

Job Description

Job Role: Housing Solutions Officer

Service: Housing Operations

Role Structure	Role Details
Directorate:	Community Wellbeing
Grade:	HC07
Location:	Hereford, Herefordshire
Responsible to:	Housing Solutions Team Lead

Main purpose of the role

To provide comprehensive housing advice to prevent homeless where possible and offer early intervention, signposting to support agencies where necessary to ensure housing related support is available to assist in sustaining tenancies

Conduct homelessness interviews where homelessness cannot be prevented within legislative framework (Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, Code of Guidance and relevant Council policy) whilst safeguarding the well-being of vulnerable people.

Provide a comprehensive housing advice service in relation to all housing options including home ownership, private rented and a range of affordable housing options to maximise housing stock across the county.

Work in partnership with Home Point and housing providers across the county to ensure that allocation of accommodation is undertaken within the relevant legislative framework.

Key Duties and Responsibilities	Frequency of Task
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To investigate and determine the local authority's statutory duty to applicants under the provisions of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working within the legislative framework of the Mental Capacity Act 2005, Children's Act 1989, Children Leaving Care Act 2006, Protection from Eviction Act 1977, Landlord and Tenant Act 1985, Housing Benefit Regulations and other relevant legislation in relation to homelessness prevention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prevent homelessness through the identification and resolution of housing risks and needs through the use of a range of housing interventions including through the use of the prevention budget in accordance with value for money principles. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily



Key Duties and Responsibilities	Frequency of Task
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work in partnership with internal and external partners to identify the broad housing needs of individual customers and provide or signpost access to services specific to those needs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide specialist assessments and intervention for service users with complex needs ensuring the safeguarding and wellbeing of vulnerable households. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the development of close working with Customer Services to ensure customers receive prompt and appropriate responses relevant to their needs however customers choose to access advice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To receive and identify referrals concerning potential cases of homelessness and, where necessary to undertake timely visits to ascertain and resolve housing needs across a broad range of housing interventions and services, prioritising and managing your own work/case load and identification of risks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify and address the needs and issues of potentially homeless people by undertaking homelessness prevention assessments, providing advice and assistance appropriate to preventing homelessness including general housing advice in partnership with multi agencies across the social care field and the wider housing market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop joint working with partners which can proactively identify homelessness risks and help in developing appropriate protocols, policies and procedures to support strong joint working practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As and when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To advise existing and potential clients of the support organisations and agencies available to them and make referrals as appropriate relating to housing, financial, welfare rights and other related issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify and address the needs and issues of potentially homeless people by undertaking homelessness prevention assessments, providing advice and assistance appropriate to preventing homelessness including general housing advice in partnership with multi agencies across the social care field and the wider housing market. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To develop joint working with partners which can proactively identify homelessness risks and help in developing appropriate protocols, policies and procedures to support strong joint working practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ad hoc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify opportunities for the development and provision of services and assistance which can contribute to the prevention of homelessness and to lead in a specialist area, dependent upon service pressures e.g. domestic violence, private sector options, parental eviction, or eligibility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As and when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make a significant contribution to the development, delivery and future review of the Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As requested



Key Duties and Responsibilities	Frequency of Task
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To liaise, as necessary with Children's Services and the parents and carers of young persons to avoid homelessness, adopting an advocacy and mediation role in negotiating successful outcomes and supporting, where necessary, case reviews to agree individual approaches. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As and when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify and address needs and issues within Housing Advice and Homelessness and address them by influencing the policy or organisations across the County, considering best practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As and when
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work across Council Directorates and with other public and private service providers to continue to develop potential working practices and procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where required or necessary to do so to work within a rota system in providing out-of-hours homelessness response services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure case files and electronic recording are kept up to date to enable the use as evidence in court cases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To receive and proactively identify referrals concerning potential homelessness and investigate and implement options to prevent homelessness occurring. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To take the lead and make initial contact by telephone, letter, e-mail or text and then carry out visits, where necessary, to interview clients and discuss housing options and provide advice and assistance following the undertaking of complex casework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To establish, complete and agree an individual housing plan with applicants, which is monitored, updated and reviewed on a regular basis, and which leads to minimal use of temporary accommodation options wherever possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To undertake financial assessments to enable the undertaking of legal duties relating to homelessness, including the identification of suitable accommodation within the framework of The Homelessness (suitability of accommodation) (England) Order 2012. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To make appropriate signposting referrals to internal and external housing partners where their services or advice is appropriate or necessary in ensuring an enhanced options approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify opportunities for the economically efficient allocation of the Council's homelessness prevention fund to members of the public to prevent homelessness in an innovative manner for own designated caseload, in line with the Council's prevention policies and procedures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily



Key Duties and Responsibilities	Frequency of Task
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To facilitate allocations from the Prevention Fund, completing relevant financial forms and organising the distribution of funds, and to help monitor spend and effectiveness around good will payments, rent arrears and deposits and rent in advance to clients. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advocate, negotiate and liaise on behalf of clients with landlords, housing associations, solicitors, agents and mortgage lenders, mediating and conciliating effectively in all situations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To undertake homelessness investigations and make homelessness decisions in accordance with the Council's statutory duties set out in the Housing Act 1996 (as amended). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare evidence and represent the Council at relevant court hearings relevant to the Council's homelessness duties. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support potential homelessness individuals at relevant court hearings or tribunals of relevance to preventing their homelessness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In partnership with social workers & aftercare workers, jointly assess those who have complex needs including 16/17 year olds, those with dual diagnosis needs within the appropriate legislation of all agencies, to prevent homelessness or secure a suitable accommodation based solution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Represent the Council at multi agency meetings, proactively working with those with dual needs to resolve their complex housing situation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and encourage multi agency approaches to homelessness in the county, working with both voluntary and statutory agencies to ensure that policies and procedures are in place to provide the necessary support, advice and appropriate accommodation for priority clients. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make referrals where appropriate to other agencies, and liaise with Housing Benefit colleagues as necessary to ensure welfare benefit take up is maximised. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To update any computer or manual records to enable case, financial and performance management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep abreast of up to date legislation, housing market forces and broader accommodation available to ensure that appropriate signposting for the applicant to prevent homelessness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help develop new policies and procedures associated with the prevention of homelessness and wider housing options advice and contribute to reviews of these and the wider homelessness strategy in Herefordshire. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly



Key Duties and Responsibilities	Frequency of Task
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To help develop a range of advice and guidance leaflets and information which can assist in the prevention of homelessness and able access to appropriate housing services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To represent the Council at housing related meetings, functions, conferences and presentations associated with homelessness as required by the Housing Solutions Manager and devise and deliver training, presentations and workshops to a variety of audiences on homelessness prevention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To contribute to the development of homelessness related strategies, including analysing and responding to the needs of new Home Point applicants in a proactive way. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide such guidance and information and training as may be required by the Customer Services Teams and other partners in supporting an enhanced options approach to housing advice services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a sound working knowledge of legislation and case law relating to homelessness and housing in general and the relevant codes of guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain a thorough working knowledge of the local housing market, including the private sector and suggest responses to any trends that may occur. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use knowledge of specialist areas in Homelessness and Housing Advice to offer advice and assistance to other statutory and voluntary agencies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be available to participate, when required to do so, in the Council's emergency out-of-hours homelessness rota. Providing appropriate advice and assistance to vulnerable people in crisis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monthly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work with social workers and after care workers, external agencies to ensure that the necessary care and support packages are available to enable and maintain independent living. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assist and deputise for the Housing Options Team Manager as directed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To undertake any other duties as required by the Housing Options Team Manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As required



Person Specification

Requirements	Essential or Desirable	Identified by A – Application I – Interview
Qualifications and Training		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bachelor's degree, equivalent qualification or experience. 	Essential	A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educated to NVQ level in housing or CIH qualification. 	Essential	A, I
Experience & Knowledge		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A working knowledge of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), the Homelessness Code of Guidance and awareness of current homelessness case law/High Court rulings. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of key legislation in relation to homelessness law, specifically, The Children's Acts, The Community Care Act 1994, The Leaving Care Act 2004, The Mental Health Act 1983, together with relevant nationality/immigration law concerning labour migration and asylum matters. 	Essential	I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of working within a Homelessness and Housing Advice or Housing-related organisation. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of working with people who have a wide range of sometimes complex needs or disabilities therefore requiring knowledge of the links between homelessness and issues such as mental health, learning disability, age, leaving care, domestic violence and similar, and of 	Essential	A, I



Requirements	Essential or Desirable	Identified by A – Application I – Interview
engaging other services in breaking patterns of homelessness.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of the benefits system, particularly Housing Benefit provisions and income-related benefits provision. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of the wide range of housing options and services across a range of issues and needs. 	Essential	I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of the impact of debt and its links to homelessness. 	Essential	I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of the developments and dynamics in the wider housing market, particularly in relation to matters such as over-crowding, tenancy rights and similar. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge and experience of how to assess housing needs and homelessness issues, completing personalised housing action plans and of the concept and operation of a choice-based lettings schemes. 	Essential	I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of working on own initiative and as an effective team member. 	Essential	A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of working with Word, Outlook, Abrisas. 	Essential	A
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to work under pressure and in circumstances where interruptions may be commonplace. 	Essential	A, I
Skills and Abilities		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrate the ability to co-ordinate interventions which result in successful outcomes for the public and other agencies. 	Essential	I



Requirements	Essential or Desirable	Identified by A – Application I – Interview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be able to liaise with, negotiate with, and influence a wide range of internal and external networks and individuals. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be able to manage a complex workload with minimal direction, delivering objectives within an environment where priorities and pressures change and/or compete on a frequent basis. 	Essential	I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly developed ability to analyse housing problems, and to instigate the gathering of information upon which interventions can then be based, particularly in the most complex and challenging cases encountered by the team. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Able to work inside legislative frameworks and Council policies and procedures in an accountable and financially effective way. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to remain calm and offer advice and support in a working environment where pressures can change very quickly and decisions made are open to legal challenge through the County Court. 	Essential	I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to develop homelessness prevention policies and procedures locally on behalf of the Council and to represent the authority at regional homelessness groups as directed. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to challenge practice amongst other agencies appropriately and to influence behaviour and outcomes across the housing market in a positive and proactive way. 	Essential	A, I
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to communicate both verbally and in writing effectively. 	Essential	A, I



All council staff have a duty to promote the welfare of children, young people, and adults with care and support needs at risk of abuse and neglect who cannot take steps to protect themselves. Ensuring you attend mandated safeguarding children and safeguarding adults training to enable you to recognise the concerning behavior, know how to talk about it, and consent/duty to share information effectively. You will also learn about the legalities and procedures the social care staff can take.

Our Values and Behaviours

Our values are what we represent as a council and our behaviours are how we act to get things done to reach our potential.

