

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

JOB DESCRIPTION

Designation: Accommodation Assessment & Lettings Officer Grade: SO2
Reports to Accommodation Assessment & Lettings Team leader Grade: PO3
(Designation): Grade: PO3
Directorate: Housing, Regeneration and Public Realm **Division:** Housing Needs & Refugee Services

Main Purpose of the job:

- To arrange emergency, temporary accommodation placements and make appropriate referrals into supported accommodation, ensuring all placements and referrals are carried out in a timely manner, making the best use of all available housing stock at all times.
- To make offers of properties in line with Housing legislation and make robust decisions to discharge duty where necessary that will withstand legal scrutiny.
- Arrange emergency accommodation on behalf of other Council services, including Children's Social Services and Adult Social Care as and when required
- Co-ordinate available properties in the private rented sector and in conjunction with Housing Caseworkers, identify highest priority households to be put forward for Direct Lets to prevent and relieve homelessness.
- To ensure high quality offers, suitability and discharge of duty decisions are made in a timely manner relating to offers of properties (temporary accommodation & private rented properties)
- To work proactively to find an appropriate housing solution to bring the Council's 'relief'/ full housing duty to an end
- Ensure compliance with relevant legislation and guidelines so that accommodation is allocated based on need and all offers of accommodation are suitable
- Proactively contribute to the council's action plan to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation by monitoring and maximising move on opportunities from temporary accommodation and supported housing.
- Ensure accurate records are maintained of those in all types of emergency, temporary and supported housing, maintaining statistical information for local and central government statistical returns.

Summary of Responsibilities and Personal Duties:

1. Maintain an accurate record of available properties and promote the timely and efficient turnaround of void properties through adherence to the voids procedure
2. To proactively assist to move clients from temporary accommodation who are suitable for move-on to other accommodation via the housing register and where necessary completion

of income and expenditure assessments to determine affordability and minimize costs to the business

3. To liaise and maintain excellent relationships with the wider Housing Needs and Refugee Services Group for the proactive management of the temporary accommodation portfolio and use it to secure accommodation options for clients
4. To identify cases of fraud and misrepresentation and ensure appropriate legal action can be taken
5. Assess medical information and make appropriate referrals to the Council's Housing Medical Adviser, communicating the outcomes of medical assessments to applicants in a clear and timely manner.
6. To pre-allocate/let all temporary and permanent accommodation within deadlines ensuring re-let times are minimized.
7. To be responsible for allocating shared and self-contained Nightly Paid accommodation to meet daily demand from Council services using the procurement hub. Signing up tenants for Nightly Paid accommodation including completion/advice of appropriate Housing Benefit forms, issuing rent cards, tenant 'Code of Conduct', tenants removals/storage and accurately setting the account up on academy
8. To ensure rent accounts are set up for each placement and assist to monitor rent accounts and maximise income by ensuring that caseworkers submit Housing Benefit claims at the point of sign up, ensuring any void temporary accommodation is minimised.
9. To ensure that clients are moved on from nightly paid accommodation to hostels/PSLs as soon as possible and that the 'six week' target for pregnant or families with children is met
10. To manage and maintain accurate records of budget and spend
11. To monitor, report and prepare regular timely statistical information
12. To respond to correspondence and complaints within corporate targets
13. To ensure continuous improvement of both local and departmental systems and to keep up to date with both changes within the department and legislation
14. To lead and participate in projects within the service and report back including written reports and presentations
15. To train all new and existing staff and partner landlord staff on systems and housing services
16. To support the Accommodation Assessment & Lettings Team Leader and Managers across the service in the delivery of the service.
17. To co-ordinate the allocation of available private rented properties, ensure suitable applicants are identified in a timely manner to best meet housing need and bring homelessness duties to an end.
18. To identify when accommodation duties have ended and oversee discharge of duty, this includes drafting robust decision letters

19. Ensuring referrals are made to other agencies as part of the discharge process as necessary e.g. MASH.
20. To receive requests for move on accommodation from supported housing providers and facilitate the most appropriate move on option, once assessed, in a timely manner so that supported housing is always occupied by those that need it the most.
21. To co-ordinate moves out of emergency and temporary accommodation in a timely manner, for example, when leased properties are being handed back, or temporary accommodation is being redeveloped.
22. To utilise multiple ICT systems to check, record and maintain concise, accurate and evidence based records and statistical data, working closely with accommodation providers and Casework Tracking and Improvement Analysts, to ensure information is up to date.
23. To adhere to policies and procedures relating to the Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults.

Internal Contacts: These include officers from across the Housing Services Division, Housing Benefits, Children and Young People's Directorate and other departmental officers as relevant to the work being carried out.

External Contacts: This will include Customers, Advocates, partner Landlords, and other relevant Third Parties as relevant to the work being carried out.

To carry out the duties of the post with due regard to the Council's relevant codes and procedures.

All employees are required to participate in the Performance Evaluation Scheme (PES) and to undertake appropriate training and development identified to enhance their work.

Undertake other duties, commensurate with the grade, as may reasonably be required.

Consideration will be given to restructuring the duties of this post for a disabled postholder

**THIS JOB DESCRIPTION MAY NEED TO BE AMENDED BY THE DIRECTORATE TO MEET
THE CHANGING NEEDS OF THE SERVICE.**

Number of fully managed staff: **0**

| Title: | Grade | No of posts |
|--------|-------|-------------|
|--------|-------|-------------|

Number of partially managed staff: **0**

| | | |
|--------|-------|-------------|
| Title: | Grade | No of posts |
|--------|-------|-------------|

PERSON SPECIFICATION

JOB TITLE: Accommodation Assessment & Lettings Officer
DEPARTMENT: Housing Regeneration and Public Realm

POST NO:
GRADE: SO2

Note to Candidates

The Person Specification is a picture of the skills, knowledge and experience needed to carry out the job. It has been used to draw up the advert and will also be used in the shortlisting and interview process for this post.

Those categories marked 'S' will be used especially for the purpose of shortlisting.

Please ensure that Equality and Diversity issues are addressed specifically in relation to the role for which you are applying when addressing the requirements of this person specification where appropriate.

If you are a disabled person, but are unable to meet some of the job requirements specifically because of your disability, please address this in your application. If you meet all the other criteria you will be shortlisted and we will explore jointly with you if there are ways in which the job can be changed to enable you to meet the requirements.

Equality & Diversity

Awareness of and a commitment to Equality of Access and Opportunity in a diverse community S

Understanding of how equality and diversity relates to this post S

Knowledge

Excellent knowledge and detailed understanding of Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and other relevant housing and homelessness legislation, case law and guidance S

Knowledge of Landlord and Tenant Legislation, the Housing Act 1985 and Protection from Eviction Act 1977 S

Suitability and affordability assessments for accommodation provided under homelessness provisions S

Up to date knowledge of the welfare benefit system and its application- S

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System

Good knowledge of the management of voids and lettings practices

Comprehensive understanding of the needs of vulnerable people and how their needs can be met, including their social, emotional and wellbeing needs- S

Aptitude

Ability to maintain databases and work effectively with IT systems S

Aptitude for working creatively and acting on own initiative.

Committed to continuous service improvement

Ability to prioritise competing demands in a pressurised environment, recognize service priorities and manage a high workload within agreed targets.

Ability to meet performance targets and deliver positive outcomes.

Ability to liaise with professional staff from across the Council and with partners

Ability to take a proactive role in reviewing and developing working practices in order to continually improve service delivery.

Aptitude for utilising new technology to help develop the service.

Skills

(Skills can only be used as shortlisting criteria if the skill is to be tested)
(To Be Tested – S)

Excellent prioritisation and problem solving skills

Excellent customer care skills

Excellent negotiating and influencing skills

Excellent oral and written communication skills with the ability to understand and explain both local policies and statutory legislation S

Experience

Experience of working in a customer demand led business in the public or private sector S

Experience of dealing sensitively with distressed or challenging customers/service users S

Experience of working with landlords and managing agents to access void properties and to refer clients S

Experience of administrative systems and office work S

Experience of responding to correspondence and resolving complaints S

Effectively programming/prioritising/planning own workload

Experience of achieving performance targets and meeting departmental performance objectives

Self-motivated and able to work with a caseload to achieve targets and continuous improvement S

To think flexibly and broadly, approaching situations from many perspectives S

General Education

Good standard of education to include Maths and English GCSE Grade C and above or equivalent experience.

Personal Qualities

To be personable and presentable

Organised and target driven

S

Able to set and maintain the highest standards in professional relationships and behavior with customers, colleagues and other external contacts

S

Commitment to high levels of attendance and punctuality

Flexible and proactive, with a commercially-minded approach to developing services and sustaining relationships with landlords

S

Willingness to undertake home visits which are effective and take into account health and safety requirements.

High standard of integrity

Ability to remain calm when working under pressure

Circumstances

Flexible approach to working hours, able to attend meetings outside normal office hours (including evenings) and to work reasonable additional hours as required.

DBS Disclosure Required? No Basic x Enhanced

(Tick as appropriate – guidance available from your HR Advisor)

Physical

Generally candidates must meet the standard Lewisham requirements for the post