Directorate for People

Job Description

Post Title: Senior Housing Needs Officer  Grade: GR4
Division: Homeless & Pre-Tenancy Service  Section: Housing Advice Centre

Job purpose

To provide a comprehensive Homeless & Pre-Tenancy service within any area of the city. Undertaking a full range of duties which will resolve a customers housing needs within a multi disciplinary problem solving Homeless & Pre-Tenancy Team.

Key responsibilities

The delivery of a high quality Homeless & Pre-Tenancy service which meets customer need, the defined service standards and contributes to achieving corporate and directorate priorities.

Contribute to the development and delivery of the Directorate’s vision, policies, priorities, resources and plans by working collaboratively and flexibly.

Ensure that all procedures and policies are adhered to and working instructions for the Homeless & Pre-Tenancy service comply with BCC policies and procedures.

To support the Service Managers and Senior Service Managers in the development of the H&PTS by proactively driving forward the streamlining and improvement of processes and where appropriate make recommendations on actions/decisions required by management to bring these improvements about.

Ensure that accurate reliable, quality data/management information is maintained; verification is available, reviewed and acted upon to improve service delivery.

To carry out regular supervision ensuring that staff are delivering services to the required standard, meeting key service targets, complying with legislative requirements and are flexible and proactive in their approach.

To line manage Housing Needs Officers and Assistant Housing Needs Officers, ensuring they are supported, developed and deployed to meet the demands of the business.
Contribute to delivering cultural change within the Service exemplifying the behaviours that promote customer focus, equality and integrated service delivery, whilst responding effectively.

Adhere to all financial regulations, maximise income and debt recovery, to provide advice on preventing homelessness and promoting a variety of housing options to customers and officers

Build and maintain effective professional working relationships with internal and external partners/contractors involved in the delivery of Homeless & Pre-Tenancy Service.

To provide technical support to front line staff within the business to help facilitate the delivery of a H&PTS that meets all legal requirements and service requirements

To remain aware of the risk of fraud, error, child and adult protection issues and action as appropriate.

To ensure teams adhere to performance management principles in the H&PTS to create a customer focused, accountable and responsive service-oriented organisation.

To support the Service Manager in the management and implementation of change within the H&PTS, including the development and implementation of processes for effective communications and engagement.

To promote and effectively participate in knowledge sharing within the team.

To work flexibly and as part of a team to ensure cover of all aspects of the Homeless & Pre-Tenancy Service and to provide continuity of service.

Dealing with customers who have problems/issues of a complex nature. To be able to deal with difficult situations and difficult customers.

**General**

To undertake project work within The Homeless & Pre-Tenancy Service as directed, including attendance at appropriate internal and external meetings on behalf of the Directorate and prepare any necessary reports and documents.

To cover any of the Housing Needs Officer roles, at the request of a Service Manager, Senior Service Manager or the Head of Service, in order to ensure the effective delivery of the Homeless & Pre-Tenancy Service.

To provide temporary or emergency cover by deputising for a Service manager in their absence in order to ensure the continued delivery of the H&PTS.

Commensurate with the grade the post holder will be required to undertake other duties that may arise from time-to-time as determined by senior management.
**Supervision Required**

**Supervising Officer:** Service Manager

**Level of Supervision**

Plan own work to ensure meeting of defined objectives

**Supervision Given** (excludes those who are indirectly supervised i.e. through others)

Housing Needs Officers and Assistant Housing Needs Officers as allocated.

**Special Conditions**

a. Some posts will require an enhanced DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check

**Homeless Centres**

1. Organisation and participation in rotas to ensure provision of 24 hours, 7 days a week support for residents. They will cover absence for annual leave, undertaking the duties of Homeless Centre Officers, and arrange for peripatetic staff, agency staff or overtime to cover other absences.

2. Lead in developing and maintaining good relationships with the local community, and ensuring that local services (e.g. schools, GP surgeries) are accessed appropriately by residents.

3. Maximise the Homeless Centre income by liaising with Housing Benefit to resolve outstanding claims, taking appropriate action towards residents in arrears, minimising void loss and exploring new resources of income.

4. Provision of a comprehensive resettlement service to residents, including identifying suitable grant applications and development of ongoing support and the completion of support plans by GR4 and GR3 officers.

5. Manage the delivery of Supporting People services ensuring compliance with Supporting People requirements and meeting Supporting People performance targets.
Operational

1. Undertake investigations and ensure robust decision-making in line with legislative requirements.

2. Experience of developing detailed letters and reports and effective case management of customers.

3. To complete and maintain accurate and effective records, statistics, outcomes and matters arising and actions undertaken.

4. To keep abreast of changes in legislation, guidance, legal precedents, case law and reports as required.

5. Need to be able to work on own initiative, have an ability to solve problems, manage customers’ expectations and take a lead on the effective management of outstanding caseloads.

Technical

Extensive experience of the following:

**Senior Housing Needs Officer – Housing Benefit**

1. Extensive knowledge of legislation regarding Housing Benefit. Ability to interpret legislation and challenge decision making where appropriate.

2. Experience of income generation and ability to maximise.

**Senior Housing Needs Officer – Audit and Policy Officer**

1. To have a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the legislative framework governing the H & PTS with the ability to produce and develop effective procedures to support operational staff.

2. To carry out regular audit and quality checks to ensure applicants have been dealt with fairly and in accordance with policy and procedure. Reporting on inequalities/errors and issues in order to ensure a high quality, fair and equitable service is provided.

3. To produce reports and statistics as and when required in relation to performance to teams and individuals as well as information for the consideration of elected members and other stakeholders, as required.

4. Extensive knowledge of IT systems that are utilised by the H & PTS. The ability to support the service in new IT initiatives.
Senior Housing Needs Officer – Voids

1. To manage and report on void properties, in order that they are available for re-letting within published targets and in line with current health and safety requirements.

2. To be responsible for the management of the performance of the contractors, to include turnaround times and all void costs.

3. To undertake lettings, should there be a requirement from the business.
Person Specification

KEY – MOA (Method of Assessment): AF – application form, I – interview, T – test,
P – presentation, G – group exercise

Posts will be subject to Application Form, Interview and Assessment Centre process

JOB TITLE: Senior Housing Needs Officer
GRADE: GR4
DIVISION: Homeless & Pre-Tenancy Service

Section 1 – Experience, abilities, knowledge and qualifications / training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience / Knowledge (relevant work and other experience)</th>
<th>MOA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Line management of staff with proven skills in allocating and monitoring work and encouraging staff development.</td>
<td>AF/I</td>
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<td>2. Experience of managing and implementing change and driving improvements in working practices.</td>
<td>AF/I</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Extensive experience of compiling detailed letters and reports, effective case management of customers and the ability to ensure direct reporting staff draft quality letters</td>
<td>AF/I</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Knowledge of relevant legislation and guidance and the ability to interpret, translate, communicate and incorporate into policies and procedures.</td>
<td>AF/I</td>
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5. Experience of working in a diverse and customer focused team environment and the ability to multi-skill to cover other roles within the service.  

**Skills and Ability**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Able to use initiative to take forward matters on behalf of Management and demonstrate a flexible approach to service delivery.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>The ability to line-manage a team of staff in a performance-oriented manner in a busy environment and through a period of change.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Ability to communicate and engage effectively at all levels within the business, both orally and in writing.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Ability to ensure that customers receive an excellent service from all elements of the service and ideas regarding improving services, capturing customers comments and implementing identified changes are raised and acted upon.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Ability to work on own initiative with a pro-active approach to all tasks to ensure business objectives are met.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Ability to work in a pressurised environment, using own initiative to manage competing priorities and deliver within changing circumstances and priorities.</td>
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### Section 2 – Competencies

In addition to the above requirements you will be asked to demonstrate competencies in the below areas. Competencies can also be described as behaviours. They describe ‘how’ we expect people to behave doing their job. Competencies will vary between job roles and different levels but an overview of them, as required by Birmingham City Council, are described below.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competencies (behaviours)</th>
<th>Category Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Moving the Council forward</strong></td>
<td>People who demonstrate this competency take the needs of the council and its customers into consideration when assessing how best they can deliver their service. They will network and develop relationships with others in helping to deliver a better service. They will help others in their work and be open to new ways of working.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Managing Ourselves</strong></td>
<td>People who demonstrate this personal competency take responsibility for their work and development. They take action to overcome obstacles and seek to achieve agreed outcomes in the most cost effective way. They are careful and economical in the use of resources. They ensure that work carried out meets the needs of the Council. They adopt strategies to manage their own workload.</td>
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<td><strong>Working with others</strong></td>
<td>People demonstrating this personal competency treat others as they wish to be treated. They build effective relationships with all their working contacts both inside and outside the council. They are encouraging supportive and helpful, and consider the impact of their working style on others.</td>
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<td><strong>Providing direction</strong></td>
<td>People who demonstrate this personal competency display the behaviours underpinning the council’s values (Belief, Excellence, Success and Trust) and present themselves as a role model to others. They enable people to achieve their best. They set clear objectives and standards, review performance, coach and organise work. They communicate the way ahead and consult and involve others.</td>
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