Families who have recently been granted ‘leaver to remain’ or ‘recourse to public funds’ • Families with No Recourse to Public Funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single people with No Recourse to Public Funds • Single people referred through Duty to Refer • Single people with a history of Rough Sleeping • Single people with identified additional needs

To utilise partnership working across services and agencies to support the creation of policies and pathways relating to the specific cohort with the sole intention of reducing the threat of homelessness or ensuring there is a housing solution/s explicitly designed to relieve their homelessness and support long-term and sustained housing shaped around their circumstances. To aid partners and Senior Manager (Pathways) in evaluating and assessing the effectiveness of these pathways and make recommendations for adjustments or changes.

The post holder will be required to be an experienced housing advisor with detailed knowledge and significant experience of housing options, homelessness legislation and case law. The post holder will input significantly into the development of innovative, dynamic and solutions focussed to prevent clients from becoming homeless. In addition to this the post holder will contribute to the design and operational practice of the Homelessness Prevention and Advice Service as well as the wider objectives of the Directorate and Local Authority as directed by Senior Manager (Pathways).

Key Tasks and Accountabilities

Key tasks and accountabilities are intended to be a guide to the range and level of work expected of the post holder. This is not an exhaustive list of all tasks that may fall to the post holder and employees will be expected to carry out such other reasonable duties which may be required from time to time.

1. To provide an effective, customer-friendly and efficient service to clients who are often vulnerable and with complex needs who are presenting with housing problems; to support them in keeping their current home, (carrying out home visits where appropriate), or in accessing a new home in the public or private housing sector.

2. To advise clients, either face-to-face, via videolink or over the phone, on full range of housing options, in the context of a high demand London local authority. This includes appropriate intervention if threatened with homelessness, assistance to secure private rented accommodation, hostels, supported housing, refuges, etc, and any actions to make accommodation more affordable and accessible. To assist people to move out of London, if desired.
3. To provide a professional and effective housing options interview and homelessness investigation service; taking a full application from the service user and issuing Personalised Housing Plans in preventing or relieving homelessness irrespective of the person's priority need or intentionality status.
4. To assess clients' housing requirements in accordance with the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. A high percentage of people presenting will be vulnerable and it is essential to assess needs accurately and in accordance with all relevant legislation, including Housing Act 1996 (as amended), the Care Act 2014 and the Children's Act 1989 and all relevant housing legislation.
5. To complete the Personalised Housing Plan in conjunction with the client, agreeing all reasonable steps which will be taken by the Council and the person to prevent or relieve their homelessness. To produce this in a timely manner and to keep under review throughout the duration of the Prevention and/or Relief Duty.
6. To support the creation of innovative and effective housing pathways for one of the vulnerable and complex cohort identified, which are designed around their specific needs and requirements. To then support the implementation across services and agencies, with mechanisms in place to track and monitor progress.
7. To build and maintain effective partnerships with other professionals, services and agencies in order to be a 'subject matter expert' aiding in the development of suitable policies and practice across the relevant bodies working with the specific vulnerable and complex cohort. To review and reflect upon the impact of relevant policies and practice and suggesting changes where required.
8. To strengthen strategic partnerships and good working practice by visiting other professionals, services and agencies, in order to gain a better understanding of the constraints they may be working within, and support the development of innovate and creative solutions.
9. To fully understand the complexities of the client group you are leading on, and operational practice of partners, ensuring you are the housing 'subject matter expert', supporting a multi-agency strategy towards homeless individuals with the aim of minimising any disproportionate impact of becoming homeless. To make recommendations for adjustments or changes
10. To attend meetings relevant to your cohort in capacity as housing advisor and subject matter expert, for example MAPPA, MARAC, bed space reviews and any other meeting as directed by Senior Manager (Pathways).
11. To work closely with other professionals, such as Social Workers, Probation Officers and Welfare Benefit Advisers, creating a strong and effective relationship, whilst maintaining the provisions of the full range of housing duties placed on the local authority and as set out in statute and caselaw.
12. To support Senior Manager (Pathways) in carrying out detailed analysis of data, identifying existing and future trends ensuring the ability to produce detailed reports for the Directorate Management Team and Cabinet Members in order to shape and design service provision and improvements.
13. To write and issue statutory S184 decision 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.
14. To carry out detailed enquiries on cases subject to statutory review proceedings as directed by Team Leaders or Senior Managers.

15. To ensure full and accurate records of all clients, all advice and support provided. To maintain accurate written and computer records, reports, & other monitoring information as required in connection with the various duties and case management.
16. To minimise the risk to Council in terms of legal challenge by ensuring robust decisions, inter-agency cooperation and housing solutions that are tailored around individuals and families who are likely to face a disproportionately negative impact if faced with homelessness.
17. To advise clients, either face-to-face, via videolink or over the phone, on full range of housing options, in the context of a high demand London local authority. This includes appropriate intervention if threatened with homelessness, assistance to secure private rented accommodation, hostels, supported housing, refuges, etc, and any actions to make accommodation more affordable and accessible. To assist people to move out of London, if desired.
18. To comply with all relevant statutory requirements, Government Guidance and Codes of conduct, Newham policies and procedures, professional and performance standards and good housing and homelessness prevention practice.
19. To ensure full and accurate records of all clients, all advice and support provided. To maintain accurate written and computer records, reports, & other monitoring information as required in connection with the various duties and case management.
20. To assist in developing cohort specific information and communications 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. The post holder is required to abide by the council's information governance policies.
21. To 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. This may include preparing information to support court cases for which the post-holder is responsible.

To undertake all responsibilities listed below:

22. To be a champion for excellent customer service delivery and customer care and contribute to the development and delivery of an integrated service.
23. To be self-serving with respect to administration, case record keeping and other related duties and utilise IT systems to update and record information required according to guidance and established procedures.
24. To participate in appraisals, one to ones, objective settings, personal development plans and working group meetings and take a full and active role in service development, including service reviews.
25. To carry out the duties of the post in accordance with the Data Protection Act, the Health & Safety at Work Act and other relevant legislation, as well as Council policies, procedures, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
26. To carry out the duties of this post with due regard to the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy and to actively promote and uphold the Council's HEART values.
27. To take responsibility, appropriate to the post, for ensuring compliance with council policies and procedures aimed at promoting and safeguarding the welfare of vulnerable children and adults.
28. To take responsibility, appropriate to the post for promoting diversity including tackling racism and good race, ethnic & community relations.
29. To undertake any other duties appropriate to the grade, that may be required. These may be varied from time to time to meet the needs of the service.

Personal Specification

Job Title: Specialist Housing Advisor <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hospital Discharge; • Ex-Offenders • Children & Families • Singles 	Service Area: Homelessness Prevention & Advice	
Directorate: Inclusive Economy & Housing	Post Number:	Evaluation Number: 6697
Grade: PO? Fixed Term Contract: 12 months	Date last updated: February 2023	

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

The criteria listed in this Person Specification are all essential to the job. Where the Method of Assessment is stated to be the Application Form, your application needs to demonstrate clearly and concisely how you meet each of the criteria, even if other methods of assessment are also shown. If you do not address these criteria fully, or if we do not consider that you meet them, you will not be shortlisted. Please give specific examples wherever possible.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

We are committed to and champion equality and diversity in all aspects of employment with the London Borough of Newham. All employees are expected to understand and promote our Equality and Diversity Policy in the course of their work.

PROTECTING OUR STAFF AND SERVICES

Adherence to Health and Safety requirements and proper risk management is required from all employees in so far as is relevant to their role. All employees are expected to understand and promote good Health and Safety practices and manage risks appropriately.

CRITERIA- Essential	Desirable	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
KNOWLEDGE: A comprehensive knowledge of the relevant legislation relating to housing and homelessness, Codes of Guidance and case law. A comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the housing and support needs of homeless and housing applicants and tenants. Specialist understanding of at least one of the complex needs cohort, and demonstrable evidence of putting this into practice within a partnership capacity		Application, Test and Interview Application and Interview Application and Interview

<p>EDUCATION/QUALIFICATIONS Educated to degree level standard or equivalent or demonstrable suitable experience</p>		
<p>SKILLS, ABILITIES & EXPERIENCE: Experience of dealing with at least one of the complex need cohort in terms of creating and implementing effective solutions based around their need.</p> <p>Experience of working in a service within a pressurised and high profile environment within a multi-disciplinary team, providing a quality service.</p> <p>Experience of developing and maintaining effective strategic and operational partnerships across both statutory and voluntary organisations.</p> <p>Experience of achieving performance targets and meeting departmental objectives.</p> <p>Experience of using different IT systems in order to monitor delivery of targets and drive improved service.</p>		<p>Application and Interview</p> <p>Application and interview</p> <p>Application and Interview</p> <p>Application and Interview</p> <p>Application and Interview</p>
<p>PERSONAL STYLE AND BEHAVIOUR: <u>Focuses on People:</u> Excellent interpersonal skills including active listening, advocacy and a win-win approach with all stakeholders</p> <p><u>Takes Ownership:</u> Proactive in seizing opportunities and takes responsibility for ensuring the best possible outcome for clients</p> <p><u>Works Collaboratively:</u> Ability to gain, and retain, the confidence and respect of strategic and operational partners.</p> <p><u>Communicates Effectively:</u> Excellent communication skills both verbally and in writing, including the ability to produce detailed policies, pathways and reports.</p> <p><u>Focuses on Results:</u> Ability to gather information and interpret complex issues e.g. legislation and case law quickly, to think creatively about problems and identify solutions.</p> <p><u>Calmness under pressure:</u> Ability to thrive in a challenging and pressurised environment, with competing service demands and tight deadlines</p> <p><u>Self-starter:</u> Ability to work unsupervised, prioritise workloads and achieve targets and deadlines.</p> <p><u>Respects and understands individual's needs:</u> Ability to work effectively and even-handedly with people from diverse backgrounds and circumstances.</p>		<p>Application and Interview</p> <p>Application and Interview</p> <p>Application and Interview</p> <p>Application, Test and Interview</p> <p>Application, Test and Interview</p> <p>Application and Interview</p> <p>Application and Interview</p> <p>Application and Interview</p>

<p>OTHER SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: Willing to work outside normal working hours to respond to emergencies or attend meetings as required.</p> <p>Demonstrate an understanding of the issues relating to equal opportunities in service delivery and provision and to actively promote ways of eradicating racism, sexism and other forms of negative discrimination through the Council's policies and procedures.</p> <p>To comply with the Council's Health & Safety Policies.</p>		<p>Application</p> <p>Application</p> <p>Application</p>
--	--	--