

# Job Description

<b>JOB TITLE</b>	Housing Options Officer
<b>REPORTS TO</b>	Housing Options Team Leader
<b>DIRECT REPORTS</b>	n/a
<b>INDIRECT REPORTS</b>	n/a

## PURPOSE OF THE JOB ROLE

To see customers in relation to Housing issues and understand their needs, provide advice and seek solutions. To deliver an effective and efficient Housing Options, Homelessness Prevention and statutory Homelessness service in order to meet the Royal Borough's responsibility to deliver its statutory functions.

## MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Service delivery – the accountabilities for this role are linked to the following council strategic objectives:**

### Putting residents first

- To deliver first class customer service which provides the customer with a suitable solution regarding their housing issues and satisfaction is high.
- To provide advice face to face, by phone and online regarding housing options and prevention enquiries to customers in buildings used by the Royal Borough to deliver customer services.
- To conduct outreach visits at customers home, prison, hostel, hospital or other locations in-line with documented procedures including arranging and attending surgeries where set out by the Senior Management
- Ensure that housing options, other than Part VII applications, are fully explored in all cases to maximise opportunities for preventing homelessness.
- Assess homelessness applications within Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 including cases for acceptance, refusal or referral to other Authorities. Make decisions on where homeless households will be placed into temporary accommodation and advise the Housing Assistant to make arrangements for sign up and housing benefit assistance if appropriate.
- To provide expert advice and assistance to stakeholders and customers with housing problems, particularly those living in the private rented sector, and take action to prevent homelessness. The post holder will also be responsible for promoting greater understanding of the rights and obligations of tenants and landlords in the private rented sector and for increasing the knowledge of housing options and resources in the community.
- Investigate and make every effort to resolve landlord/tenants disputes, seeking to conciliate wherever possible and ensuring that all relevant parties are aware of their rights, responsibilities and remedies. It involves the gathering of evidence and preparation of prosecution files to enable the Council to prosecute successfully where appropriate.
- Achieve individual performance objectives, targets and service standards and contribute to the achievement of team plan objectives and targets.
- Manage a personal caseload and maintain accurate and detailed casework records. In addition manage priorities and meet individual and service performance targets and deadlines.

- Interview and complete housing needs assessments by exploring all options to prevent homelessness. Where all options are exhausted complete applications under the homelessness legislation.
- Update and record information accurately and timely as required according to guidance and established procedures. Ensure customer and management information is accurate and up to date at all times
- Gather evidence, including taking statements from all relevant witnesses where criminal offences of harassment and illegal eviction as defined within the Protection from Eviction Act 1977 have been committed for which the Local Authority is empowered to prosecute. Interview offenders under caution as defined within the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) and recommend suitable cases for prosecution. Ensure that all relevant documents, witness statements, exhibits and disclosures are contained within the file
- Respond to member's enquiries and draft responses to complaints/enquiries on individual cases or other areas of the post holder's work, in-line with documented procedures.
- Deliver training and awareness to stakeholders and colleagues where required
- Take part in a pre-arranged call out rota for Homeless advice and placements
- To carry out any duties as directed in line with grade

#### **Delivering value for money**

- Provision of information and advice, both verbally and in writing regarding security of tenure, rights of occupation, eligibility for benefits to maximise income and all aspects of housing to provide a comprehensive service. This requires in-depth knowledge of housing law and of a wide range of welfare benefits.
- Adhere to Council financial regulations, especially homelessness and fraud prevention.

#### **Delivering together with our partners**

- Promote effective working relationships with internal departments and external agencies, following referral procedures, protocols and processes with internal departments and external agencies.
- Conduct Open Day events and represent the Housing Options service and Customer Services on request
- Attend any meeting, including those out of hours as required to represent the Council.
- Promote a positive image of the RBWM Council, working corporately across services and supporting organisational change. Display a sense of pride and passion and a 'can do' attitude across the service to drive up customer satisfaction and improve the Council's reputation
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#### **Equipping ourselves for the future**

- Undertake ongoing professional development and actively participate in training sessions. Keep up to date with legislation, case law, best practice and council policies and procedures and initiatives and train stakeholders as appropriate.

This job description outlines the main duties and responsibilities but does not detail every task required for service delivery. You may be asked to take on additional duties at an equivalent level, on a temporary or permanent basis.

#### **GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

Standard responsibilities that apply to all council staff or specific groups are set out in the [Employee Handbook](#), these include:

- Corporate management
- Information governance compliance
- Risk management including Health & Safety
- Business continuity

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- Whistleblowing
- General Safeguarding Statement
- Project and work management
- Working in a team
- Equality of Opportunity
- Our corporate values
- Budget management
- Specific responsibilities for managers

Local operating procedures and specific activities/tasks will be supplied by the service.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

<b>Qualifications/Education/Training</b>	<p>4 GCSE's including Maths &amp; English</p> <p>Educated to A-level / NVQ Level 3 or equivalent</p> <p>HND/NVQ4 level or experience in relevant field.</p> <p>Housing Qualification attained or currently being studied</p> <p>Project management training (<b>Desirable</b>)</p> <p>NVQ2 in Customer Service (<b>Desirable</b>)</p>
<b>Experience</b>	<p>A comprehensive understanding and awareness of housing issues, and of government policy relating to homelessness.</p> <p>Vast experience of interviewing people who are under stress, emotional and/or living in unsatisfactory housing conditions.</p> <p>Proven ability to manage difficult situations remaining calm, friendly and professional</p> <p>Experience of working in partnership with local authorities or other housing providers</p> <p>Extensive experience of working in confidential situations with an understanding of when and how to share sensitive information with customers and relevant agencies.</p> <p>A high level of experience of working in a Housing Needs, Local Authority Lettings or equivalent environment</p>
<b>Skills, Abilities and Competencies</b>	<p>Excellent verbal and written communication</p> <p>Experience of analysing data and information and presenting as such in formal reports</p>
<b>Specific Working Requirements</b>	<p>Demonstrable ability to travel to sites around the Borough in an efficient manner.</p> <p>Clean Driving Licence (<b>Desirable</b>)</p> <p>Ability to drive a Council vehicle (<b>Desirable</b>)</p>

## OTHER/SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS ROLE

<b>DBS check required for this role</b>	Basic
<b>Is this role "politically restricted"?</b>	No

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**ADDITIONAL JOB DETAILS****Job Grade**

6

**Directorate**

Place

**Service Area**

Housing and Public Protection