



# Job Description & Person Specification

|             |                                  |                |   |
|-------------|----------------------------------|----------------|---|
| Job Title:  | Housing Options Officer          | Job Reference: |   |
| Service:    | Housing and Environmental Health |                |   |
| Location:   | Andover                          | Grade:         | 6 |
| Reports to: | Senior Housing Options Officer   |                |   |
| Date:       | 25/09/2018                       |                |   |

**Our Values: We expect all of our employees to live by and demonstrate the Council's five key values of:**

**Accountability, Ambition, Empowerment, Integrity, Inclusiveness.**

## Main job purpose

The post will seek to identify people who may be at risk of homelessness at the earliest possible opportunity and work proactively with local residents to prevent homelessness wherever possible. Providing high quality advice to service users with a view to addressing any housing issues that may affect them, conducting Housing Options interviews and pursue housing options with applicants.

## Main responsibilities and duties

To deliver an effective, proactive and tailored early intervention and prevention service to local residents, with primary focus on preventing and tackling homelessness.

Contribute to the ongoing development of asset based assessments and the continuous improvement of customer service.

To conduct Housing Options interviews and pursue housing options with applicants.

To interview, visit, investigate and assess homelessness applications and ensure the Council meets its duties in accordance with the requirements of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

To hold a caseload, and maintain accurate and timely case recording and ensure relevant data is captured accurately and in a timely way.

To arrange temporary accommodation for households who are homeless or about to become homeless and make referrals on behalf of the Council to hostels, supported accommodation providers and Registered Providers.

To provide specialist support to people with regard to housing related issues including but not exclusively, homelessness and the prevention of homelessness.

To ensure applications are registered through Hampshire Home Choice and conduct home visits when required.

Participate in the Housing Options 'Triage' Service

To promote the Council's Rent Deposit Scheme with landlords and applicants.

To develop and maintain a comprehensive local advice and information system including the production of leaflets and newsletters.

Represent clients and the Housing Options Service at forums such as the Test Valley Early Help Hub, Children in Need meetings and others when necessary.

To provide advice and take the appropriate action in cases of harassment and illegal eviction.

To develop and maintain positive working relationships with internal and external customers and stakeholders.

Provide office cover, including within the Romsey office when required.

To work from place based services and to co-locate with other services as may be required.

To undertake home visits as and when required.

To participate in the Homelessness Out of Hours Service.

To ensure confidentiality and data protection are observed at all times in compliance with the Data Protection Act.

NB The particular duties and responsibilities attached to posts are of necessity in many cases difficult to define in detail, and may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the duties or the level of responsibility entailed.

### **Qualifications**

Please note that if you are selected for interview you will be required to provide evidence of your qualifications when you attend.

### **References**

It is a condition of employment that two satisfactory references are obtained. The Council reserves the right to approach any of your previous employers for a reference, in writing or by telephone, regardless of whether or not they have been nominated as a referee by you.

*To ensure that service delivery complies with current regulations, accepted professional standards, the Council's policies and procedures and appropriate legislation. This includes legislation on equalities, health and safety and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.*

### **Supervision and management**

Reporting to the Senior Housing Options Officer who will conduct supervision and support on a regular basis.

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| <b>Resources</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| N/A                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Contacts and relationships</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Joint working with statutory and non statutory agencies.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Working environment</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is an office based role with some home visiting and outside meetings.</li> <li>• Must be able to travel Hampshire wide and occasionally to further locations some of which may not be easily accessible by public transport</li> <li>• Contact with the public with risk of challenge or abusive behaviour.</li> </ul> |

| <b>CRITERIA</b>                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>ESSENTIAL<br/>DESIRABLE</b> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Everything included in this section needs to be able to be objectively measured in one of the following ways: application form, certificates, testing, interview or references. |                                |
| <b>Educational and professional qualifications</b>                                                                                                                              |                                |
| Sound general education with 5 GSCE's grade C or above (or equivalent), including in English and Mathematics.                                                                   | Essential                      |
| <b>Knowledge</b>                                                                                                                                                                |                                |
| Have a working knowledge of homelessness legislation, landlord and tenant law, welfare benefits knowledge and relevant case law.                                                | Desirable                      |
| Able to demonstrate an understanding of the types of issues that may impact on people and lead to homelessness.                                                                 | Essential                      |
| <b>Experience</b>                                                                                                                                                               |                                |
| Experience of working in a housing related field.                                                                                                                               | Desirable                      |
| Experience of working in partnership with either statutory and/or non statutory agencies.                                                                                       | Desirable                      |

| <b>Key skills</b>                                                                                                                                                                         |           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Excellent communication skills (including written and interpersonal skills)                                                                                                               | Essential |
| Methodical and analytical approach to workload.                                                                                                                                           | Essential |
| Good time management skills                                                                                                                                                               | Essential |
| Computer literate and proficient in the use of Microsoft Office                                                                                                                           | Essential |
| <b>Personal qualities and behaviours</b>                                                                                                                                                  |           |
| Ability to work under pressure and deal with potentially difficult and stressful circumstances.                                                                                           | Essential |
| Ability to work under own initiative but also as part of a team.                                                                                                                          | Essential |
| Must be able to travel to Hampshire wide and occasionally to further locations some of which may not be easily accessible by public transport                                             | Essential |
| Motivated to deliver excellent customer service                                                                                                                                           | Essential |
| Good influencing and negotiating skills                                                                                                                                                   | Essential |
| You are dynamic and you look at life as an opportunity                                                                                                                                    | Essential |
| You use your role as a mechanism to “can do” rather than “no way”                                                                                                                         | Essential |
| You value diversity, promote equality of opportunity for all, and you are committed to delivering services that are accessible to all.                                                    | Essential |
| You are able to build and develop positive working relationships.                                                                                                                         | Essential |
| You are friendly, fair and easy to work with, recognising that you may need to use different approaches to communicate effectively with different people to help aid their understanding. | Essential |
| <b>Other Factors</b>                                                                                                                                                                      |           |
| Enhanced Disclosure and Baring Service check required                                                                                                                                     |           |
| Casual Car User Allowance                                                                                                                                                                 |           |

## Corporate Responsibilities

All employees are required to adhere to corporate policies, procedures and codes of conduct; full details can be found on the intranet or from your line manager. Particular aspects include:

**Health and Safety** - Every employee while at work has a duty to take reasonable care for the health and safety of himself/herself and of other persons who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions at work - Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.

All employees are required to adhere to the Council's corporate policy, procedures associated with their duties and to undertake tasks/training in that context, as required.

A satisfactory medical report will be needed before an offer of employment can be made. You will be asked to complete a medical assessment form if selected for interview which is passed by you directly to our Occupational Health Adviser. Any information you give is confidential.

If our Occupational Health Adviser feels that you need a medical examination you will be contacted by them.

**Safeguarding** - This Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and vulnerable adults and expects all employees and volunteers to share this commitment, and to adhere to the Council's Safeguarding Policy.

**Equalities** – This Council is committed to providing equal opportunities for all. We believe that employing people from different backgrounds with a range of perspectives and experiences helps us to deliver high quality services to all our residents. We employ people based on their abilities and potential, regardless of any protected characteristics.

**Social Media** - Employees are required to adhere to social media corporate policies and to undertake tasks/training in that context as required. Employees must not bring the Council into disrepute through their use of social media either personally or on behalf of the Council.

**Financial** – Employees are required to adhere to the Council's financial regulations and to undertake tasks/training in that context, as required.

**Risk Management** - Employees are required to adhere to the Council's risk management strategy and to undertake tasks/training in that context, as required.

**Data Protection and Data Security** - We hold and process information about our customers and as such we are legally obliged to protect that information. Data protection is important for the Council, and employees are required to understand and adhere to relevant policies and procedures.