

London Borough of Tower Hamlets Job description

JOB TITLE:	Lead Professional Officer
GRADE:	H
POST NUMBER:	G013000115
DIRECTORATE:	Place
SERVICE:	Housing Options
RESPONSIBLE TO :	Lead Professional Team Principal
RESPONSIBLE FOR:	N/A
	DBS Basic / Enhanced not required This is not politically restricted
JOB SUMMARY:	<p>Lead Professionals is one of the teams responsible for the provision of the statutory homeless service at London Borough Council Tower Hamlets. For the majority of homeless clients, it is the first point of contact for those approaching the Housing Options Service.</p> <p>You will work alongside colleagues to meet the council's obligations under Housing Act 1996 as amended by Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.</p>
ROLE REQUIREMENTS:	
1.	To conduct housing options interviews with customers focussing on assessing housing needs, preventing homelessness and giving good quality advice on the housing choices available so that customers can make informed decisions
2.	To negotiate and mediate with landlords, parents and other accommodation providers to prevent homelessness and provide practical assistance to help customers remain in their accommodation, including home visits

3.	To provide good quality advice, information and assistance through face-to-face interviews, home visits, co-location, by telephone and by correspondence within a customer care framework, ensuring all deadlines are met and that customers can make informed decisions about their housing options
4.	To provide the above through a detailed knowledge of housing legislation and case law in relation to homelessness, children, immigration law, social housing sector landlord and tenant law, and family law including domestic abuse and welfare benefits and rights
5.	To confirm eligibility and that there is a reason to believe that an applicant is homeless and in priority need when determining whether accommodation is to be provided, making recommendations as to what would constitute suitable accommodation
6.	For those clients who wish to pursue an application under homeless legislation, make sufficient enquiries to determine whether a duty is owed and to write good quality and comprehensive s184 decision letters
7.	To have a good knowledge and understanding of the responsibilities of social landlords, Children's Services, YOT, Police, Probation, Social and Health Services and of local voluntary sector provision in relation to housing need, homelessness and homelessness prevention work
8.	To be the lead professional for customers by using an assessment tool to assist in exploring other support needs in relation to employment, childcare, immigration and legal advice and making supported referrals to internal and external partners using agreed protocols under the NWD programme.
9.	To assist and encourage customers to use on-line tools available to access options advice and source partner agency assistance

10.	Following assessment, to make timely referrals to the Legal and Housing Options Singles Team (HOST) teams of cases which requires in depth enquiries, analysis, support, in depth legal assistance and complex s184 decisions, providing a comprehensive referral report of customer NWD outcomes and targets to date
11.	To give basic money advice, budgeting advice and debt advice to customers using an assessment tool and liaising negotiating with partner agencies, including Housing Benefit
12.	To participate in outreach work off-site in partners' offices to give advice and assistance on housing options and homeless prevention
13.	To effectively communicate the Council's duties and policies to customers and partner organisations directly, in writing and through customer information
14.	To actively assist customers in seeking and securing accommodation in the private sector where this is identified as an affordable, suitable and viable option following assessment of customer needs
15.	Where single customer's homelessness cannot be prevented, to assess their needs to determine whether there is a supported housing need and provide interim accommodation where a reason to believe has been confirmed, if required, pending referral to the HOST complex team
16.	To inform customers about Choice Based Lettings and potential waiting times to help customers make appropriate bids through the choice based letting scheme
17.	To develop and share a comprehensive network of contacts across the public, private and voluntary sectors to improve partnership working
18.	To ensure that all contact with customers and other organisations is fully recorded and where possible confirm advice given in writing
19.	To respond to queries from customers or their approved advocates and other stakeholders – whether in person, by

	telephone, email or in writing in line with the council's standards
20.	To make recommendations to the Team Manager for use of the Homelessness Prevention Fund or other related direct financial assistance where such would prevent homelessness
21.	To undertake all duties with due regard to Health & Safety legislation, ensuring all risk assessments are undertaken, maintained and reviewed
CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITIES	
22.	Actively contribute to the council's priorities and outcomes in a way that promotes a 'one organisation' approach.
23.	Develop and maintain positive relationships with colleagues, stakeholders and communities to ensure the council and the directorate strategic priorities are effectively implemented.
24.	Promote equality among all staff and ensure that services are delivered in a non-discriminatory way, that is inclusive of all disadvantaged groups.
25.	Support organisational change and learning, following and implementing appropriate systems of self-development, communication and engagement, quality measures, monitoring and review in delivering the functions of the role.
26.	Promote sustainability, including encouraging a culture of innovation and accountability amongst all council staff.
PEOPLE	
27.	Liaise, negotiate and engage with internal partners such as other teams within the Housing Options Service, Social Services, Legal, and Housing Benefits to provide effective, joined up services for clients
28.	Liaise, negotiate and engage with partner agencies such as DWP, Criminal Justice, NHS and the third sector to provide effective, joined up services for clients
29.	Liaise, negotiate and engage with landlords and letting agents to prevent and relief homelessness

SERVICE	
30.	To contribute to the development and delivery of relevant council plans and strategies so that targets and performance requirements are met
31.	To ensure all housing options case work is clearly, appropriately and accurately documented, including data and statistical information especially for the purposes of accurate Homeless Case Level Information Collection (HCLIC) submission
PERFORMANCE	
32.	To ensure that homeless notifications are issued in accordance with the timeframes set out in legislation. This is to be achieved by efficient case management
33.	The ensure that the contents of notifications are legally compliant and in keeping with Public Law principles. This is to be achieved by keeping professional knowledge up to date
34.	To ensure that professional knowledge is kept up to date by use of resources such as legal texts and online journals as well as ensuring possession of or access to the most up-to-date Homelessness Code of Guidance
35.	To ensure that knowledge of council policies such as the Allocations Policy and the Homelessness Strategy is up to date and comprehensive. This is to be achieve by being self-apprised of the contents relevant documents and retaining up-to-date copies
36.	

OTHER CONDITIONS:

To maintain personal and professional development to meet the changing demands of the job and participate in appropriate training/development activities including the council's 'My Annual Review' scheme.

Ensure that all duties and responsibilities are discharged in accordance with the council's policies and procedures, Code of Conduct and relevant regulations and legislation.

To comply with the council's equal opportunities and diversity policies ensuring anti-discriminatory practice within the service area.

To undertake additional duties that may arise from time to time commensurate with the grade of the post.

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Person Specification for the Post of		Essential (E) or Desirable (D) (if applicable)	Method of Assessment A= Application Form T= Test I= Interview
Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of the duties owed to the homeless under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 as amended including Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the Homelessness Act 2002 • Knowledge of Landlord and Tenant Legislation, the Housing Act 1985 and 1988, the Protection from Eviction Act 1977, and knowledge of Family law and welfare benefits. • Knowledge of the strategies for preventing homelessness and the main housing options initiatives, provided by both statutory and voluntary organisations. 	<p style="text-align: center;">E</p> <p style="text-align: center;">E</p> <p style="text-align: center;">E</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">A/T</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A/T</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A/T</p>
Qualifications & Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to deliver homelessness prevention and housing option solutions with these being tailored to diverse communities and differing customer needs • The ability to work across boundaries in partnership with all housing sectors and partner agencies. • The ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing to 	<p style="text-align: center;">E</p> <p style="text-align: center;">D</p> <p style="text-align: center;">E</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">A/I</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A/I/T</p>

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	<p>an excellent standard, giving advice and information sensitively and persuasively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ability to negotiate both with homeless people and on their behalf to broker housing solutions. • Experience of working in a busy customer-oriented environment, delivering excellent customer service. • Excellent IT skills, with the ability to use a range of databases and MS Word and EXCEL to produce a wide range of letters and documents and MS Outlook to process the full range of email and diary functions. • To have an understanding of welfare benefits and have a level of numeracy sufficient to give basic money and housing advice using available tools <p>The ability to write robust s184 decision letters that challenges at review stage</p>	<p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p> <p>E</p>	<p>I</p> <p>A</p> <p>I/T</p> <p>T</p> <p>T</p>
<p>Living the TOWER Values sets out the essential behaviours required of all staff.</p>		<p>They are aligned to the organisation's five TOWER Values</p>	
<p>We work TOGETHER across boundaries and with partners to</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeks opportunities to build positive relationships with people from other teams and partners. 	<p>E</p>	<p>A</p>

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achieve the best outcomes for Tower Hamlets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shares information and engages others in a timely way to achieve the best outcomes 	E	A
We are OPEN and transparent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checks understanding, they are understood by others and explains jargon where needed. Uses effective listening and questioning techniques to understand the needs of others and act accordingly. 	E E	A A
We are WILLING to challenge, innovate and be accountable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Takes accountability for delivering own work, setting challenging goals for self. Looks for ways to continuously improve and develop within role. 	E E	A/I A
We empower each other to be EXCELLENT and go the extra mile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands the organisation's direction of travel and actively supports that in their work and interactions. Takes the initiative to improve outcomes because they can explain the difference they have made. 	E E	A A

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<p>We RESPECT all communities; they are the heart of everything we do</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively listens to customers and takes steps to making things better for customers. • Takes ownership of more complex issues, whilst keeping the customer informed. 	E	I
<p>Additional Requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to attend outreach sessions at partner agencies' offices to give housing advice and options 	E	A