

JOB DESCRIPTION

POST: Homeless Accommodation Officer	POST NO: ES84
DIRECTORATE/DIVISION: Strategic Housing Services	
SCALE: E/F	
ANY SPECIAL CONDITIONS: (a) <u>Career Grade</u> Scale E - Post holder able to carry out the majority of all duties of the post, but some requiring additional training, supervision and/or experience on some aspects of the role. Scale F - Post holder able to carry out full duties of the post with minimal supervision. (b) This role is entitled to receive casual car user payments for mileage claimed (c) A Baseline Personnel Security Standard check is required as part of this role, and that will also entail the successful applicant undertaking a Basic DBS Check. (d) The post is for a fixed term contract for a period of no longer than 18 months. To avoid ambiguity: The contract will end on the date which will be specified in the letter of appointment unless previously terminated in accordance with the notice provision included, or summarily should gross misconduct occur; and There will be no entitlement to an additional period of notice extending beyond the termination date specified in the other.	
RESPONSIBLE TO: Housing Options Team Leader	
RESPONSIBLE FOR (POSTS): None	
MAIN PURPOSE OF POST: a) To place homeless applicants and their households into the most suitable and cost effective form of temporary accommodation available in accordance with current Legislative Duties and formal Government Guidance requirements. b) To co-ordinate voids within the temporary accommodation portfolio. c) To minimise debt to the Council by managing current rent accounts effectively, informing households of final balances promptly and pursuing payments of former arrears. d) To verify and authorise the payment of invoices for nightly paid temporary accommodation in accordance with Corporate timescales and commitments. e) To identify opportunities for the Council to discharge the duty towards homeless applicants in temporary accommodation. f) To regularly check and record the standards within the temporary accommodation used by the Council	
SPECIFIC DUTIES OF POST: a) To ensure homeless households are placed into the most suitable and cost effective form of temporary accommodation available to the Council in accordance with its legal duties.	

- b) To carry out sign-ups for nightly paid temporary accommodation placements with the applicant and ensure that they understand all aspects, costs and responsibilities of that placement.
- c) To set up clean rent accounts, monitor payments and terminate accounts and placements promptly in relation to nightly paid temporary accommodation in accordance with the council's procedures and recorded on the relevant IT systems.
- d) To co-ordinate voids within the council's temporary accommodation portfolio and identify and provide the most suitable nominations of homeless households to providers in accordance with the relevant service level agreement.
- e) To communicate moves to alternative temporary accommodation with homeless households so that they understand why and when they are moving and the consequences if they are resistant or refuse to do so.
- f) To record all placements, movements and exits from temporary accommodation on the relevant IT systems and spreadsheets.
- g) To notify all other relevant Council Sections e.g. Housing Benefits and Council Tax Departments of placements into, moves within and the termination of nightly paid temporary accommodation.
- h) To be the initial point of contact for homeless applicants to be able to report any issues or difficulties relating to their temporary accommodation and make initial investigations and advise or refer to the appropriate person to facilitate a resolution.
- i) To notify the relevant colleague, provider, department or agency of any change to a homeless households circumstances or composition that impacts upon their temporary accommodation placement and/or homeless application
- j) To identify households in temporary accommodation who require banding re-assessments on the housing register due to the length of time spent in temporary accommodation or due to a change in the circumstances in accordance with the Council's Allocations Policy and refer it to the appropriate colleague.
- k) To co-ordinate the storage of applicant's belongings in accordance with the Council's legal duties in instances of abandonment, incarceration or confinement for health reasons.
- l) To schedule and carry out regular visits to temporary accommodation used by the Council to be satisfied that suitable standards are being maintained.
- m) In conjunction with Private Sector Housing, keep an updated record of Fire Safety compliance for the temporary accommodation used within Crawley.
- n) To verify invoices received from nightly paid temporary accommodation providers to ensure they are accurate and to authorise their payment via the finance department and IT system within corporate timescales
- o) To take the appropriate action in respect of nightly paid rent accounts falling into arrears in accordance with current council procedures, liaise with the Housing Benefit department to resolve any issues in relation to claims and agreeing and monitoring agreed repayment arrangements are adhered to.
- p) To inform households of final account balances promptly, monitor repayment agreements made and actively pursue former tenant debts for temporary accommodation provided by the Council in accordance with current procedures.
- q) To identify and recommend debt to be written off in circumstances where the tenant is not traceable, has become too old to legally pursue, is not cost effective to pursue, where all legal recourse has been exhausted or becomes known that the tenant is deceased.
- r) To refer homeless applicants being evicted from their temporary accommodation placement to the relevant Housing Options Officer with the full details to enable a discharge assessment to be made.

- s) To build and maintain positive relationships and communication between the Council and our temporary accommodation providers and be the main point of contact for the Council.

GENERAL DUTIES

- a) To provide cross team cover as required during times of heavy workloads, absence and sickness as appropriate
- b) To provide, in conjunction with other officers and team managers, an emergency response to large scale emergencies, evacuations and repatriations either within the Borough or back to the UK via Gatwick Airport.
- c) To carry out such other duties as the Housing Options Manager may require from time to time reasonably require.
- d) To carry out all duties in accordance with relevant legislation, Council policies, procedures and standards.
- e) To actively promote the Council's Corporate Equality Statement and demonstrate the standard of conduct which prevent discrimination taking place.
- f) To ensure full compliance with the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Council's Health and Safety Policies and Procedures and all locally agreed safe methods of work.
- g) To share the Council's commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk as outlined in the CBC Safeguarding Policy.
- h) To ensure that all duties are carried out in compliance with both environmental legislation and a commitment to the Council's Environment Policy.

Note: The duties listed are in general terms only and detailed variation in job content may be expected to occur.

Amendment Date: May 2022

Postholders Signature:

CANDIDATE SPECIFICATION

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CHARACTERISTICS	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE
<p>SKILLS/ABILITIES (Specific skills and abilities required to undertake the duties)</p>	<p>Highly organised with the ability to manage a varied and demanding workload.</p> <p>The ability apply procedures and legislation</p> <p>Highly numerate with the ability to understand and explain rent accounts to customers and their representatives</p> <p>Ability to prioritise workloads and meet deadlines</p> <p>Ability to re-prioritise and manage a variety of work streams despite changing demands and interruptions</p> <p>To consistently produce high quality work with limited supervision.</p> <p>A high level of oral and written communication skills using plain English.</p> <p>The ability to communicate professionally, clearly, firmly and respectfully with a variety of customers, colleagues stakeholders and agencies</p> <p>The ability to add value to and support the wider team</p> <p>To show initiative, respect and compassion at all times, particularly in challenging circumstances.</p> <p>Be IT confident and competent with the ability to learn new systems and maintain spreadsheets</p> <p>Ability to promote positive working relationships with other departments within the organisation.</p>	
<p>KNOWLEDGE (Particular knowledge which will be necessary to perform the work effectively e.g. of specific legislation or regulations)</p>	<p>The ability to understand and apply current Housing Legislation, Statutory Instruments, Case Law and Guidance relating to Temporary Accommodation placements to ensure the Council's compliance.</p> <p>An understanding of Equal Opportunities, Equality and Diversity and how they relate to the Housing Options Service.</p>	<p>A demonstrable understanding of current Housing Legislation, Statutory Instruments, Case Law and Guidance applicable to Temporary Accommodation.</p> <p>Knowledge of Housing Benefit and Universal Credit</p>

<p>QUALIFICATION/ TRAINING (Education/vocational qualifications and other training) <i>Verification will be required</i></p>	<p>A good standard of general education, specifically English and Maths GCSE to grade A – C (9 – 4) or equivalent</p>	<p>Some form of housing or accounts training or qualification</p>
<p>EXPERIENCE (Level and type of previous experience)</p>	<p>Significant experience of working in a customer facing role</p> <p>Experience of keeping accurate records and using multiple computerised systems to log contacts</p>	<p>Experience of working with a varied and sometimes challenging client group</p> <p>Experience of working with figures/accounts and being able to explain the details to customers in a way they understand</p> <p>Experience of applying relevant Legislation, Statutory Instruments, Case Law and Guidance to a role.</p>
<p>QUALITIES (Particular qualities necessary to carry out the works e.g. ability to work co-operatively in a team, use own initiative)</p>	<p>Demonstrate a positive attitude towards customer service</p> <p>Be self motivated but able to work under pressure</p> <p>Be able to work as part of a team and share/learn best practice, knowledge and expertise with/from colleagues</p> <p>Able to show a commitment to a high level of customer care and the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy</p> <p>Develop the ability to cope with and control confrontational situations</p> <p>Demonstrate fair, firm and consistent dealings with the public.</p> <p>Ability to work within legal, political and policy constraints and to follow internal procedures.</p> <p>Be a creative problem solver and multi-tasker</p> <p>Ability to promote positive working relationships with other departments within the organisation.</p>	
<p>SPECIAL CONDITIONS (e.g. willingness to work unsocial hours or wear a uniform)</p>	<p>Full current driving licence</p> <p>Be willing to work unsociable hours on the rare occasion where the Service is, respond to large scale emergencies, evacuations and repatriations within the borough or back to the UK via Gatwick Airport in accordance with the Council's statutory duties</p>	<p>use of a suitable vehicle</p>