# Job Description

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| **Job Title:**<br>Housing & Homelessness Support Assistant | **Service Area**:<br>Homelessness Prevention & Advice | |
| **Directorate:**<br>Inclusive Economy & Housing | **Post Number:** | **Evaluation Number:**<br>6391 |
| **Grade:**<br>Scale 6 | **Date last updated:**<br>May 2022 | |

**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 undertake an initial triaging of homelessness applications, under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), assessing if there's *reason to believe* a household is *eligible* and *homeless* in accordance with the Act prior to allocation to a Housing Adviser.

To ensure individuals and families, who may be vulnerable, have multiple complex needs, and in a state of heighted anxiety, are able to proceed with a homeless assessment, making sure all applications are supported with the appropriate documentation and evidence, provided in a timely manner.

To provide consistent and professional messages regarding realistic housing options, are given to clients from the first point of contact. Contact may be via phone, email or whilst covering reception when on duty.

To oversee the administration of statutory reviews, allocating cases to Review Officers and issuing Notice of a review being registered.

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 consistent messages on realistic options to households presenting as homeless or threatened with homelessness, as well as making sure households provide the appropriate information in a timely manner to assess an application.

The role will involve the initial triaging of new cases, establishing whether there is *reason to believe* a resident may be *eligible* and *homeless* (in accordance with the Housing Act 1996), prior to case allocation, as well as the administration of statutory reviews

The post holder will be required to be solutions focussed, operating within agreed procedures, to support an effective and efficient process for collecting and recording data, and allocation of cases.

**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 carry out an initial triaging of new cases, presenting either in person, via phone/email or as a result of completing the on-line self-assessment. The purpose of this initial triaging is to establish whether there is *reason to believe* a resident is *eligible* and *homeless* prior to case allocation.

2. To administer the registration and allocation of statutory reviews to Reviews Officers, including the issuing Notifications using standard templates developed by the Service.

3. To provide an effective, customer-friendly and efficient service to clients presenting with housing problems, communicating agreed messages to help them keep their current home or new, suitable accommodation.

4. To ensure clients, who may be vulnerable or with multiple complex needs, and who by virtue of being homeless or threatened with homelessness are in a heightened state of anxiety, receive an excellent customer service from the first point of contact.

5. To deal with clients face-to-face, by videolink, by phone or by email, adjusting and adapting communications to reflect the circumstances of the individual or family.

6. To ensure all documents supporting a client's application are provided and appropriately uploaded onto the relevant systems.

7. To approve applications for options developed as part of a wider housing offer (eg HomefinderUK).

8. To allocate cases to Housing Advisers in a timely manner and in accordance with work practices and procedures.

9. On instruction, to contact clients to ensure 'reasonable steps' have been completed, to administer relevant communication (including statutory decision letters), and ordering of equipment, IT licenses, stationary, etc.

10. 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.

11. To comply with all relevant policies and procedures, professional and performance standards and good housing and homelessness prevention practice.

12. To ensure full and accurate records of all clients, all advice and support provided. To maintain accurate written and computer records, and other monitoring information as required in connection with the various duties and case management.

13. 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.

14. To provide cover for reception as and when required.

**To undertake all responsibilities listed below:**

15. To be a champion for excellent customer service delivery and customer care and contribute to the development and delivery of an integrated service.

16. 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.

17. 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.

18. 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.

19. 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.

20. 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.

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

22. 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**
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 |
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| **KNOWLEDGE:**<br>Broad understanding of the housing issues facing a high demand London local authority. | Rudimentary understanding of Part VII Housing Act 1996 and the duties applying to a local housing authority, especially in relation to *eligibility* and *homelessness*<br><br>Broad understanding of the housing needs of vulnerable people and the impact this may have on their wellbeing | Application and Interview |
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| **EDUCATION/QUALIFICATIONS**<br>N/A | | |
| **SKILLS, ABILITIES & EXPERIENCE:**<br>Experience of dealing with a diverse and vulnerable clientele<br><br>Experience of working within a pressurised and high profile office environment, supporting a wider team and ensuring the provision a quality customer care.<br><br>Understanding of the value of achieving performance targets in order to meet the wider departmental objectives.<br><br>Experience of using a wide range of IT systems.=, including databases, spreadsheets and word documents.<br><br>Experience of providing high levels of customer care.<br><br>Ability to follow processes, procedures and policy, with a good eye for detail and accurate recording. | | Application and Interview<br><br>Application and interview<br><br>Application and Interview<br><br>Application and Interview<br><br>Application and interview<br>Application and interview |
| **PERSONAL STYLE AND BEHAVIOUR:**<br><u>Focuses on People:</u> Excellent interpersonal skills including active listening, and understanding people's own personal circumstances.<br><br><u>Takes Ownership:</u> Proactive in seizing opportunities and takes responsibility for ensuring the best possible outcome for clients<br><br><u>Works Collaboratively:</u> Ability to gain, and retain, the confidence and respect of staff, service users and other contacts.<br><br><u>Communicates Effectively:</u> Excellent communication skills both verbally and in writing.<br><br><u>Focuses on Results:</u> Ability to gather information, to think creatively about problems and identify solutions.<br><br><u>Self-starter:</u> Ability to work unsupervised, prioritise workloads and achieve targets and deadlines.<br><br><u>Calmness under pressure:</u> Ability to thrive in a challenging and pressurised environment, with competing service demands and tight deadlines<br><br><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<br><br>Application and Interview<br><br>Application and Interview<br><br>Application, Test and Interview<br><br>Application and Interview<br><br>Application and Interview<br><br>Application<br><br>Application and Interview |

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| **OTHER SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS**:<br>Willing to cover reception as and when required | | Application |
| Willing to work outside normal working hours to respond to emergencies. | | Application |
| 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. | | Application |
| To comply with the Council's Health & Safety Policies. | | Application |