
Recruitment information

Job description and person specification

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| Your title | Team Leader Homelessness Prevention and Advice 1-year fixed term contract |
| DBS Check | This post requires a basic disclosure check. |
| Post number | None |
| 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 | Housing Options Manager |



Elmbridge
Borough Council

... bridging the communities ...



About the role

- You will manage a small team who work to prevent homelessness wherever possible. You will provide support, direction, and supervision as necessary to ensure that the Council meets its legal duties under homelessness legislation to those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and the achievement of targets.
- You will work collaboratively with key partners and stakeholders to provide the best prospect for homeless applicants to secure and sustain accommodation.
- You work with other Team Leaders in the Housing Options Unit to ensure customer service delivery and will give advice on complex cases as needed and act as a Reviewing Officer for homeless decisions including for the final duty owed as necessary.
- You will work closely with other Teams Leaders in the Unit to seek the best housing solutions for applicants and the most suitable admissions into available temporary accommodation providing summaries on cases as necessary.

The main purpose of the role:

1. To manage and co-ordinate the Homelessness Prevention and Advice Team, providing information on housing options preventing or delaying homelessness wherever possible. To ensure compliance with the Council's duties under the terms of the Housing Act 1996 as amended, the Homeless Reduction Act and associated legislation, Code of Guidance, Regulations, and case law.
2. To ensure a responsive Housing service is always maintained with enquiries resolved on a duty basis or by planned appointment. To receive referrals from outside agencies and ensure appropriate action is taken having regard to the Council's commitment to customer care.
3. To manage, support and direct the Homelessness Prevention and Advice Team across all areas of responsibility, motivating the team, assessing training needs and undertaking performance appraisals as necessary, dealing with any performance or attendance problems in accordance with the Council's Policy.
4. To be part of the Housing Options Management team working to improve and expand the range of advice, information and housing options for all applicants, maximising housing solutions for applicants preventing homelessness, attending regular meetings to ensure operational efficiency to meet service objectives. To deputise for the Housing Options Manager as directed.

Specific duties and responsibilities

1. To manage the work of officers within the team ensuring a responsive service is maintained with enquiries being resolved on the day or by planned appointment. Where applicants display challenging behaviour in the reception / interview area, you will work with the Senior caseworker (Customer Service and Complex needs) and liaise with Team Leaders within the Housing Options

Unit as necessary, so the situation is managed effectively. To provide support and direction where a customer requests to see a manager, interviewing as necessary.

2.To monitor officers comply with prevention duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act and quality relevant personal housing plans are completed, monitored, and amended as necessary and end appropriately with correct notification.

3. To establish and maintain effective processes to receive referrals from public bodies of households threatened with homelessness and check that appropriate action is taken. To ensure Pathway plans are completed for individuals falling within relevant groups.

4. To be the reviewing officer for any request under Rights to Review issuing review decisions referring to the Housing Options Manager for advice as necessary. To offer advice and guidance to officers where an applicant does not agree with the Personal Housing Plan and reasonable steps required of them.

5. To ensure the Council meets its relief duties with early referrals being made to other housing authorities where a local connection exists. To monitor cases during the relief period of 56 days to check officers have taken appropriate actions. Where a homeless application is taken to ensure quality S184 decisions are made and where an applicant does not have a priority need to ensure notices are issued ending the duty, with termination dates for temporary accommodation being set as necessary.

6. To carry out regular casework supervision to include when a homeless application should be taken, maintenance of casework standards, appropriate recommendations / decisions, and provision of temporary accommodation. To authorise temporary accommodation placements, removal, and storage where households are unable to protect their goods.

7. To monitor the number of households in temporary accommodation to keep numbers as low as possible and ensure that move on arrangements are made liaising closely with the Temporary Accommodation Co Ordinator and Team Leaders of the Private Rented Sector and Temporary Accommodation Team and Social and Supported Housing Team, working collaboratively with them to secure or develop housing opportunities to best meet applicants' needs.

8. To carry out routine checks to be satisfied band B for prevention/homelessness cases is awarded appropriately and identify cases for direct lets ensuring for all homeless cases suitability assessments are completed and auto bidding is correctly set up.

9.To assess and reach decisions on complex cases or as directed by the Housing Options Manager. To carry a caseload as necessary, To discuss supported and settled accommodation needs so officers work to develop housing opportunities in a unified way to best meet needs. To regularly liaise with the Team Leader of the other Homelessness Prevention and Advice Team in the unit so as to ensure maintenance of common standards.

10.To undertake assessment and make recommendations to the Housing Options Manager for applicants to be awarded a payment from the Prevention Fund or other relevant funding opportunities that may arise to prevent homelessness. To authorise invoices as necessary taking action where there is any discrepancy.

11. To support officers in the Private Sector and Temporary Accommodation team to achieve the maximum income recovery rates for their clients including for Housing Benefit and ineligible payments the client must pay directly.

12.To collate and maintain management reports and statistics for the service area participating in the development of electronic data records management, ensuring completion of Hcllc ,other homeless returns or other statutory returns and internal management information. To complete and send off returns within target times, notifying the Housing Options Manager of any operational concerns / trends.

13. To develop expand and update web access and content, maintaining publications for the service, updating the content of the online Housing Advice tool and participate in developing use of the Councils computer systems to ensure operational efficiency in conjunction with the Senior caseworker (Customer Service and Complex needs).
14. To represent the Council at case conferences as requested. To prepare affidavits and to testify in legal hearings as necessary liaising with Legal Services. To attend external meetings such as MARAC
15. To assist in the formulation, preparation of guidance manuals, reports and strategies and their review as relevant to the service area to include involvement in consultation processes with stakeholders. To attend Homeless Network meetings and pro-actively engage with agencies to advise and promote the service.
16. To ensure the Council responds appropriately to reports of street homelessness from Street link or other agencies. To work closely with Rentstart regarding referrals and outcomes to them for assistance with housing. To develop new ways of working with Rentstart more generally in the provision of housing assistance and advice in the context of the Homelessness Reduction Act.
17. To develop and maintain good working relationships with local hostels and advice agencies such as CAB and domestic abuse outreach services to prevent homelessness and to secure temporary accommodation.
18. To respond to members enquires, complaints as requested and to assist in the preparation of any reports for the Local Government Ombudsman. To respond to Freedom of information Act requests.
19. To participate in case conferences with other statutory agencies as required. To liaise with such agencies regarding joint working representing the service at a range of formal and informal meetings.
20. To make recommendations to the Housing Options Manager for change where this is considered necessary to improve the operational efficiency of the team in meeting objectives or to comply with changes in legislation.
21. To work with the Housing Options Manager and other Team Leaders within the Unit specifically to develop processes and procedures to enable the service to work effectively and in full compliance of its legal duties.

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 Team Post No: new 1-year fixed term contract

Team Leader

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

Salary: £43,482 - £49,132

Car Allowance: C3

| 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 and manage change | E | A, I |
| 4 | Experience of investigating and determining homelessness applications within Housing Act 1996 as amended, Homelessness Reduction Act | E | A ,I |
| 5 | Experience of undertaking housing needs assessments. | D | A,I |
| 6 | Effective management and motivation of staff in a pressurised work environment | E | A I |
| 7 | Experience of dealing with statistical data, its collection and interpretation. | E | A I |
| Knowledge, skills and abilities | | | |
| 8 | Strong interpersonal and negotiation skills with the ability to establish effective working relationships with partners and clients. | E | A ,I |
| 9 | Must be able to remain calm when under pressure and deal effectively with those who present with unpredictable behaviour or complex needs. | E | A ,I |
| 10 | Good general understanding of the Council's duties to homeless households under the Housing Act 1996 as amended including where a main duty is accepted and duties under the Homeless Reduction Act | E | A ,I, T |

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|-----------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|---------|
| 11 | Knowledge of access to social housing and supported housing | D | A, I |
| 12 | Methodical approach to tasks and prioritising effectively. Delivering projects or tasks with the minimum of supervision. | E | A, I |
| 13 | Must be computer literate able to use a range of IT packages to access and record information on clients, and test for / suggest enhancements. | E | A, I, T |
| 14 | Excellent communication skills and able to write reports / letters. | E | A,I, T |
| 15. | Must be committed to finding housing solutions for people | E | A, I |
| Special requirements | | | |
| 16 | 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 |
| 17 | Must be able to work flexibly and commence work at 8.45 and work beyond 5pm as necessary. | E | A,I |
| 18 | Be able to pass Basic DBS check | E | A, I |