

Job summary

Role title: Homelessness Prevention Officer
(12m fixed term contract)

Department: Housing

General Description

To work proactively with households at threat of homelessness to assist them to sustain their tenancy where possible, or otherwise to secure alternative accommodation. Clients may include private or social tenants, home owners, those evicted by family members or facing relationship breakdown, and may be vulnerable and/or have complex needs.

Responsibilities

1. To provide comprehensive housing advice by telephone covering a range of housing issues including:
 - Housing and tenancy rights in both the private & social rental sectors, as well as for home owners
 - Basic financial advice including welfare benefits, maximising income and tackling debt
 - Housing options including private rental sector, housing register, direct access accommodation, supported housing, hostels and refuges, government home ownership schemes
 - The council's role in assisting those at risk of losing their home under homelessness legislation
2. To make referrals to accommodation providers or support services where relevant
3. To work with the duty officer to assist with emergency homelessness situations
4. To make an initial assessment of eligibility and homelessness, booking callers in for a housing appointment accordingly
5. To manage a caseload of households threatened with homelessness, involving:
 - Conducting an assessment in person of their housing circumstances, housing and support needs and providing them with advice and a personal housing plan to help address their particular issues
 - Issuing statutory decision letters in accordance with current housing legislation e.g. to accept or discharge a prevention duty, not homeless and not eligible decisions
 - Carrying out casework e.g. negotiating with landlords/family members, completing referrals to support agencies and accommodation providers, helping to address problems with benefit claims, assisting with the completion of court defence paperwork and writing support letters for court hearings, reviewing progress against personal housing plans, making home visits where necessary and beneficial

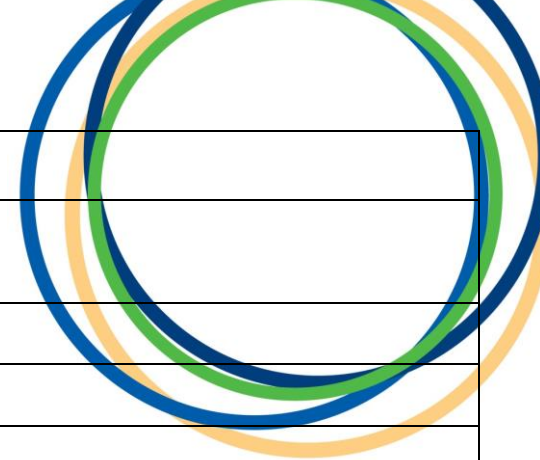
- Liaising with internal departments e.g. Housing Register, Housing Benefit, Environmental Health and external partners e.g. debt advice agencies, rent deposit schemes, registered social landlords and other housing providers
 - Keeping accurate and detailed case notes on our internal systems (Locata)
 - Working closely with homelessness relief officers where prevention may not be successful
6. To assist with the continual improvement of our housing service provision e.g. through
- Contributing to the development of the information we provide to customers including personal housing plans, advice leaflets, website content etc.
 - Identifying opportunities to work with new service providers
 - Keeping own knowledge of housing legislation and case law current
 - Managing particular service areas or projects e.g. rent guarantor scheme, fraud assessments, acting as key contact for receiving eviction notifications from social landlords
7. To represent the Council at internal & external meetings relevant to the role, for example meetings with social services.
8. To undertake any other duties that may be allocated from time to time which are commensurate with the post holder's qualifications and experience.

Person specification and interview assessment form



Candidate name			
Contact number			
Role title	Homelessness Prevention Officer (12m fixed term)		
Date of interview		Signed by recruiting manager	

Selection and Interview Criteria		Scoring	
Criteria	Criteria importance E = Essential P = Preferred	Score 3 = Met with full example 2 = Partly met with example 1 = Partly met no example 0 = Not demonstrated	Score rationale/interview notes
Qualifications			
Educated to GCSE level or equivalent	E		
HNC in Housing Studies or equivalent	P		
Experience and achievements			
Experience of delivering housing advice or tenancy support	E		
Comprehensive knowledge of housing legislation, tenancy rights, and the benefits system.	E		
Experience of working in a local authority housing department, for a Registered Social Landlord or in another housing related role, in a capacity which involves providing direct services to the public	P		
Experience of liaising with statutory, non-statutory and voluntary agencies.	P		
Experience of dealing with vulnerable and/or demanding clients.	P		
Role required competencies and behaviours			



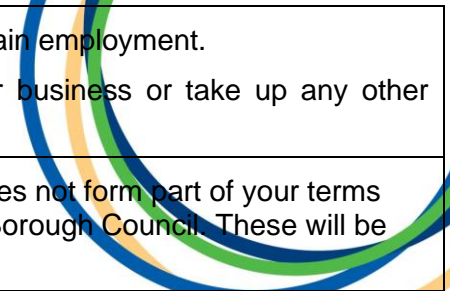
Excellent communication (oral and written) and negotiation skills	E		
Ability to work effectively with clients who may be chaotic, demanding, vulnerable or don't themselves wish to engage	E		
Commitment to high standards of customer care	E		
Good team player	E		
Resilient with the ability to work calmly and effectively under pressure.	E		
Good IT skills	P		
Corporately required personal qualities and behaviours			
Innovative	E		
Supportive	E		
Flexible	E		
Positive	E		
Total Criteria Score			Feedback to be given to candidate:
Essential Criteria Score			
Preferred Criteria Score			
Appointment choice number		1st / 2nd / 3 rd	

Summary of employment package

Place of work	The role will be primarily based at Reigate Town Hall, Castlefield Road, Reigate, Surrey, RH2 OSH We may require you to work from another place of work within the Borough or a neighbouring Borough or District, or further afield by prior agreement.
Salary	Graded Technical Specialist 3 , the salary will be in the region of £24,090 to £31,596 per annum pro rata dependent upon experience. Cost of living awards are reviewed annually on 1 April. Incremental progression and bonuses may be payable in line with the appraisal scheme.
Duration of contract	This is a 12 month fixed term contract.
Probationary period	Upon joining the Council, all staff are required to satisfactorily complete a six month probationary period.
Hours of work	Hours of work are 22 per week. We can be flexible regarding exact days/hours though generally the successful applicant should be able to attend an in-house meeting at 0915 on each of their working days. We would prefer Monday to be one of the working days.
Employment Benefits	
Flexible working hours	Flexi-time allows for the alteration of start/leave times and length of lunchtime break, time off in lieu for longer hours worked and a flexible working system. Whilst staff are expected to manage their time and keep working hours within acceptable limits, flexible working arrangements are always subject to sufficient office cover and the particular needs of the service at that time.
Annual leave	The basic leave entitlement is 259.2 hours per annum pro rata (equivalent to 36 standard days), rising to 295.2 hours per annum (equivalent to 41 standard days) pro rata after five years continuous local government service, inclusive of Bank Holidays. Annual leave must be taken on the Council's discretionary day off around Christmas and New Year period.
Pension	You will be auto enrolled into the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) to which the Council contributes 15% of your earnings each year. You are able to transfer funds into the LGPS within the first twelve months of employment. However, you can also choose not to join the scheme and make your own arrangements. If you wish to opt out of the scheme you will not be able to do so until after your first day. Your pension contribution rate will depend on your full time equivalent annual salary. The salary and rates are reviewed annually on 1 April each year. The current rates can be found on the Surrey Pension Fund website: http://www.surreypensionfund.org/surrey-pension-fund/paying-in/membership-and-contributions/#contribution-rates

Training and development	<p>The Council actively encourages continued professional development and talent development.</p> <p>Learning facilities are available in-house, including a dedicated Training Room for both individual and group learning. The Council also has a number of Computer Based Training packages.</p>
Professional subscriptions	<p>If you are required to be a member of a professional organisation(s) for your role, we will pay the subscription fee(s) each year directly by invoice.</p>
Car parking	<p>Unless your role is classed as an essential user, you take part in our car share scheme, or you are physically disabled, car parking is not made available.</p> <p>The Council offers interest free loans to encourage staff to travel by alternative methods to solo car use. Loans are available to purchase bicycles and accessories to the value of £1000, for quarterly/yearly rail season or bus tickets or a season car park pass.</p>
Travel loan scheme	<p>The Council offers interest free loans to encourage staff to travel by alternative methods to solo car use. Loans are available to purchase bicycles and accessories to the value of £500, quarterly or yearly rail season tickets, or a season car park pass.</p>
Cycle purchase scheme	<p>The Council offers staff who have passed the probation period and are employed for 18 months or more, the opportunity to lease/purchase bikes and related safety equipment up to £1000, reducing tax and National Insurance deductions. Staff are required to use the bike mainly for journeys between home and work.</p>
Employee discounts	<p>All staff have access to special offers and discounts on national and local high street shops, restaurants, motoring benefits, discount cinema and theatre tickets, holidays, insurance and much more.</p> <p>Full annual discounted membership is available for the 'Better' run leisure centres at Tadworth, Donyngs and Horley.</p>
Other Conditions	

Pre-employment checks	<p>Appointments are offered subject to several pre-employment checks to comply with the Home Office's Baseline Personnel Security Standards (BPSS):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at least two satisfactory references • eligibility to work within the UK, and proof of your identity • evidence of relevant qualifications • basic criminal record check (As access to secure government systems is an intrinsic requirement of the role)
DBS clearance	<p>Employment with the Council will also be subject to receipt of standard / enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance. Details will be provided to the successful applicant, which may require completion of an online application and/or registration to the DBS 'Update Service'.</p>



Paid work with another employer	<p>If you are appointed, your contract with the Council should normally be classed as your main employment.</p> <p>You will devote your whole-time service to our work and not be involved in any other business or take up any other appointment without getting written permission from your manager or the Chief Executive.</p>
Disclaimer	<p>Please note that this document outlines the likely employment package for this role but does not form part of your terms and conditions of employment if you are subsequently employed by Reigate & Banstead Borough Council. These will be outlined in any contractual documents addressed to you directly.</p>

Great People at Reigate & Banstead

Our great working environment and the values and behaviours of every individual and team in the Council, help to evolve the culture of our organisation to become more commercial, innovative and embracing of change.

Successful applicants to our career opportunities will be able to demonstrate they share the values and behaviours we seek in our organisation.

Our Vision

Working together to make a great place to live, work and enjoy.

Our Values

Making a difference, doing the right thing, being bold and confident.

Our Behaviours

We should demonstrate our values by being positive, supportive, flexible, and innovative.

Positive: I maintain a “can do” attitude and a smile

- ✓ Create an encouraging and optimistic environment and bring others with me
- ✓ Approach others in a pleasant, happy and upbeat manner
- ✓ Maintain enthusiasm in difficult times
- ✓ Demonstrate commitment to my own service and to the Council
- ✓ Demonstrate an "I care" attitude

Supportive: I create an environment where the people I work with feel valued and respected and have confidence to develop

- ✓ Understand the council's priorities and work towards a common goal
- ✓ Work across boundaries to develop relationships, share information and keep others informed
- ✓ Listen to the views of others allowing the best way forward to be found
- ✓ Communicate in a courteous and respectful manner
- ✓ Behave in ways that promote the fair and equal treatment of all

Flexible: Adapting the way I work, I can deal confidently with change and accept new and different ideas and approaches

- ✓ Accept that change is an integral part of working at Reigate & Banstead
- ✓ Demonstrate an open mind to new ideas and proposals
- ✓ Display a willingness to do things differently
- ✓ View change in working practices as an opportunity for improving and developing
- ✓ Adopt a flexible approach to meet the team's requirements

Innovative: I work to develop new ideas and workable solutions to drive the Council forward

- ✓ Question currently accepted ways of doing things
- ✓ Implement good ideas, learn from others, both internally and externally
- ✓ Identify novel ways of resolving issues using own initiative
- ✓ Suggest and trying out new approaches
- ✓ Challenge the status quo in a constructive way

Great People

