

Job Description



Job Title: Senior Environmental Health Officer / Senior Environmental Health Practitioner	Service Area: Private Sector Housing Standards
Directorate: Inclusive Economy and Housing	Post Number: 40385 Evaluation Number: 5201
Grade: PO5	Date last updated: January 2021

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.

Background

The London Borough of Newham has the largest private rented stock in England as a proportion of its overall housing stock and over half of Newham households (60,000) depend on a private landlord for their health, safety and welfare. At the same time the quality of the housing stock is poor, with 1 in 4 homes found to have hazards to health and many families are subject to overcrowding as they struggle with finding rent and the means to heat their homes on low incomes.

Alongside this massive expansion of the private rented sector (PRS) in Newham there are now over 17,000 private landlords, including a significant number of criminal landlords and many more that are lacking the basic knowledge and skills needed to manage residential property.

In response to these circumstances Newham became the first local authority to introduce borough wide private licensing of all private landlords in January 2013 and since that time has issued approximately 80,000 licences with the intention of raising housing standards across Newham and penalising landlords who fail to provide homes of suitable quality.

Not only is the service responsible for regulating and the strategic direction of the PRS in terms of meeting the needs of Newham residents, but it is also key player in underpinning the core values and initiatives of the Council since its work directly impacts on the majority of Newham households.

In addition to the administrative and property licensing functions there is a strong regulatory theme and there are new corporate priorities including an empty homes project and contributing to the climate change agenda through innovative energy efficiency initiative. The service is also a major contributor to the Council's data warehouse and provides information and intelligence on housing to services across the Council.

The Council is focused on delivering the best possible outcomes for its Communities placing people at the heart of everything we do. All this is only achieved by significant cross disciplinary and partnership working both inside and outside the authority, including both statutory and non-statutory sectors for all aspects of the housing delivery function. This network includes amongst others Social Care Safeguarding, Council Tax and Benefits, Planning, the Metropolitan Police, London Fire Brigade, HMRC, amongst others and this provides a number of additional social and financial benefits to the council.

Overall Purpose of Job

To use their extensive housing and environmental health knowledge, along with creativity and innovations, to deliver advanced interventions to improve the lives of tenants and Newham residents, while remaining dedicated to the service and corporate objectives.

Private Sector Housing seeks continuous improvement of property conditions and protect the health, safety and welfare of tenants through robust regulation, high standard inspections and intelligent intervention.

Your role is to assist in the development, implementation and lead our strategy for protecting private renters across the borough while helping to tackle some the social, economic and environmental factors.

You will need to provide an excellent service to landlords, owners, occupiers and tenants in all tenures, using a range of intervention strategies, including enforcement, education and advice.

Job Context

The post holder reports to Team Manager, or other Private Housing Manager.

1. The post holder will be a lead member of a team of high performing officers and are expected to ensure their team works efficiently and effectively, to continually monitor productivity and the quality of service and to effect change where required.
2. The post holder will be a flexible worker, which means they will be expected to work in various locations; remotely in the field, inspecting private properties that are in poor and unpleasant conditions. Although currently based at Newham Dockside, it is required that they be able to work from various locations including any suitable designated office location or from home
3. The post holder will be expected to work with multi-agency partners both internally and externally from a variety of locations. Create and continually maintain close working practices and to attend multi-agency or special casework meetings. Design and develop bespoke enforcement intervention using creativity and innovation while remaining within the limits of the law.
4. The post holder is expected to be a key decision maker and work on their own initiative and to take responsibility for their actions and the outputs of their team. This will mean supporting less experienced officers, including mentoring and supervising colleagues whilst in the office, during site visits and in other locations.
5. They are expected to be the main liaison with legal professionals, and similar stakeholders, to make decisions in isolation and lead on their cases in pressured environments e.g. Courts and Tribunals.
6. The post holder may be required to work at various locations within the borough. Post holders may be required to early mornings, work in various locations late evenings, weekends and occasional public holidays on a regular basis in order to meet service requirements.
7. They will need to ensure they appropriately represent the Council using their specialist housing qualifications, experience and knowledge in Courts, and Tribunals. Be familiar with Council policy objectives and offering advice to residents, service users, external bodies and the Mayor and elected members.
8. The post holder will be expected to be familiar with Council policy objective and publically represent the Council in a wide range of environments, from overcrowded houses with unsanitary conditions, to government conferences, Magistrate, and Crown Courts.
9. They will have extensive experience with managing, organising and coordinating cross-service or multi-agency projects.

10. The post holder may have line management responsibility for up to 5 technical staff and participate in a key policy area, projects, or objectives for the Group. They shall ensure other officers act and present themselves in line with the Council's conduct policy and to take appropriate action where an officer falls short. He/she will deputise as lead in any team within Private Sector Housing.
11. The post holder may have some responsibility for financial matters including procurement, the authorisation of works in default and contract/project management of up to £25k. He/she will be expected to take appropriate action to maintain budgetary control for works in default activities.

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 inspect properties in poor, overcrowded and unsanitary conditions in various locations, and early in the morning, late at night and at weekends. To work proactively, often alone and with limited supervision.
2. To gather quality evidence under guidelines such as the Police & Criminal Evidence Act. Prepare legal case files for the purposes of civil proceedings and criminal proceedings in courts and tribunals including prosecutions. To directly hire and work with external barristers and legal professionals and make decisions on their own and on behalf of their lower skilled colleagues' cases whilst adhering to Council's policies.
3. Use their extensive housing and environmental health knowledge to make sound and complex decisions in relation to high-risk technical and legal matters. So they achieve the tactical and strategic outcomes of the council. For example, using creativity to gather hard to obtain evidence within the bounds of PACE. Applying the public interest tests and deciding to prosecute a criminal landlord. Giving evidence and being cross-examined as a Council witness in high profile cases.
4. Use their extensive housing and Council operational policy knowledge to assist in the formulation and implementation of operational policies, guidance and initiatives and to work with related departments in the creation of these policies. Continue to innovate to ensure the highest level of productivity and effectiveness.
5. To report to a Private Sector Housing Manager on all appropriate matters concerning the activities, duties, responsibilities of staff within their Team. To

assist and deputise for Managers on a regular basis on a range of complex and contentious where persuasion and advocacy is required.

6. May manage a team of up to 5 officers and ensure targets are met and share in leading in key policy areas or projects, to ensure that various technical functions and associated work are performed effectively and where risks are identified the Officer will take action to mitigate those risks. This includes the selection of new recruits, development of officers and taking disciplinary action where appropriate.
7. Show awareness of different learning styles and needs. Assess and help in the development of Officers and contribute their knowledge use their creativity and share initiatives including training programmes, mentoring, coaching and provide day-to-day technical support for their team.
8. To assist with procurement activity and authorising payments in relation to the delivery of statutory activities and other private sector housing services.
9. To process technical and other data to ensure the service operates to a high degree of productivity and efficiency. For example using advanced data management to identify properties in need of proactive inspection
10. To understand and assist others in the use of the appropriate IT systems for business improvement and promote data quality and integrity at all times.
11. To investigate and take the appropriate action in relation to service requests and complaints about the service concerning technical or legal housing matters and poor officer performance.
12. To take responsibility and lead enforcement inspections and operations to ensure that they are carried out safely and effectively, often in the presence of Police and/or other agencies .Ensure legal enforcement cases are driven forward and are brought to a satisfactory conclusion.
13. To pro-actively make their own and their lower skilled officers (when required) enforcement decisions, in line with council policies and procedures.
14. To help manage the recovery of Financial Penalties and other orders by designing and managing effective recovery mechanisms, including liaising with finance, legal and other teams. In addition, explore and use new, innovative solutions to aid recovery.
15. To prepare complex legal cases using their training and qualifications to gather and give evidence to a high standard in civil and criminal proceedings in Courts and Tribunals on behalf of Council.

16. To act as the authority's expert in matters of private sector housing law and administration using their knowledge, experience and qualifications and to mentor and support colleagues involved in similar activities.
17. To actively promote effective communications both inside and outside the Group through working with Communications and Policy departments and preparing and giving presentations, setting up meetings, consultations and briefings at various inner and outer borough locations.
18. To assist in the management and preparation of the annual service planning process, council policy and the formulation of performance indicators and measurement of outputs.
19. To prepare and present accurate written and/or verbal reports, briefings and presentations directly to senior managers, the Mayor, Cabinet and other bodies and to attend meetings as necessary or required.
20. To be flexible, able to cover more than one service area at any time and take on new duties and responsibilities. To cover the work of other officers as necessary in times of leave, sickness or other absenteeism.
21. To participate in the recruitment and selection of staff, including temporary staff and consultants.
22. To carry out 1-1's, appraisals and case reviews in line with procedures for all supervised staff.
23. To maintain relationships with partners and stakeholders particularly landlords and tenant groups to ensure the delivery of key outputs and performance indicators. Use advanced persuasion and advocacy techniques to ensure that satisfactory outcomes are achieved
24. To give high levels of customer care and recognise the service needs of clients with complex needs, ensure the delivery of high quality customer service including responding to MP/Councillor enquiries and FOI requests.
25. To ensure that adequate records and databases are maintained including statutory registers to enable the efficient operation of the work of the Team and assist with the timely production of information and performance indicators, and to ensure their team does likewise.
26. To comply with Data Protection and Freedom of Information Act legislation and associated regulations and guidance.
27. To undertake all responsibilities listed above.

Personal Specification



Job Title: Senior Environmental Health Practitioner/ Senior Environmental Health Officer	Service Area: Private Sector Housing Standards
Directorate Inclusive Economy and Housing	Job Number: 21959 Evaluation Number: TBC
Grade: PO5	Date last updated: January 2021

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.

CRITERIA	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
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.	

<p>KNOWLEDGE</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Comprehensive knowledge of private sector housing and property licensing within the local government framework. Including, the enforcement and regulatory functions, of the Housing Act, Public Health, other landlord and tenant law and the application of all other relevant legal and practical principles. Undertake complex interventions in a specialised environment. 2. Good knowledge of developments in the field of housing and health and of the sociological, demographic and geographical demands and constraints of inner city boroughs. 3. High level of knowledge and experience of PACE, conducting interviews under caution, preparing evidence and obtaining warrants. 	<p>Application form/Interview/Test</p> <p>Application form/Interview/Test</p> <p>Application form/Interview/Test</p>
<p>QUALIFICATIONS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. BSc (Hons) or MSc Environmental Health or a similar degree. (Essential). 5. CIEH Approved Certificate in Understanding and Applying the HHSRS (2 day Course) or equivalent. (Essential). 6. Full Registration with the Environmental Health Officer Registration Board (EHORB). (Desirable). 7. Minimum of 2 years post qualification experience or equivalent. (Desirable). 8. Evidence of continuing professional development. (Desirable). 9. A relevant post-degree qualification. (Desirable). 	<p>Application form / Interview</p> <p>Application form / Interview</p> <p>Application form / Interview</p> <p>Application form / Interview</p> <p>Application form / Interview</p> <p>Application form / Interview</p>

<p>EXPERIENCE:</p> <p>9. Experience of leading on housing enforcement cases.</p> <p>10. Experience of inspecting properties in poor, overcrowded and unsanitary conditions in various locations, early in the morning, later at night and at weekends. To work proactively, often alone and with no supervision.</p> <p>11. Experience of giving detailed advice on the rights and responsibilities of owners and occupiers, often in difficult and hostile situations</p> <p>12. Ability and experience of working with Communications and Policy departments and preparing high profile reports, briefings and presentations for other officers, Senior managers and to local public forums</p> <p>13. Comprehensive experience of the main functions of a local authority public health and housing functions.</p> <p>14. A high level of understanding and experience of construction technology, surveying techniques and extensive investigations on a variety of dwellings, including complex H.M.O's. Preparing schedules of work and applying and using risk assessment</p> <p>15. Experience of most aspects of private sector housing and/or property licensing work including demonstrable experience of having taken numerous high level enforcement work in difficult or high-risk situations. Using a broad range of enforcement options under the Housing Act 2004, Housing and Planning Act 2016, Public Health Acts, Statutory Nuisance legislation and other principal acts and statutory guidance.</p> <p>16. High level of competency to prepare and serve legal notices, legal agreements, prepare legal briefs, instruct counsel and pursue resultant legal action including giving evidence in court or tribunal, for prosecutions/hearings. To organise W.I.D and/or seek financial recovery. And proactively provide guidance and instruction to colleagues on the same.</p> <p>17. Experience in, and ability to build and maintain effective and productive working relationships with service users, colleagues and partners at all levels.</p>	<p>Application form/Interview</p> <p>Application form/Interview/Test</p> <p>Application form/Interview</p> <p>Application form/Interview/Test</p> <p>Application form/Interview/Test</p> <p>Application form/Interview/Test</p> <p>Application form/Interview/Test</p> <p>Application form/Interview/Test</p> <p>Application form/Interview/Test</p>
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18. Experience of managing, organising and coordinating high risk or high profile cross-service or multi-agency projects and/or procurement activities.	Application form/Interview/Test
19. Experience and commitment to delivering an effective, improving and high quality service.	Application form/Interview/Test
20. Experience in taking the initiative in dealing with a wide range of private sector housing functions and for the improvement of the service.	Application form/Interview
21. Ability and experience in leading effective interventions make sound technical judgements and follow through to a satisfactory conclusion.	Application form/Interview
22. Ability to deputise for lead principal/manger in making and implementing operational decisions in their absence.	Application form/Interview
23. Ability to lead on and providing advice on complex housing cases.	Application form/Interview
24. Ability to supervise people, projects and/or procurement activities and the organisation of the team.	Application form/Interview

<p>SKILLS AND ABILITIES:</p> <p>25. Ability to be flexible and ensure flexibility within your team and deputising as a lead by attending inspections and operations out of hours (weekends, early mornings and late at night) in multiple properties in poor, overcrowding and unsanitary conditions</p> <p>26. Ability to deputise as lead, to work safely in poor environments and identify and mitigate risk to others and work effectively with various internal and external partners (e.g. Police, Immigration, HMRC, other LA's, etc.) with no supervision.</p> <p>27. Ensure knowledge is proactively shared.</p> <p>28. Offer constructive criticism in appraisals and 1-1s, where appropriate. Ensure measures are agreed to rectify issues</p> <p>29. Willingness and ability to be flexible undertake new tasks, take responsibility and make well informed decisions on behalf of the service.</p> <p>30. Deputise for Team Leaders on, the promotion and implementation of new ways of working to improve service delivery. Using innovative thinking to create and define new policies/procedures.</p> <p>31. You will be an excellent communicator (both verbal and written) and will be adept at providing excellent customer care and communication skills in explaining complex and technical issues accurately, clearly and concisely both orally and in writing when dealing with all service users.</p> <p>32. Ability to lead on the promotion and defence of the team's work publically, to ensure the positive, high media profile of the department.</p> <p>33. Have a high degree of literacy and numeracy skills, with appropriate application to the business.</p> <p>34. Ability to analyse, filter and use data and to interpret electronic information accurately and ensure target and service requests are met. And identify and design new ways of collecting and using data for the benefit of the service.</p>	<p>Application form/Interview</p> <p>Application form/Interview</p> <p>Application form/Interview</p> <p>Application form/Interview/Test</p> <p>Application form/Interview</p> <p>Application form/Interview</p> <p>Application form/Interview</p> <p>Application form/Interview</p> <p>Application form/Interview/Test</p> <p>Application form/Interview/Test</p>
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35. Able to lead the effective delivery of tasks and services for internal and external customers.	Application form/Interview
36. Makes high level decisions in the absence of principal/manager.	Application form/Interview
37. Ability to coach, support, influence and assist colleagues in resolving complex cases.	Application form/Interview
38. Ability to lead, identify and support team development needs and their own.	Application form/Interview
39. Ability to manage their own workload and have capacity to monitor their team members' workload, through 1-1 and appraisals to ensure performance targets of the service are met, including meeting and shadowing Officers at various locations.	Application form/Interview
40. Ability to use creativity and innovation to solve problems, identify, develop and deliver projects for the team.	Application form/Interview
41. Ability to delegate tasks and performance manage staff.	Application form/Interview
42. Ability to implement change and support the management team in delivering quality outputs.	Application form/Interview
43. Ability to participate in the selection of staff and undertake appraisals and case reviews as necessary.	Application form/Interview
44. Ability to audit their team's work and legal cases. And take action against staff using the Council HR policies, where required.	Application form/Interview

PERSONAL STYLE AND BEHAVIOUR:	
45. Supports their team and seeks guidance and clarification from Team Leaders and Managers when needed.	Application form/Interview
46. Motivate colleagues to improve team working	Application form/Interview
47. Effective and professional interpersonal skills with excellent communication ability with regards to service users, other officers and external partners, especially whilst engaging them in difficult or contradictory circumstances and/or in poor, overcrowded environments	Application form/Interview
48. Inspires others to deliver high standards of customer service and by leading by example.	Application form/Interview
49. Is enthusiastic about PSH work and has a problem solving attitude, which influences and motivates others.	Application form/Interview
50. Liaises with other council's and organisation's to identify opportunities to enhance or protect the work of the department, internally and externally.	Application form/Interview
51. A champion of a learning culture with an understanding of different learning styles.	Application form/Interview
52. Proactively share knowledge and skills.	Application form/Interview
53. To identify underperformance and give praise, where needed.	Application form/Interview
54. Promotes, investigates and uses new technology and new ways of working to meet the requirements of the service.	Application form/Interview
55. Promotes, supports and encourages a focus on outputs rather than attendance within their team and service.	Application form/Interview

<p>OTHER SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:</p> <p>56. The post holder may be required to work at various locations around the borough. The post holder may be required to work early mornings, in various locations, late evenings, weekends and occasional public holidays on a regular basis in order to meet service requirements.</p> <p>57. If the post holder chooses to use their own car to carry out visits/inspections then they must have a full current driving licence, ensure that their own vehicle is safe to drive, MOT'd, taxed and insured for business use.</p> <p>58. This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check.</p> <p>59. This post is exempt from The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act (1974).</p>	<p>Application form/Interview</p> <p>Application form/Interview/Test</p>
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Application form/Interview/Test