JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: ACCOMMODATION OFFICER

POST NUMBER: HO08

GRADE: F

RESPONSIBLE TO: SENIOR ACCOMMODATION OFFICER

RESPONSIBLE FOR: N/A

LIAISON WITH: Councillors, Internal staff, Members of the public, other External Organisations

KEY CORPORATE ACCOUNTABILITIES:

1. To provide effective housing support for those in temporary accommodation by referring to services, giving advice, assisting with claiming benefits and helping to find long term alternative accommodation.
2. To manage the day to day provision of temporary accommodation through regular visits to the properties and undertaking safety checks.
3. To help rough sleepers across the district to access accommodation and services through intervention activity and to help those at risk of rough sleeping through prevention activity.
4. To proactively work with customers at risk of homelessness to prevent homelessness approaches.

KEY SERVICE ACCOUNTABILITIES:

1. Identify available and suitable accommodation for use as temporary accommodation for those approaching as immediately homeless. Liaise with providers and negotiate favourable rates.

2. Be responsible for creating licence agreements, relevant accommodation duty letters and rules. Including getting the property ready for occupation.

3. Undertake accommodation sign up appointments in person at the property or the office.

4. Undertake regular visits to clients in temporary accommodation to ensure they are managing and to offer support and advice to enable them to move on into a sustainable tenancy. Deal with any issues that arise by intervening to prevent a breakdown in the accommodation arrangement for example arrears and property condition.

5. Manage accommodation and re-charge invoices with clients to ensure payments are made.

6. Provide support to both hosts and guests across the district in relation to any refugee schemes. Work with guests to secure re-settlement and access to the private rented sector where possible.

7. Monitor, review and update client's personal housing plans with them and assist them to move on from temporary accommodation.

8. Liaise directly with a range of partners such as housing, social services, mental health services, health services, Police, emergency accommodation providers, charities and third sector organisations to maximise positive outcomes for clients.

9. Develop partnership working with a range of organisations that can help encourage and assist clients to establish positive social networks and undertake meaningful activities to assist and promote social inclusion.

10. Support clients to engage with their recovery, including personal budgets, develop life and social skills, claim benefits and access appropriate accommodation and avoid a return to the streets.

11. Manage the council owned temporary accommodation on a day to day basis by visiting the properties to check for repairs. In particular the HMOs will require regular fire alarm checks and review of the cleanliness of the common parts. Any disrepair to the facilities including the appliances must be reported as soon as possible.

12. Monitor the internal and external condition of the properties and where damage is caused by clients issue warning letters.

13. Make recommendations to the Senior Accommodation Officer where warning letters have been unsuccessful and eviction/end of duty may be necessary.

14. Be involved in the delivery of services relating to rough sleepers. This may include undertaking assertive street outreach sessions and hot spot visits, or working closely with partner organisations commissioned to provide this service.

15. Carry out a strength-based assessment with each rough sleeping client and plan and enact support actions/interventions which will assist clients to achieve their goals and move towards a sustainable life away from the streets, either directly or through working with partners.

16. Maintain accurate records and keep case files up to date with detailed notes.

17. Be responsible for responding to safeguarding issues and recognise indications of substance misuse, mental health needs, domestic abuse, personality disorders and behavioural issues and make appropriate referrals to relevant agencies.

18. Promote and facilitate effective multi-agency and joint working to address begging, street drinking and other street-based activity as well as anti-social behaviour.

19. Support clients in contributing to the development of the services they use. Help them to engage in consultation events both within the organisation and in the wider community.

20. To attend meetings and multi-agency forums both internally and externally as required and give and receive information as appropriate around clients; address any service area requirements and build relationships with front line workers and operational service leads. Represent the aims and objectives of the service at these meetings.

21. Support the Council's approach to equalities and diversity ensuring that our services and policies identify, address and promote the needs of our diverse community. This includes the need for safety of children and other vulnerable people.

22. The role may be required to work outside of normal working hours and is required to be flexible to meet the needs of this particular customer base.

23. Take personal responsibility for the relevant aspects of the Council's Health and Safety Policy. In particular lone working and working outside of normal working hours.

24. 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.

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK:

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.
When considering the duties of this role as part of the most recent Job Evaluation (JE), a decision was reached using the government DBS Tool that this role is required to hold a **Basic DBS level check**. The basis on which this form of DBS is renewed is explained further within our DBS policy.

MID DEVON DISTRICT COUNCIL'S REQUIRED COMPETENCIES

For further information, please refer to the information attached to the recruitment pack on core competencies.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ACCOMMODATION OFFICER

	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
Qualifications and Experience:	• Good all round education to GCSE level including Maths and English (A-C) or equivalent level of education. • Work-related experience in appropriate, related fields of employment. • Experience in housing advice, homelessness and prevention and dealing with customers with complex needs. • Experience of working with the public in an advice-giving capacity or in a customer-orientated work environment.	• Experience of working with Statutory and Voluntary organisations. • Experience of developing plans/approaches to meet specific individual needs
Knowledge and Expertise:	• Knowledge and understanding of the services available to customers seeking help and accommodation provided by other organisations, both statutory and voluntary. • Knowledge of risk assessments and safeguarding practices to ensure the safety of clients. • 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. • Understanding of issues relating to data protection • Understanding of the Equality Duty and of the diverse needs of different sections of society	• Investigation techniques, and report writing experience. • Understanding of rural housing issues and how these are managed. • Knowledge of welfare rights and benefits.
Skills:	• Accuracy and attention to detail. • Able to work under pressure • Have excellent organisational skills • Ability to work on own initiative and as part of a team • Well-developed interpersonal skills • Ability to be innovative and creative when identifying ways to prevent homelessness	• Knowledge of other computer applications e.g. jigsaw, orchard. • Report writing skills.

	• Ability to write clear and concise reports and letters etc. • Excellent communication skills, including listening, oral and written. • Competent with ICT packages including Microsoft Office • Ability to build good strong working relationships with colleagues and customers • Resilience and ability to deal with challenging situations • 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. • Ability to understand and interpret personal financial information (income/outgoings, affordability etc.)	
Personal Attributes:	• Ability to work to tight deadlines. • Ability to identify and resolve problems sensitively and effectively. • Be able to work flexibly as part of a team. • Have good inter-personal skills with a focus on customer care. • Enthusiastic and professional • Ability to be diplomatic, tactful, friendly and empathetic to customers and colleagues. • Change your communication style to best meet the needs of the audience and regularly check there is mutual understanding • Able to build effective relationships with customers, stakeholders, colleagues and partners • Respectful and considerate • Aspire to provide excellent customer service and use own initiative	
Special Requirements:	• Be able to travel around the Mid Devon area on a regular basis. • Must be able to drive and have daily use of a vehicle • Availability to respond to emergencies which arise out of hours regarding homeless cases as requested	