

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

JOB DESCRIPTION

Designation:	Empty Homes Officer	Grade:	PO3
Reports to (Designation):	Housing Improvement and Assistance Manager	Grade:	PO5
Directorate:	Housing Regeneration and Public Realm	Section:	Private Sector Housing Agency

Main Purpose of the job:

To lead and drive forward the Council's Empty Property Strategy, including the use of Empty Dwelling Management and Compulsory Purchase Orders where appropriate.

To act as the Council's organisational expert and be responsible for delivering the empty homes service by promoting the Council's powers to tackle long term empty property, giving advice to landlords and home owners to bring properties back in to use to alleviate housing need.

To support the delivery of assistance to owners (grant and loans where appropriate) to enable properties to reach decent homes standards and restore them to full use.

Summary of Responsibilities and Personal Duties:

1. Undertake all duties associated with tackling empty homes in the private sector in accordance with the relevant policies and procedures, council standing orders and financial regulations.
2. Provide high quality, confidential and trustworthy customer focused services and relevant advice to home owners, landlords, commercial premises, tenants and lettings agencies; including ensuring they are aware of their legal responsibilities.
3. Identify potential EDMO candidate properties by visiting and inspecting vacant dwellings. Investigate potential EDMO applications to the Residential Property Tribunal and carry out all processes to ensure compliance with interim or final EDMOs. Ensure statutory and council deadlines are met.
4. Maintain an up-to-date accurate register of long term empty properties from across the borough. Maintain detailed records of all live and historic caseload and make use of new technology and specialised equipment.
5. Provide detailed reports, statistics and performance information as required.
6. Prepare statements of evidence and associated documentation and attend First Tier (property) tribunal hearings, public enquiries, court hearings to present witness evidence on behalf of the Council. Defend appeals etc.
7. Promote and market the key private sector schemes offered to landlords, lettings agents and other external partners and proactively promote the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme ensuring a full understanding of the scheme and its benefits.

8. Provide expert advice to customers on empty homes and appropriate solutions and enforcement regimes employing a commercially focused approach which recognises business needs and minimises risk.
9. Negotiate arrangements with property owners to bring property back into use and monitor arrangements through to completion.
10. Carry out specialist research projects and make recommendations on appropriate courses of action.
11. Work in partnership with a wide range of officers from across the council (Housing Needs, Planning, Legal, Economic Development, Trading Standards, Environmental Health) and externally (Police, LFB, SELPH, Empty Homes Agency, LACORs, Empty Property Practitioners Associations) to provide the best opportunities for making the best use of the stock for the residents and the council.
12. Maintain detailed up-to-date knowledge and play an active role in the development and review of strategies, procedures, policies, working practices in response to changes in legislation, codes of practice, case law, Residential Property Tribunal decisions, statutory and non-statutory guidance, best practice identified by other departments or organisations etc in relation to regulation and enforcement in the private sector.
13. Attend and participate in member briefings, committees, working parties and inter-agency meetings as required.
14. Work flexibly as part of a team to ensure individual and team targets are met. Provide advice, support and training to others.
15. Contribute to service innovation to continually improve outcomes for the residents of the borough using high levels of discretion to gain optimal results
16. Contribute to and ensure compliance with Health and Safety legislation and in particular assessment of risks for clients, working methods and derelict premises
17. Carry out all tasks with due regard to the Councils policies and procedures with particular regard to the Equal Opportunities Policy.

Internal Contacts: These include officers within the unit, technical, professional and administrative staff across the council and Council Members.

External Contacts: This will include owner occupiers and their families, landlords, registered providers, charities, agents, land registry, commercial, contractors, MPs, officers in other areas such as SELHP, Central and Local Government, utilities, Fire Service, Met Police and professional bodies such as CIEH, CIH, ALEHM, HSE, LACORS.

Duties are to be carried out 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 post holder

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

Number of fully managed staff: - None

Title:	Grade	No of posts
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Number of partially managed staff: - None

Title:	Grade	No of posts
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PERSON SPECIFICATION

JOB TITLE: Empty Homes Officer

POST NO:

DEPARTMENT: Housing Services

GRADE: PO3

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 short listing and interview process for this post.

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

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

Detailed knowledge and understanding of the legislation, codes of practice and other statutory and non-statutory guidance relating to housing and empty homes issues

S

Extensive knowledge of the housing market and its effects on empty property

S

Knowledge of homelessness prevention and housing options

S

Aptitude

Ability to problem solve

Ability to use high levels of discretion to make complex decisions

Ability to use initiative with minimal supervision to effectively manage and organise own workload

Ability to communicate, negotiate, influence, motivate

Aptitude for working with databases, IT and monitoring systems

Skills

(Skills can only be used as short listing criteria if the skill is to be tested)

(To

Be Tested – S)

Excellent verbal, written communication skills

Analytical skills

Numeracy and literacy skills

Presentation skills

Report writing skills

Negotiation skills

Experience

Substantial experience relating to the improvement of housing conditions relating to empty homes, including financial, legal and technical

S

Experience of setting and meeting demanding targets

S

Experience of successfully negotiating with relevant parties on complex matters	S
Experience on working in homelessness prevention	S

General Education – evidence of relevant qualifications to be produced at interview	
Certificate of competency in performing HHSRS assessments and hazard identification	S

Personal Qualities

Passionate about customer care and improving housing conditions
Excellent communicator, personable and empathetic to the needs of customers
Excellent and flexible team worker
Solution focused mindset
Goes the extra mile

Circumstances

Must be able to travel throughout the borough to carry out the functions of the post
May need to work outside normal office hours to get the job done

DBS Disclosure Required?	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Basic	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enhanced	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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(Tick as appropriate – guidance available from your HR Advisor)

Physical

Generally candidates must meet the standard Lewisham requirements for the post