

Job Description

Job Title: Housing & Homelessness Support Team Leader	Service Area: Homelessness Prevention & Advice	
Directorate: Inclusive Economy & Housing	Post Number:	Evaluation Number: 6910
Grade: PO3	Date last updated: June 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 manage a team of up to 10 Housing & Homelessness Support Assistants or Trainee Housing Advisors who are responsible for the frontline access to the Homeless Prevention & Advice Service (HPAS) and ensuring operational compliance with PVII Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The post holder will ensure the team provide the best possible advice and support to customers and stakeholders at the first point of contact, managing demand to ensure the best outcome for the customer and the Authority and liaising closely with the wider management team to ensure statutory duties are met.

To oversee triaging of incoming cases, ensuring priorities are balanced whilst urgent and high profile issues are responded to promptly. Ensure individuals and families, who may be vulnerable, have multiple complex needs, and in a state of heightened anxiety, are booked an appointment appropriate for their circumstances with relevant supporting documentation captured.

Ensure the HPAS email inboxes, incoming applications and allocated administrative duties meet the KPIs set by the Head of HPAS.

Develop the team to maximise the opportunities for HPAS to Prevent Homelessness and reduce use of Temporary Accommodation through robust appointment management, frontline email/telephone advice and appointment management.

Work with the Senior Manager to develop the Service to continually improve the quality of service delivery, increase capacity, and assess and implement new tools and processes.

To ensure consistent and professional messages regarding realistic housing options, agreed across the service, are effectively communicated by the team dealing with clients from the first point of contact.

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

To make every conceivable effort to prevent homelessness where possible through strategic management of incoming applications and queries and by ensuring consistent messages on realistic expectations and options are passed through to households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

The post holder will be required to be innovative, dynamic and solutions focussed, creating an effective and efficient process for triaging applications, highlighting urgent cases and the collection and recording of data required to support applications. This the post holder will be responsible for the operational day-to-day access to Newham HPAS and in ensuring the delivery of a high quality service through email and telephone.

The post holder will be an experienced housing advisor able to reach s184 decisions compliant to PVII Housing Act 1996 as amended by Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Post holder will be responsible for reaching Not Eligible and Not Homeless decisions where evidence is ample and for formally refusing repeat homeless applications where applicable. The post holder will also be responsible for recognising where a s188 duty may apply and ensuring the team act appropriately.

As Team Leader for the entry into the Service, you will be tasked with supporting the training of Trainee Housing Advisors, ensuring that they have an opportunity to learn a working knowledge of the relevant legislation through tasks set on the frontline.

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 ensure an effective, customer-friendly and efficient service to clients presenting with housing problems from the first point of contact; to identify non-Eligible cases, to consider s198 referral requests, to support residents with first line advice designed to help them keep their current home or in accessing a new home in the public or private housing sector.
2. To make sure Housing & Homelessness Support Assistants have the appropriate skills and knowledge required to triage clients as per PVII Housing Act 1996, to assist residents in making a homelessness application, and ensure that all supporting documents are provided and appropriately uploaded onto the relevant systems.
3. 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.
4. To ensure the Housing & Homelessness Support Assistants have the skills and knowledge required to respond to emails and telephone calls from residents regarding homelessness and their homeless application including those clients who may be vulnerable or with complex needs, and who by virtue of being homelessness or threatened with homelessness, are in a heightened state of anxiety.

5. To develop and monitor systems and processes giving assurance that new applications are booked appointments as per agreed Service Level Agreement (SLA), that emails and telephone calls are responded to (as per SLA) and excellent customer service is delivered from the first point of contact and with consistent messages, in a way that meets any specific needs of the individual or family.
6. To directly manage Housing & Homelessness Support Assistants/Trainee Housing Advisors providing appropriate support to through supervision, 1-2-1 and appraisals, etc.
7. To ensure the team register and make compliant HPAS applications for residents identified by Private Sector Housing Team as threatened with homelessness. Where post holder determines homelessness successfully prevented, to ensure application is completed as appropriate.
8. To approve applications for options developed as part of a wider housing offer (eg HomefinderUK).
9. To ensure staff have access to appropriate systems and tools in order for them to fulfil their duties and responsibilities, providing training and guidance where necessary
10. To support Housing & Homelessness Support Assistants in their duties, including contacting clients to ensure 'reasonable steps' have been completed, communication (including statutory decision letters) are sent, and ordering of equipment, IT licenses, stationary, etc.
11. To collate client information where required, including provision of documents for solicitors and Service Access Requests. To ensure this is in compliance with GDPR guidelines, including redacting items where appropriate.
12. To develop and maintain robust performance management arrangements and be responsible for taking appropriate and timely corrective action. To collate performance data, in order for this to be fed into reports and briefings as required.
13. To coordinate and record notes of meetings where required.
14. To comply with all relevant policies and procedures, professional and performance standards and good housing and homelessness prevention practice.
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 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.

To undertake all responsibilities listed below:

17. To be a champion for excellent customer service delivery and customer care and contribute to the development and delivery of an integrated service.
18. 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.
19. 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.
20. 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.

21. 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.
22. 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.
23. To take responsibility, appropriate to the post for promoting diversity including tackling racism and good race, ethnic & community relations.
24. 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

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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

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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. An understanding of the housing issues facing a high demand London local authority.		Application, Test and Interview
EDUCATION/QUALIFICATIONS N/A		

SKILLS, ABILITIES & EXPERIENCE: Experience of dealing with a diverse and vulnerable clientele Experience of working within a pressurised and high profile office environment, supporting a wider team and ensuring the provision a quality customer care. Experience of leading, motivating and managing individuals, helping them fulfil their full potential. Experience of achieving performance targets and meeting departmental objectives. Experience of using a wide range of IT systems., including databases, spreadsheets and word documents. At least one year's experience of managing and supporting staff.		Application and Interview Application and interview Application and Interview Application and Interview Application Application
PERSONAL STYLE AND BEHAVIOUR: <u>Focuses on People:</u> Excellent interpersonal skills including active listening, advocacy and a win-win approach with all stakeholders <u>Takes Ownership:</u> Proactive in seizing opportunities and takes responsibility for ensuring the best possible outcome for clients <u>Works Collaboratively:</u> Ability to gain, and retain, the confidence and respect of staff, service users and other contacts. <u>Communicates Effectively:</u> Excellent communication skills both verbally and in writing. <u>Focuses on Results:</u> Ability to gather information, to think creatively about problems and identify solutions. <u>Coaching and development:</u> Ability to identify people's strengths and weaknesses and create a supportive environment whereby staff are able to fulfil their potential <u>Self-starter:</u> Ability to work unsupervised, prioritise workloads and achieve targets and deadlines. <u>Calmness under pressure:</u> Ability to thrive in a challenging and pressurised environment, with competing service demands and tight deadlines <u>Respects and understands individual's needs:</u> Ability to work effectively and even-handedly with people from diverse backgrounds and circumstances.		Application and Interview Application and Interview Application and Interview Application, Test and Interview Application and Interview Application and Interview Application Application and Interview Application and Interview

OTHER SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: Willing to work outside normal working hours to respond to emergencies or attend meetings as required. 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. To comply with the Council's Health & Safety Policies.		Application Application Application
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