
Recruitment information

Job description and person specification

Your title	Homelessness Prevention and Advice Officer
DBS Check	This post requires a basic disclosure check.
Post number	
Your team	Homelessness Prevention and Advice Team, Housing Services
You would be based	Elmbridge Civic Centre, High Street, Esher, Surrey KT10 9SD
Your line manager	Homelessness Prevention & Advice Team Leader



Elmbridge

Borough Council

... bridging the communities ...

About the role

- You will work to prevent homelessness wherever possible developing and keeping under review personalised housing plans as required by the Homelessness Reduction Act.
 - To maximise housing solutions, you will work collaboratively with key partners and stakeholders to provide the best prospect for a client to secure and sustain accommodation.
 - If homelessness can't be prevented, you will seek suitable housing options for clients and will undertake homelessness investigations to determine the duty owed to clients under homelessness legislation.
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The main purpose of the role:

- You will manage a caseload to prevent homelessness wherever possible, developing and keeping under review personalised Housing Plans as required by the Homelessness Reduction Act to ensure they remain relevant, motivating clients to be proactive in sustaining or seeking accommodation.
 - You will work to comply with our prevention and relief duties, issuing decision notifications, undertaking full homelessness investigation, determining the duty owed issuing decision letters in compliance with the Council's duties under the Housing Act 1996 as amended, Homelessness Reduction Act, Codes of Guidance and caselaw.
 - You will interview households who are threatened with homelessness and explain what duties may be owed to them including the provision of interim accommodation as appropriate so they are clear on the procedures that will be followed with a focus on finding housing solutions.
 - Your main aim will be to prevent homelessness where possible and to work as part of a team operating a frontline customer service including assessing applicants who approach as homeless on the day
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Specific duties and responsibilities

1. To provide a responsive service to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness following a direct approach or having received a referral from a relevant public organisation or from internal teams. To assist members of the public who are in housing need or have housing related enquiries in person, telephone, letter or email. To participate in a duty rota to provide a responsive frontline service.
2. To manage client's expectations advising as to potential housing solutions including Private and hostel accommodation and as to the lower supply of social housing compared to demand. To undertake a holistic assessment of current housing issues and seek out appropriate solutions where possible at an early stage to prevent homelessness.
3. To develop Personal Housing Plans with clients as appropriate taking into account the circumstances that led to the threat of homelessness, the housing needs of the applicant and the type of accommodation required and support needed to secure and retain accommodation.
4. To issue relevant notices in writing ensuring the reasonable steps to be taken by the client and Council are clear in respect of securing and retaining accommodation. To seek the clients' agreement to the steps to be taken and to keep this under review until the prevention duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act ends.
5. Where homelessness can't be prevented or already homeless on approach to secure interim accommodation if there is reason to believe the client has a priority need. To investigate the case taking action under relief duties to help the client to secure accommodation for a 56 - day period or to refer cases to another local authority where satisfied local connection criteria is met. To monitor relief cases ending the duty as appropriate.
6. To fully investigate homelessness applications and complete records of enquiries updating databases. To assess clients' needs completing suitability of accommodation assessments To monitor cases set to view or offer under the Search Moves Choice based lettings scheme primarily for homeless cases.
7. Where a Part 6 offer is refused, or other accommodation to meet the 6 - month duty, to encourage acceptance of the property and ensure clients receive "Right to Review" documentation as appropriate and assist the Reviewing Officer in obtain further information to complete the review as requested
8. To identify and refer cases to the Homeless Floating Support workers / services or Senior caseworker complex needs /customer service,where this will be most effective e.g. those with a history of rough sleeping or complex needs where resettlement is needed to enable rehousing by social or other housing providers..
9. To make referrals to the Mental Health or other relevant professional panels and to attend or participate in case conferences as requested
10. To keep up to date with relevant case law particularly in respect of the tests of vulnerability and priority need and with reference to responsibilities under the Equality Act and Care Acts.
11. To provide information to clients on the operation of the Council's Housing Register, advice on a household's position on the register, extending areas of choice and prospects of assistance with housing and update systems as necessary. To complete assessments on suitable accommodation for applicants to end the homeless duty and to arrange auto bidding for clients where necessary.
12. To work proactively with the Temporary Accommodation Co Ordinator to maximise housing opportunities including engaging with Councils and providers out of borough to seek

housing solutions. To work closely with Rentstart to ensure the best use of resources as well as other agencies such as Transform who have access to accommodation to best meet clients needs.

13. Under direction of the Team Leader Homelessness Prevention and Advice to respond to notifications of street homelessness in Elmbridge through No Second Night out, including notification of the outcome of action taken in cases where Rentstart may not take the lead role as appropriate.

14 To make appropriate referrals to Rentstart and liaise with them as necessary regarding any PHP's for clients. To check information received from Rentstart for cases logged by them as referrals and outcomes to ensure the data matches and advising of any discrepancy

15. To identify suitable households for the Councils Rental Support Scheme making appropriate referrals and keeping them under review obtaining or providing the team with information on clients to make the best match with property and landlords. Where the private sector offer is to end the homelessness duty to liaise with them to ensure appropriate documentation is completed.

16. To visit clients at their home or alternative venue to assist in preventing homelessness as necessary, or for housing register or support assessments. To set up auto bidding for the Council's Choice Based Lettings Scheme for eligible clients and assist in all processes associated with direct lets for clients. To work with clients seeking their engagement and adopt a "can do " problem solving approach in addressing threats of homelessness.

17. To make recommendation for the use of the Council's Prevention fund for clients to prevent homelessness or to purchase bespoke additional support for particularly complex cases.

18. To promote and contribute to effective teamworking by communicating effectively with colleagues within the Housing Unit as appropriate in a timely fashion; to include attending, contributing to team meetings, one to one and casework supervision with the Team Leader – Homelessness Prevention and Advice.

19. To promote effective multi agency working by keeping up to date with other relevant statutory and voluntary agencies; cultivating good local contacts; by assisting the team to attend regular Network meetings and generally promoting the work of the Housing Service with other agencies.

20. To be proactive about arranging and attending meetings with other agencies for the general welfare of the clients including professional meetings with housing providers. To complete nominations to housing providers including for social housing.

21. To provide a responsive frontline service being aware at all time of the Council's commitment to customer care and the Councils duties under the Equalities Act.

22. To provide information as requested to enable a response to be provided for any complaint regarding the service or to respond to Councillor or Member enquiries or for Freedom of Information Act requests or the Local Government Ombudsman.

23. A basic DBS check is required for this post

What's missing?

Our job descriptions cover as much of the role as we can possibly get down in writing, but issues will arise, and we hope and expect that you will understand that and take on-board other tasks from time-to-time, in keeping with your role of course.

Your conduct

We expect the highest standards of conduct from our employees and at all time you must carry out your duties with integrity and in accordance with the Code of Conduct for employees.

Equal opportunities

We have a strong commitment to achieving equality of opportunity and expect all employees to implement and promote our policy in their own work.

Health and safety

We are committed to a healthy and safe working environment and expect all employees to implement and promote its policy in all aspects of their work.

Personal and sensitive data

You will have regard for the duty of care owed to personal data and sensitive personal data and any other confidential or sensitive information which you access in the course of your employment ensuring adherence to the Data Protection Act and the Council's Information Security Policy and related guidance.

Talent development

We have a talent development programme that includes regular one-to-ones, mid-year reviews, end of year performance reviews and a strong and varied learning and development programme.

You will be expected to get involved in this talent programme to ensure you are performing at the highest level.

Confidentiality

We are committed to maintaining privacy of all staff and customers. We expect all staff to handle all individuals' personal information in a sensitive and professional manner. All staff are under an obligation not to gain access or attempt to gain access to information they are not authorised to have.

Person specification

Please read the details on this form carefully before you complete your Application Form. This form lists the essential requirements needed in order to do the job.

Your written application will be considered in relation to the essential knowledge, skills, abilities, education and experience required for the job and candidates will therefore be selected for interview on this basis.

Elmbridge Borough Council is committed to providing the best possible services and ensuring they are accessible to all who need them irrespective of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religious or political belief, Trade Union activity, age, disability, being male or female, married or unmarried, sexuality.

What you need to tell us on your application form:

- You will need to tell us throughout your application form and at interview how you can contribute to providing good quality services for all.
- For each of the requirements listed overleaf, you will need to explain how your skills, abilities, knowledge, education and experience make you suitable for this post.
- These may have been gained through previous employment, voluntary/community work, spare time activities, home responsibilities, training or languages spoken.
- You should also include anything else relevant to the job which you think we should know about.

We regret that we can only consider applicants who are already eligible to work in the United Kingdom

**Homelessness Prevention and Advice
Officer -**

Post No: Y00610

Team: Homelessness Prevention and Advice Hours: 36hrs per week

Salary: £28,692 -£36,192 (scp 6 – SO2)

Car Allowance: C2

Key requirements	Desirable/ essential	To be tested by: Application1 (A) Test (T) Interview (I)
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Qualifications and Education		
1	GCSE or equivalent	E A
Experience		
2	Experience of working in a frontline team in a housing, social work or health setting	E A,I
3	Experience of being able to influence and negotiate successfully	E A,I
4	Experience of making links with private sector landlords and hostels to secure accommodation and promote working relationships	D A,I
5	Experience of investigating and determining homelessness applications under the Housing Act 1996 as amended	D A,I
Knowledge, skills and abilities		
6	Strong interpersonal skills and ability to establish effective working relationships	E A,I
7	Must have good listening skills and empathise with those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness with a focus on finding solutions	E A,I
8	Able to remain calm when under pressure and deal effectively with those who present with unpredictable behaviour or complex needs	E A,I
9	Need to be focused on delivering positive outcomes and achieving work targets	E A,I
10	General understanding of the Council's duties to homeless households under the Homeless Reduction Act and undertaking assessments from Personal Housing Plans through to final decisions including where a main duty is accepted under Housing Act 1996.	E A,I A,I
11	General knowledge of social and supported housing	D A,,I
11	Must be computer literate to access and record information on clients	E A, , I
12	Excellent communication skills and able to write complex reports / letters	E
13		

Special requirements			
1 4	Must have access to a vehicle for visits and be able to visit clients in their home or other locations as appropriate to risk.	E	A,I
1 5	Must be able to work flexibly commence work at 8.45am as necessary on rota and stay beyond 5pm as necessary.	E	A,I
1 6	Must possess or pass a basic DBS check	E	i

Find out more about our housing service on our website: <https://www.elmbridge.gov.uk/housing/>

If you have any queries about the role, please contact Sue Lucking on 01372 474521 or Juliette Martin on 01372 474598