London Borough of Tower Hamlets Job description

JOB TITLE:	**Housing Options Visiting Officer**
GRADE:	**Grade H**
POST NUMBER:	
DIRECTORATE:	Housing & Regeneration
SERVICE:	Housing Options
RESPONSIBLE TO:	**TBC**
RESPONSIBLE FOR:	N/A
	DBS Enhanced. **This role is not politically restricted**
JOB SUMMARY:	1. To visit applicants who are potentially homeless and their excluders where appropriate to assess their circumstances and verify homelessness. 2. To provide advice on a range of housing options available to applicants and their excluder. To prevent homelessness where appropriate and to use judgement to make timely & relevant interventions. 3. To advise excluders where applicable of available tenancy support services including income maximisation, debt and rent arrears advice, cost of living grants and Universal Credit support. 4. To verify details supplied by applicants and confirm homelessness. 5. To ensure the service provided to the customer complies with relevant legislation. 6. To update the Personalised Housing Plan with relevant changes as appropriate in liaison with the case officer.

	7. To conduct visits outside core hours when required based on the circumstances of the case.
ROLE REQUIREMENTS:	
1.	To provide a professional and effective visiting service for applicants and excluder who have approached the Council as homeless to ascertain why they are threatened with homelessness and discuss relevant options available to them. This will include immediate intervention to prevent crisis homelessness and may take place in various settings.
2.	To provide a consistent and high standard of customer service to external and internal service users, ensuring that the approach is empathetic and customer centric while maintaining confidentiality and adhering to data protection principles.
3.	To use mediation and intervene when appropriate to prevent homelessness for customers who state that they can no longer live with their excluder.
4.	To identify situations where homelessness can be prevented and to take appropriate action to prevent the applicant from becoming homeless, in collaboration with colleagues across the council as well as with external agencies.
5.	To conduct interviews with private sector landlord/ letting agents to establish the reason why notice requiring possession has been served on a customer. Negotiate with landlords and provide practical assistance in making arrangements for households to remain in their accommodation.
6.	To provide housing solutions for each customer with consideration given to the availability of accommodation within the private rented sector, accessing accommodation through Homeseekers and also considering a homeless at home application form each customer.
7.	To advise applicants on the full range of housing options appropriate to their circumstances including alternative ways of solving their housing problem.
8.	To explain clearly the relevant legislation, legislative requirements and procedures to service users.
9.	To keep informed of legislative and procedural changes affecting Housing Options & Homelessness Services for people experiencing homelessness or in housing need.

10.	To produce effective and timely written visit reports and keep all records accurate and up to date.
11.	To report on and meet targets and standards set by the organisation.
12.	To work co-operatively and effectively with colleagues within Tower Hamlets Borough Council, external stakeholders, the third sector and other statutory agencies.
13.	To deal with all correspondence, enquiries and complaints within the prescribed timescale and in accordance with the prescribed procedure.
14.	To liaise with Adult and Children's services on all safeguarding issues.
15.	To have knowledge of Part 7 Housing Act 1996, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the Protection from Eviction Act 1977, Housing Act 1988, Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and Equality Act 2010 also knowledge of the provisions of the Homelessness Code of Guidance.
16.	To be innovative, dynamic and solutions focussed to prevent the customer from becoming homeless and explore all housing options to prevent the customers from becoming homeless.
17.	To adhere to the Council's Health and Safety policy, with particular reference to the requirements relating to staff in a customer facing role. To report any incidents via an Accident & Incident Report (AIR) form.
18.	To demonstrate robustness and resilience when dealing with challenging cases.
CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITIES	
19.	To actively contribute to the council's priorities and outcomes in a way that promotes a 'one organisation' approach.
20.	To develop and maintain positive relationships with colleagues, stakeholders and communities to ensure the council and the directorate strategic priorities are effectively implemented.
21.	To promote equality among all staff and ensure that services are delivered in a non-discriminatory way and inclusive of all disadvantaged groups.
22.	To 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.
23.	To promote sustainability, including encouraging a culture of innovation and accountability amongst all council staff.
PEOPLE	
24.	To liaise, investigate, negotiate and engage with hosts (family & friends), landlords and others who are removing the right to occupation to verify homelessness and to try to prevent homelessness.
25.	To provide feedback to officers and managers in respect of the outcome of visits using visit reports or other appropriate means.
26.	To refer any safeguarding concerns to Adult & Children's Services (whichever is appropriate).
SERVICE	
27.	To contribute to the development and delivery of relevant council plans and strategies so that targets and performance requirements are met.
28.	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	
29.	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
30.	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

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 commensurate with the grade of the post.

Person Specification for the Post of		Essential (E) or Desirable (D) (if applicable)	Method of Assessment A= Application Form T= Test I= Interview
Knowledge	Knowledge of relevant legislation including amendments and caselaw. Housing Act 1996 as amended including Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, Protection from Eviction Act 1977, Housing Act 1988, Domestic Abuse Act 2021 & Equality Act 2010.	E	I/A
	Knowledge & understanding of current issues in housing.	E	I/A
	Awareness of risk assessment and Health and Safety requirements relating to working with service users outside the office	E	I/A
Qualifications & Experience	Experience of liaising with a variety of stakeholders.	E	I/A
	Experience of investigative work.	E	I/A
	Ability to communicate effectively with colleagues, managers, external agencies and the public both verbally and in writing.	E	I/A

	Ability to work effectively and even-handedly with people from diverse backgrounds and circumstances.	E	I/A
	Ability to gain, and retain, the confidence and respect of staff, service users and other contacts.	E	I/A
	Ability to gather, analyse and interpret information and exercise judgement.	E	I/A
	Ability to work independently including the planning and organisation of own workload to achieve targets and meet tight deadlines.	E	I/A
	Ability to identify gaps in current service provision and to liaise with senior officers and external agencies to address these.	E	I/A
	Literacy and numeracy to a level that will enable the post holder to analyse and interpret information, produce reports and correspondence and to maintain administrative records.	E	I/A
Living the TOWER Values sets out the essential behaviours required of all staff.			
We work **TOGETHER** across boundaries and	Seeks opportunities to build positive relationships with people from other teams and partners.	E	I/A

with partners to achieve the best outcomes for Tower Hamlets	Shares information and engages others in a timely way to achieve the best outcomes.	E	I/A
We are **OPEN** and transparent.	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	I/A I/A
We are **WILLING** to challenge, innovate and be accountable.	Takes accountability for delivering own work, setting challenging goals for self. Looks for ways to continuously improve and develop within role.	E E	I/A I/A
We empower each other to be **EXCELLENT** and go the extra mile	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	I/A I/A
We **RESPECT** all communities; they are the heart of	Actively listens to customers and takes steps to making things better for customers.	E	I/A

everything we do.	Takes ownership of more complex issues, whilst keeping the customer informed.	E	I/A

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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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