| Role Structure | Role Details |
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| Directorate: | Community Wellbeing |
| Grade: | HC7 |
| Location: | Blueschool House and Hybrid |
| Responsible to: | Housing Operations and Service Manager |

# Job Description

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| Job Role: Housing Solutions Officer |
| Service: Housing |

## Main purpose of the role

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| * To provide all aspects of housing advice to prevent homeless where possible and offer early intervention, signposting to support contracts where necessary to ensure housing related support is available to assist in sustaining tenancies. * Take homeless applications and 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 both rental and ownership 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. |
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| Key Duties and Responsibilities | Frequency of Task |
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| * 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. | * Daily |
| * Working within the legislative framework of the Mental Capacity   Act 2005, Children’s Act 1989, Children Leaving Care Act 2006  in relation to homelessness prevention. | * As required |
| * 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 | * Daily |
| * 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. | * Weekly |
| * To provide specialist assessments and intervention of service   users with complex needs ensuring the safeguarding and wellbeing  of vulnerable households. | * Weekly |
| * 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. | * Daily |
| * 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 | * Daily |
| * 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. | * Daily |
| * 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. | * Quarterley |
| * 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. | * As required |
| * To take the lead and seek to maximise continued occupation of threatened accommodation, and, where homelessness is unavoidable, to work with tenants, landlords and agencies with the aim of avoiding the use of temporary accommodation, pending the securing of other more suitable housing options. | * As required |
| * 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. | * Monthly |
| * To make a significant contribution to the development, delivery and future review of the Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan. | * Annually |
| * 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. | * As required |
| * 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. | * Annually |
| * To work across Council Directorates and with other public and private service providers to continue to develop potential working practices and procedures, working at a senior level. | * Monthly |
| * To ensure case files are kept up to date to enable the use as evidence in court cases. | * Daily |

**Person Specification**

| **Requirements** | **Essential or Desirable** | **Identified by**  **A – Application I – Interview** |
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| **Qualifications and Training** | | |
| * 5 GCSE passes or equivalent extensive professional experience | Essential | A |
| * A Housing Law/Advice qualification | Essential | A |
| **Experience & Knowledge** | | |
| * 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 |
| * 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 |
| * Experience of working within a Homelessness and Housing Advice or Housing-related organisation. | Essential | I |
| * 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 engaging other services in breaking patterns of homelessness. | Essential | A, I |
| * Awareness of the benefits system, particularly Housing Benefit provisions and income-related benefits provision. | Desirable | A,I |
| * Awareness of the wide range of housing options and services across a range of issues and needs. | Desirable | I |
| * Awareness of the impact of debt and its links to homelessness. | Desirable | I |
| * Knowledge of the developments and dynamics in the wider housing market, particularly in relation to matters such as over-crowding, tenancy rights and similar. | Desirable | A |
| * 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. | Desirable | I |
| * Ability to work under pressure and in circumstances where interruptions may be commonplace. | Essential | A |
| **Skills and Abilities** | | |
| * Demonstrate the ability to co-ordinate interventions which result in successful outcomes for the public and other agencies. | Essential | I |
| * Be able to liaise with, negotiate with, and influence a wide range of internal and external networks and individuals. | Essential | A, I |
| * 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 |
| * 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 |
| * Able to work inside legislative frameworks and Council policies and procedures in an accountable and financially effective way. | Essential | I |
| * 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 |
| * 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 |
| * Ability to communicate both verbally and in writing effectively. | Essential | A |

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

The council’s THRIVE core values are our guiding principles and beliefs that shape our culture and behaviour within the council. ​They help us to achieve our Council Plan vision “do our best for Herefordshire” acting as our DNA and the “way that we do things around here”. We expect all colleagues to act as a role model by living our values and setting an example for others. ​Our values strive to promote a thriving workforce by fostering a culture of trust, being honest and responsible, inclusive, valuing people and resources and leading with empathy.

**Trust -** Developing and maintaining relationships based on a culture of transparency and open communication. Supported by integrity and the confidence that you are reliable and fulfil commitments.

**Honesty -** Demonstrating truthfulness, integrity, and transparency in all communications, decisions, and relationships. Being trustworthy, reliable, and accountable for your actions. Acting with sincerity and fairness, even in challenging situations.

**Responsibility -** Taking ownership of individual and collective actions, decisions, and delivering on commitments. Being reliable, fulfilling obligations and being accountable for outcomes and results. Proactively contributing to the achievement of your own, the team and council goals.

**Inclusivity -** Embracing diversity, equity and inclusion by recognising and valuing the unique perspectives, backgrounds and experiences of our staff, customers and residents. Creating an environment where every individual is valued, respected and can belong.

**Value -** Upholding high standards, ethics and integrity to guide our actions and decisions. Demonstrating commitment to creating and delivering value in our work by recognising and appreciating each other, our resources, processes, customers, community and environment.

**Empathy -** Demonstrating a genuine and caring understanding of others' feelings, perspectives, and experiences. Listening attentively, acting with compassion, supporting with respect and kindness and considering the impact of our actions on others.