

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

JOB DESCRIPTION

Designation:	Housing Reviews and Complaints Team Leader	Grade: PO4
Reports to (Designation):	Homelessness Prevention & Assessment Service Manager	Grade: SMG1
Directorate:	Housing Regeneration & Public Realm	Division: Housing Services

Main Purpose of the job:

The role will include management of the Reviews Coordinators to ensure that the Council fulfils its legal obligations. This will also include leading on any threats of Judicial Reviews received and coordinating and supporting other Managers in resolving issues and liaising with the Legal team to ensure that the Council's interest is protected at all times.

This will include working professionally with service users, their representatives and other agencies involved with Reviews and Appeals. To ensure that the Housing Reviews and Complaints Team provides an effective, professional Review and Appeal service on behalf of the Homelessness Prevention and Assessment Service.

To co-ordinate and integrate the homelessness reviews process for the benefit of customers, promoting channel shift and electronic case management to promote greater efficiency of service delivery.

To manage the Housing Casework Officer and ensure efficient and timely responses to complaints and enquiries from customers, Councillors and MPs, taking steps to resolve service issues at the earliest opportunity.

To provide professional advice to Councillors and other officers on relevant areas of service delivery. To support the training programme and ensure that all processes and decisions comply with legislation, case law, and national and local policy and procedures.

Identify systemic issues using root causes analysis where required and review processes and procedures to ensure actions taken are consistent with desired outcomes. Take proactive actions to resolve issues arising from within the team or other business areas.

Summary of Responsibilities and Personal Duties:

MANAGEMENT ROLES & EXPECTATIONS

As a Team Leader/Manager you will:

1. Adapt the planned delivery of services to ensure changing community and customer needs.
2. Monitor and review service outcomes ensuring effective delivery of personal and team objectives.

3. Ensure the continuous improvement in services using creative and informative inventions as well as effective performance and quality management.
4. Plan, deploy and co-ordinate people resources to meet changing operational needs.
5. Ensure services meet statutory and identified organisational standards and regulations.
6. Ensure an understanding of the impact of your service on other functions.

To effectively manage the legal budget and minimise court action where possible in relation to Housing Act Appeals and Judicial Reviews.

7. To conduct reviews on cases where the original decision has been completed by one of the Housing Needs Managers as an officer senior in rank or in cases of particular complexity, legal or political scrutiny.
8. To represent the Council in Court as and when required.
 1. Ensure an understanding of the impact of your service on other functions
 2. To effectively recruit, induct and train staff, undertake regular supervisions and set and monitor objectives; ensure annual performance development appraisals are completed alongside learning and development plans and any performance and HR issues are dealt with as they arise.
 3. To be responsible for leading and motivating the team on a day to day basis to deliver a high quality, professional and customer centric service to internal and external customers; provide and/or facilitate coaching and mentoring and effectively address poor behaviours and poor performance.
 4. To promote a philosophy of putting customer needs first at every opportunity and to put in place arrangements to action this.
 5. To oppose and where possible eradicate all forms of discrimination, making a positive contribution to managing diversity, both as an employer and service provider.
 6. To raise performance in the team by contributing to a culture of continuous improvement.
 7. To be responsible for allocating reviews to the Reviews Coordinators.
 8. The post holder will require detailed knowledge of the Housing Act 1996 and subsequent amendments including the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. There will need to be an understanding of how the Children Act 1989, the Care Act 2014, and all relevant housing and immigration legislation link into the Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
 9. Maintain up to date knowledge of all relevant homelessness and housing legislations, developments and case law. Interpret the legislation, providing advice to managers in order to develop and improve compliance within the business unit. Taking an active role in the team's achievement of the quality standards agreed by the department.
10. Provide responses to Stage 2/3 and Ombudsman investigations and ensure that the Council's position is protected and any learning embedded in the service.

11. To manage the service in a way that achieves strong performance and continuous improvement in the following broad areas (the list below is not exhaustive):

- Ensure all statutory decisions by the service are robust and in line with legislation
- To provide the Housing Solutions Service with feedback from the Review and Appeals process in order to improve the quality of casework decisions and reduce the number of reviews and appeals.
 - Ensure all decisions are in line with legislative timeframes
 - Continue to support customers to prevent and relieve their homelessness as and when necessary
 - Ensure customers' circumstances are assessed as and when their needs change and that the property continues to be affordable and suitable
 - Improve and maintain satisfaction of customers
 - Reducing the Council's expenditure in relation to Appeals arising from decisions made in the service
 - To ensure that the statutory decisions are able to withstand, political, media and legal scrutiny.
 - To ensure that all work is carried out in accordance with the current relevant legislation, and any central governments or Lewisham policies, procedures and performance measures
 - Supporting customers to maintain accommodation independently by referring any cases to support agencies or the resettlement team where appropriate
 - Minimising avoidable or inappropriate use of long term statutory support services'
 - Maximise social inclusion, community cohesion and reduce social isolation
 - Ensure the team provide assistance to the rest of the service and when required e.g. training and updated in response to new case law and change in legislation
 - To work in partnership with the Council's Legal Services; providing instructions, attending case conferences on legal challenges, and attending the supreme court, high court, appeal court and county court with legal services.
 - To put the required framework in place to ensure that the service is delivered efficiently, effectively, maintains high levels of customer satisfaction and continually improves.
 - To ensure that the Council's vision, values and strategic aims are focused on making a real and positive difference for customers, homes and local communities
 - This is a specialist role that will be at the forefront of ensuring the work in preventing and relieving homelessness in the borough is lawful and effective.
 - Ensure that the number of complaints are reduced as a result of service improvements
 - An ability to empathise with customer, understand their situation whilst remaining aware of the business needs
 - Monitor and manage caseloads to meet service levels

12. To take responsibility of updating any processes/ templates used within the Homelessness Prevention & Refugee Services with direction from the Service Group Managers or Heads of Services in line with case law/ legislative changes.

13. To identify cases of fraud and misrepresentation and ensure appropriate legal action can be taken

14. To provide effective and timely responses to complaints and enquiries from customers, Councillors and MPs, taking steps to resolve service issues at the earliest opportunity. To provide professional advice to Councillors and other officers on relevant areas of service delivery, ensuring compliance with the Council's standing orders

15. To develop and maintain systems, making efficient and effective use of ICT to ensure that appropriate management information is provided and made accessible to senior management and commissioners, submitting periodic performance returns as required. To adhere to General Data Protection requirements at all times when collecting, recording and handling personal data
16. Engage and support any statutory review process relating to allocations or a discharge of duty resulting from an offer of a property made by the team and to ensure that offers are compliant.
17. To adhere to policies and procedures relating to the Safeguarding of Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults
18. To monitor and ensure measures are in place and to take proactive steps to improve performance and contribute to the achievement of all the Council's priorities.
19. To ensure the team carries out holistic assessments, providing appropriate, timely and proactive support to those in need, devising and managing personalised housing and support plans.

Internal Contacts: These include officers from across the Housing Services Division, officers from across the Council eg Housing Benefits, Strategic Development, Childrens Young People Directorate, Corporate Procurement Team

External Contacts: This will include Lewisham Homes and other Registered Providers, Landlords, Landlord Agents, Capital Letters, Police, Advocates.

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: up to 8

Title:	Grade:	No of posts:
Reviews Coordinator	PO2	2
Housing Casework Officer	SO1	1
Housing Casework Apprentice	AP78	1

Number of partially managed staff: None

Title:	Grade	No of posts

PERSON SPECIFICATION

JOB TITLE: Housing Reviews & Complaints Team Leader

POST NO:

DEPARTMENT: Housing, Regeneration and Public Realm

GRADE: PO4

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

Comprehensive knowledge and experience of homelessness decision making, accommodation duties and statutory reviews within a local authority setting

A good understanding of budgetary control **S**

Working knowledge health & safety legislation in the workplace **S**

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 Aptitude for working creatively and acting on own initiative.

Ability to identify business risks at an early stage, alerting appropriate managers and developing possible solutions.

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 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.

Able to prepare and present reports and to analyse statistical information

Skills

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

Strong interpersonal skills to effectively communicate verbally and in writing and build trust mutually respectful relationships with a range of audiences, including Councillors, residents, stakeholders and commissioners, including the ability to write clear and concise reports.

Strong negotiation, advocacy and influential skills to effectively implement system change, imbed new and complex initiatives and build and maintain wide networks internally within the council and externally with partner agencies and the voluntary sector.

Ability to deliver excellent customer care and adapt behaviour of self and team to support residents in a timely way and respond effectively to challenging behaviour.

Ability to collect and analyse data and critically reflect on work practices to improve services, using new technologies to improve services delivery and accessibility.

Ability to motivate and develop staff, effectively manage and support staff through change, provide welfare support to staff covering frontline work and inspire team work and a collaborative culture with internal and external colleagues.

Strong analytical and numeracy skills to carry out complex housing and financial assessments and the ability to make difficult and contentious decisions on a range issues. S

Experience

Proven experience of designing and implementing robust and efficient business processes that have delivered tangibly improved services and dramatically improved efficiency. S

Proven experience of reviewing performance and service levels, using performance management techniques to drive service delivery and improvements, implementing robust plans to ensure excellent service delivery is maintained, responding to, and escalating, quality assurance concerns. **S**

Proven experience of staff management, delivering and leading change and transformation across a multi-disciplinary team, and developing staff to meet their full potential. **S**

Proven excellent communication, mediation skills dealing with landlords and prospective tenants particularly those who may have disabilities or are vulnerable

Advanced knowledge and experience of using Microsoft packages, including Word, Excel and PowerPoint packages.

General Education

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

Evidence of relevant continuing professional development

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