

JOB DESCRIPTION

TITLE: Housing Solutions Advisor (Apprenticeship)

POST NO: *****

DEPARTMENT: Population and Wellbeing

DIVISION: Housing Needs

RESPONSIBLE TO: Housing Solutions Team Manager

CONTRACT TERM: Fixed term 24 months

PURPOSE OF THE POST:

To provide quality service of housing options advice in order to fulfil the authority's statutory function to prevent homelessness, in accordance with the council's statutory duties under the Homeless Reduction Act 2017, Housing Act 1996 Part VII and related amendments, case law and statutory guidance/instruments.

To accurately assess and give advice, by phone or in person, to prevent homelessness, wherever possible, or to facilitate a move into suitable accommodation in the private or social sector.

To support speedy assessments of cases and refer to the appropriate teams where duties under the HRA have been triggered and assist in the development of the personalised housing plan. To support the Housing Solutions Officer keeping personalised housing plans up-to-date, administration of rent deposit application, financial assessments, and referrals to hostels etc.

To maintain a detailed understanding of security of tenure including tenancy agreements possession proceedings, harassment, illegal eviction, disrepair issues and tenancy sustainment in order to give appropriate housing options & advice.

You must have "Lived in the UK, Gibraltar, EEA, Switzerland, or EU overseas territories for at least the previous 3 years."

To undertake the Housing and Property Management Level 3 Apprenticeship, in addition work towards the Chartered Institute of Housing qualification.

PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

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1	To work proactively to deliver a front line services to individuals and their families at risk of homelessness. To give accurate advice and assist on housing related matters and support individuals and their families to find and secure accommodation including referrals to appropriate services and organisations. This will include working and negotiating with council departments, employment support workers, landlords, external agencies, and legal and health professionals.	35
2	To assist caseworkers to undertake completion of financial affordability assessments, developing support plans and co-ordinating the interventions of partner organisations, monitoring and reporting on caseloads and progress. To process rent deposit applications and assist clients with the completion of discretionary housing payments and housing benefit claim forms. Assist residents with obtaining appropriate welfare benefits, and to provide advice and guidance in maintaining full benefit entitlement.	25
3	Complete and maintain accurate records allowing casework to be tracked and monitored to ensure the service can be effectively evidenced and evaluated.	10
4	To establish eligibility for other services e.g. employment support, stronger families, flying start and obtain consent to make referrals where appropriate. Making referrals to hostels and partners and record outcomes. Refer and signpost residents for ongoing support where appropriate. Promote close working ties with other support agencies to ensure that longer term support is available. Liaise closely with the appropriate support services providing on-going support to vulnerable people.	5
5	To be proactive about identifying safeguarding issues e.g. child protection, domestic violence, sexual exploitation etc, and ensure appropriate referrals and escalations to relevant services and interventions are made. Ensure the Team Leader is made aware of operational problems that may prevent smooth service delivery.	5
6	Work towards and complete all learning modules as a part of your apprenticeship programme, keeping Practice Educators, tutors and mentors up to date with any associated risks both to work programme and course work. Participate actively in your own development plan as agreed with the line manager and apprenticeship assessor, tutor and mentor.	20

CONTEXT:

Housing Solutions Services identify individuals and families at risk of homelessness and provide holistic housing advice and support, working with both internal and external partners including local voluntary sector organisations.

The post-holder will work as part of a team of officers to advise, help create and support clients to maintain their personalised housing plan which is designed to reduce the risk of homelessness and increase personal resilience and self-sustainability. In addition the post holder will support caseworkers to establish statutory duties owed.

WORK ENVIRONMENT:

The post holder will work flexibly, although generally based on-site at Town Hall, will be expected to work across all council offices as well as from home. As a front line officer interviewing in an open plan office there are risks associated with the post and dealing with members of the public.

It is an office based role with some interviews carried out in customers' homes or other locations i.e. hospitals, community centres etc. The post holder has no supervisory responsibility.

PERSON SPECIFICATION: Housing Solutions Advice Officer

This acts as selection criteria and gives an outline of the types of person and the characteristics required to do the job.

Essential **(E)**:- without which candidate would be rejected Desirable **(D)**:- useful for choosing between two good candidates. Critical **(C)**:- Marked **(C)** criteria to be addressed by employees applying under the redeployment policy

Please make sure, when completing your application form, you give <u>clear examples</u> of how you meet the <u>essential and desirable</u> criteria.				
Attributes	Essential	How Measured	Desirable	How Measured
Experience	Demonstrable experience of working in a busy and pressurised environment as part of a team to achieve set targets and outcomes Demonstrable experience of partnership working, liaison and negotiation with external agencies and partners.	1,2	Demonstrable experience of working with vulnerable individuals and families with complex needs	1,2
Skills & Abilities	Able to converse with ease with members of the public and provide effective help or advice in accurate and fluent spoken English Ability to plan and prioritise own work. To identify barriers to casework progression due to issues involved in working with clients and families with complex, multiple needs and to appropriately challenge failures of clients to meet targets Good written skills, being able to communicate accurately and politely by letter and e-mail. Exemplary telephone manner,	1,2,3 1.2 1,2		

	communicating clearly and effectively. Ability to quickly assimilate complex information and present to customers, partners and colleagues in a concise and accessible manner. Ability to accurately record concise information and produce customer documentation and case records Ability to deal with challenging and disengagement behaviour in a calm and professional manner to achieve a positive turn-around. Being able to empower individuals to resolve their problems Good numerical skills to carry out affordability tests to recommend financial awards/grants/loans Proficient in ICT & customer contact systems including Windows based computer packages, internet, and case management systems.	1,2 1,2 1,2,3 1,2,3		
Equality Issues	Demonstrable knowledge and understanding of equality issues and legislation and, in particular, how they impact on service(s) provided and able to integrate equality policies into service delivery.	1,2		
Specialist Knowledge	Demonstrable knowledge of interpreting and applying legislation and policies.	1,2	Knowledge of the rights of housing and welfare benefits Knowledge of the Housing Act 1996 Part VII and the Homeless Reduction Act	1,2 1,2

Education & Training	Functional Skills L2, GCSE grades C/4 or above in English and maths or equivalent. Able to commit to relevant apprenticeship training including Functional Skills if required	1, 2 & 4	Qualification in housing, customer service information advice and guidance.	1,2
Other Requirements	Ability to take a flexible approach and work proactively. Ability to travel between sites Ability to work as part of a multi-disciplinary team Ability to work with minimal supervision when required	1,2 1,2 1,2 1,2		

(1 = Application Form 2 = Interview 3 = Test 4 = Proof of Qualification 5 = Practical Exercise)

We will consider any reasonable adjustments under the terms of the Equalities Act (2010), to enable an applicant with a disability (as defined under the Act) to meet the requirements of the post.

The Job-holder will ensure that Luton Borough Council's policies are reflected in all aspects of his/her work, in particular those relating to;

- Equal Opportunities
- Health and Safety;
- Data Protection Act (2018) & General Data Protection Regulation (2018).