

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

**POST TITLE:** HOUSING OPTIONS OFFICER

**POST NUMBER:** HO03

**GRADE:** G

**RESPONSIBLE TO:** SENIOR HOUSING OPTIONS OFFICER

### **KEY CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITIES:**

1. To provide a customer focussed service that provides a quality front line assessment and advice service to meet the Council's Statutory Prevention and Homelessness duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

### **KEY SERVICES ACCOUNTABILITIES:**

1. To provide a high level of service delivery taking account of Council's policies and procedures and to promote a culture of customer focus.
2. Ensure that the Council's statutory duties under housing and homelessness legislation are correctly determined and administered
3. Be responsible for assessing referrals and approaches from clients under the homelessness reduction act through interviews either face to face, or by telephone.
4. Provide housing advice and options, creating personal housing plans and issuing relevant legal letters;
5. Work towards achieving homelessness prevention which could include referrals for grants, supporting people to sustain their tenancies and achieve long-term positive outcomes
6. Working with a range of statutory and voluntary services to provide employment support, housing benefit liaison etc.
7. Liaise with accommodation officers to arrange suitable temporary accommodation.
8. To make formal decisions on homeless applications.
9. Making offers of affordable and suitable alternative accommodation as appropriate.
10. Complete the homelessness reduction act qualifying checklist and assist clients to make Devon Home Choice applications.
11. Maintain accurate records and keep case files up to date with detailed notes and manage caseloads within statutory timeframes.
12. Maintain an ongoing and in-depth knowledge and understanding of relevant housing and homelessness legislation to deliver an effective and efficient service.

13. To contribute to service development in co-operation with other colleagues and the Housing Options Manager.
14. To attend venues as appropriate to provide a housing advice service to members of the public.
15. Represent the Council on a variety of forums and multi-agency panels, as required both internally and externally. Providing and fully promoting a customer focussed service that always seeks to empower customers, particularly in order to maximise available housing options
16. Make a positive contribution to the delivery of the service, this will include working flexibly and positively to achieve the objectives of the Council.
17. To deputise for the Senior Housing Options Officer as appropriate.
18. Ensure awareness and compliance with the Council's policies, Code of Conduct and Constitution.

**OTHER DUTIES:** In order to deliver services effectively, a degree of flexibility is needed and the post holder may be required to perform work not specifically referred to above. Such duties, however, should not normally exceed those expected of an employee at that grade.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY:** The Council has a health and safety policy, which outlines its responsibilities as an employer, and the responsibilities of its employees in respect of health and safety. All employees need to be aware of this policy and comply with its content.

**RISK MANAGEMENT:** All employees need to have an awareness of risk management and are responsible for ensuring that they manage risk effectively in their job and report hazards and risk to their Head of Service or Senior Manager.

**DATA PROTECTION:** It is the responsibility of the Post holder to ensure that the section's requirements for compliance with the Data Protection legislation are met.

**SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME:** The Council has a Single Equality Scheme which gives clear guidance on the responsibilities of both the employee and the employer. All employees must be familiar with and comply with all aspects of the Scheme.

**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS:** The Council has a Safeguarding Policy, which outlines its responsibilities and the responsibilities of its employees. All employees need to be aware of this Policy and comply with the contents.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

### HOUSING OPTIONS OFFICER

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
<b>Qualifications and Experience:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educated to A level standard in a relevant subject area (including HND, professional/enhanced skill qualification) or equivalent or demonstrable work-related experience in appropriate areas.</li> <li>• Demonstrable experience in social housing, especially in the areas of housing advice, homelessness and prevention issues as well as an understanding of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.</li> <li>• Experience of working with Statutory and Voluntary organisations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HHSRS Qualification.</li> <li>• Evidence of significant relevant Continuing Professional Development (CPD)</li> <li>• Relevant professional qualification or part qualification e.g. Chartered Institute of Housing</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge and Expertise:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excellent understanding of social housing, housing advice, and homelessness, and the housing options approach.</li> <li>• Detailed knowledge of housing law especially as it relates to allocations under part 6</li> <li>• A working knowledge of landlord and tenant law</li> <li>• Investigation techniques, and report writing experience.</li> <li>• Able to understand and keep up to date on legislative and policy changes</li> <li>• In depth knowledge of the duties owed to customers threatened with homelessness under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Act 2002, Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.</li> <li>• In depth knowledge of homelessness legislation including case law and housing related legislation including the roles and responsibilities associated with homeless prevention and the pursuit of wider housing options.</li> <li>• A detailed understanding of the services available to customers seeking help and accommodation provided by other organisations, both statutory and voluntary.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of the context and strategic purpose of social housing.</li> <li>• Understanding of rural housing issues and how these are managed.</li> <li>• Knowledge of other computer applications e.g. jigsaw, orchard.</li> </ul>

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In-depth knowledge of risk assessments and safeguarding practices to ensure the safety of clients.</li> <li>• Working knowledge of the Mental Health Act 1983, Mental Capacity Act 2005, Children's Act 1989, Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and subsequent legislation as it affects the client group.</li> <li>• Knowledge of welfare rights and benefits.</li> <li>• Understanding of the Equality Duty and of the diverse needs of different sections of society</li> <li>• Understanding of issues relating to data protection</li> </ul>	
<b>Skills:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective use of a range of communication skills including face to face, email, telephone, formal and informal reports and presentations taking into account issues of confidentiality.</li> <li>• Ability to analyse, interpret and present complex information with clarity, tact, and purpose in all relevant situations especially those of a sensitive and emotional nature.</li> <li>• Ability to make complex decisions based on facts, multi-agency intelligence and legislative powers.</li> <li>• Good organisational ability, particularly self-organisation, ability to see tasks through to a successful conclusion.</li> <li>• Self-motivated with the ability to work on own initiative, organise workload and manage that of others ensuring service priorities are met.</li> <li>• Attention to detail and ability to maintain accurate records.</li> <li>• Ability to write legal letters, emails, and file notes to a high standard with minimal supervision.</li> <li>• Competent in the use of word, excel and database applications</li> <li>• Ability to understand and interpret</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability to think and act creatively to apply unique solutions to problem solving based on experience and knowledge.</li> <li>• Knowledge of other computer applications eg Jigsaw, Orchard</li> </ul>

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
	personal financial information (income/outgoings, affordability etc.)	
<b>Personal Attributes:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enthusiastic and professional</li> <li>• Good networker and team player</li> <li>• Good inter-personal skills, particularly when dealing with the public and difficult situations</li> <li>• Ability to work to tight deadlines</li> </ul>	
<b>Special Requirements:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be able to travel around the Mid Devon area from time to time.</li> <li>• Availability to respond to emergencies which arise out of hours regarding homeless cases</li> <li>• Participate in the out of hours service</li> </ul>	

Updated February 2024