

ROLE PROFILE

The 'role profile' is the contractual element and generically sets out in broad terms the responsibilities the post holder is expected to have

Job Title: Housing Advice Officer

Reporting to: Senior Housing Advice Officer

Salary Band: 4

Generic Responsibilities

- Acting corporately to support new innovation and creative opportunities in the delivery of the Council's services
- To work with colleagues within the Strategic Growth team as part of the 'one team' approach to meet corporate priorities.
- To work collaboratively with colleagues within and across managers to support and/or lead new initiatives to transform the delivery of the Council's services and ensures the long term financial stability of the Council.
- Ensure a positive and flexible approach to the variety of tasks within the role in order to meet customer and work demands.
- Operate as an effective and reliable team member to achieve own accountabilities and team objectives.
- Assist in the resolution of enquiries to ensure a customer focused, high quality service is provided.

Corporate Accountabilities

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- Work to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and report incidents as they occur. Treat everyone with dignity and respect and ensure individual's needs are met. Challenge inappropriate behaviour and language constructively.

Health and Safety

- To operate with due regard to the Council's policies, procedures and guidance and undertake any health and safety training as appropriate.

Information security and governance

- Manage information in line with the Council's policies, procedures and guidance on Data Protection, GDPR, Freedom of Information, confidentiality, information security and sharing to ensure compliance and efficient and effective information governance.

Safeguarding

- Maintain awareness of Council policies and practices regarding the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults who may be at risk. Report concerns in accordance with corporate guidance and procedures.

TASK SPECIFICS

The 'task specifics' is the non contractual element of your post and is a more detailed description of day to day activities which will be reviewed in line with the appraisal process and can change when priorities change

Purpose of the role

- To work with customers in identifying appropriate prevention and/or accommodation solutions when they are faced with potential homelessness.
- To utilise prevention services and accommodation effectively.
- To ensure the Council meets its statutory duties in relation to the homeless legislation.
- To meet the Council's statutory responsibilities in relation to housing advice and homelessness, including the provision of interim / temporary accommodation.

Service to Customers/Key Relationships

This is a customer focussed role working directly with members of the public who are homeless and threatened with homelessness as well any other customer requiring housing advice.

- To work with potentially homeless customers to prevent them from becoming homeless from their current accommodation through the provision of information, advice support and access to services
- To work with homeless people to identify accommodation solutions where they are unable to remain living in their current accommodation; this will include accessing the private rented sector, the social housing sector and home ownership
- To provide information and assistance to people approaching the Councils for advice in relation to housing; tenant rights and responsibilities, accessing private and public sector housing and homelessness. To work with other members of the housing advice team and strategy and enabling team to ensure housing solutions are available and accessed when appropriate.
- To establish effective working relationships with statutory and voluntary agencies such as Police, Community Mental Health Team, Adult Services, Youth Offending Team, Registered Providers, Childrens Services, CAB, Nightstop to enable the provision of effective housing advice and homelessness services to applicants.
- To assist customers in accessing accommodation through removing financial or practical barriers including accessing rent in advance, bond scheme, charitable funding, Welfare Assistance Scheme, Council Tax Support Scheme etc. and supporting them in moving.
- To encourage and empower customers to make best use of statutory and non-statutory resources.
- To assist homeless customers to access temporary accommodation including No First Night Out, Crisis Rooms, Crash Pad and other forms of temporary accommodation etc and ensuring there is an appropriate move-on plan in place.
- To register and assess housing register applications, bid on social housing properties and work closely with Registered Providers to ensure effective and timely access to housing stock including holding/ attending regular meetings.
- To undertake the homeless out of hours function on a rota basis.
- To work with the Support/Pathway officers to ensure customers are tenancy ready and able to sustain their home over the long term.

Business Improvement/Planning Responsibility

- Ensure effective coordination with other areas of the council to promote strong customer service and a consistent approach to dealing with applicants and queries.
- To utilise the relevant computer systems to record cases and manage workflow including for the purposes of statistical retruns.
- To work with internal and external colleagues to support the development of new policies, procedures, working practices and materials to ensure constantly improving, efficient and effective services that meet the needs of our clients.

Managing Resources (People, equipment, buildings)

- To maintain accurate, comprehensive and up to date records in relation to applicants housing and homelessness applications, support cases and other records as required.
- To maintain the Civica Home Choice Plus system (or its successor) including contributing to system redesign, upgrades and testing.
- To manage a procurement card for purchasing accommodation and storage of belongings for homeless people.

Skills, Knowledge, Experience, Qualifications

Essential

- Good level of education including 5 GCSE a-c / 4-9 including Maths and English and A levels or equivalent
- Experience of working with customers or clients for a minimum of one year
- Experience of working in housing or a related field for a minimum of one year
- Good knowledge of accommodation options, including private sector housing, low cost or affordable housing options and how to access these.
- Good knowledge of Local Authority housing register and allocation policy.
- Knowledge of welfare benefits and know how to access these for clients.
- Ability to work in a team environment and also using own initiative with minimal supervision.
- Able to manage conflicting demands and your own workload effectively to meet deadlines.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, including ability to write concise case notes and comprehensible legal decision letters. The ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of people, such as service users and professionals
- The ability to use internal IT systems and databases to monitor workload.
- Well motivated and determined to find accommodation solutions to meet need of our service users.
- Good negotiation and advocacy skills
- Fully understands their role in the context of safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, in a housing environment
- Able to work effectively with partners to deliver appropriate solutions for applicants
- Understanding of how to interpret and apply legislation or policies

Desirable

- Knowledge of homelessness legislation and the duties of the Council in regards to this.
- Housing related qualification
- Understands the role of the organisation, its communities and the needs and expectations of internal and external customers. Works professionally and innovatively to meet or exceed these needs and expectations
- Knowledge of legislation relating to private sector housing tenancies.
- Ability to compile reports and updates regarding workload to ensure the effective delivery of the service.
- Knowledge of issues affecting the housing market
- Knowledge of the tools that may help clients access the private sector, such as rent deposit bond schemes and rent in advance payments.

Values & Behaviours

Work to the Council's Values and associated Behaviours - WFDC

We are Working Together	We are Fair	We are Dependable	We put Communities first
We are one team, all working towards the Council's vision for the district	We treat people fairly, we are inclusive and embrace our differences	We do what we say we are going to do, you can trust us to deliver on our promises	We listen, we set targets for ourselves and the services we deliver

Special Conditions of the Role

Enhanced DBS required

Date Prepared: June 2020

Reviewed: January 2025