

**Post Title:** Senior Housing Needs Officer

**Post Hours:** 37 hours per week

**Grade:** Scale 6

**Responsible to:** Housing Needs Manager

**Responsible for:** Supporting the Housing Needs Manager with day-to-day management of the Housing Needs service and supporting Housing Needs Officers in their roles.

**Main contact associated with principal duties:**

- Staff within Housing, Health & Engineering Services
  - Elected Members
  - Registered providers
  - Members of the public
  - Adult Care Services
  - Wast Lancashire Primary Care Trust
  - External statutory, voluntary & community based organisations
  - Other local authorities
  - Probation Service
  - Prison Service
  - Private Landlords
  - Providers of temporary accommodation
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**Job Purpose:**

- To act as senior officer within the Housing Needs Team
  - To manage a caseload and undertake Housing Options / Homelessness interviews as required.
  - To implement the Council's duty towards individuals under Homelessness legislation.
  - To contribute to the formulation of the Council's homelessness strategy and policies in relation to the housing needs section.
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**Control of Resources:**

- Petty Cash
  - Responsibility for bonds / rent in advance within agreed parameters.
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## **Main duties and responsibilities:**

1. To act as senior officer within the Housing Needs Team, which would include: supporting the Housing Needs Manager with day-to-day management of the Housing Needs service as required. This would encompass but not limited to:
  - Ensuring there is sufficient staff cover as required
  - Supporting Housing Needs officers with their caseload as required
  - Dealing with general agency enquiries
  - Dealing with other local authorities in relation to homelessness cases issues such as resolving local connection disputes
  - Support the Housing Needs Manager with statistical returns
  - Be able to make decisions in relation to the offer of bonds / rent in advance/ other financial assistance, in accordance with agreed parameters set out by the Housing Needs Manager
  - Manage petty cash as required
2. To undertake Housing Options interviews with the client, and to provide a range of housing advice and homelessness prevention services to resolve the clients housing issues including, but not exclusively, the following:-
  - Opportunities for access to affordable housing including private sector options.
  - Usage of the Council's private sector bond schemes in accordance with agreed policies and procedures
  - Local authority housing register admission criteria and allocation policy.
  - Housing and tenure status and security and rights of occupation
  - Harassment and illegal occupation
  - Consequences of relationship breakdown and domestic violence
  - Income maximisation and welfare benefits
  - Rent and mortgage arrears and other debt issues
  - County Court possession proceedings
  - Housing condition and disrepair.
  - Liaison with mediation services
  - Where necessary and appropriate direct applicants to other agencies offering housing / specialist advice.
3. To undertake homelessness interviews and related enquiries to determine eligibility, priority need, and intentionality of homelessness applications in accordance with the provisions of Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 as amended and extended by the Homelessness Act 2002, associated codes of guidance, relevant case law and the Council's agreed policies and procedures.
4. To accept responsibility for reaching a decision in respect of each homelessness application received and for issuing a decision letter to the applicant within prescribed target times.
5. To liaise with housing staff and other agencies in the provision of accommodation solutions.
6. To liaise with all temporary accommodation providers to monitor and facilitate appropriate accommodation solutions for Homeless Households.
7. Revise the arrangements for the provision of temporary accommodation in Bed and Breakfast on an annual basis in conjunction with owners/managers of bed and breakfast establishments.
8. Ensure that Homeless Households maximise their entitlement to Housing Benefit and liaise with the Housing Needs Manager and others to ensure solutions for those with a shortfall.
9. To develop a package of appropriate support to people who the council has a Section 193 duty towards.

10. To attend child protection conferences, multi-disciplinary case meetings under the Mental Health Act and other multi agency meetings where Housing Need is a critical factor to meet the statutory requirements of other agencies.
11. To provide advice and assistance to Social Services in following joint protocols for 16/17 year olds and Care leavers.
12. To monitor and administer the Council's private sector bond scheme.
13. To liaise with Private Landlords, tenants, housing staff and other agencies to ensure that the private sector is a viable Housing Solution.
14. To work with the prison/probation services and Health colleagues to develop appropriate housing related support packages for people due for release/discharge from institutions.
15. To select households from the local authority allocations scheme to facilitate nomination requests from Housing Associations.
16. To monitor unsuccessful Housing Association nominations to ensure that further housing options advice is provided where and when appropriate.
17. To liaise in general with Housing Associations on the provision of accommodation solutions for those in housing need.
18. To meet the emergency needs of persons in the event of fire, flood or other crisis situations.
19. To coordinate the services required to meet the individual requirements for accommodation of persons with unusual housing needs, including disabled large households, substance abusers and asylum seekers.
20. To maintain supporting administrative systems and to record all relevant information in order to provide accurate records for internal performance management and complete appropriate MHCLG returns.
21. To administer the Council's involvement in the HOMES Scheme and ensure that records and statistics are adequately maintained.
22. To be aware of the possible dangers faced while working alone with vulnerable people and follow the policies and procedures of the Council and the actions required from risk assessments.
23. To contribute to any review of the housing needs function and to contribute to the development and implementation of associated improvement Plans.
24. To undertake other duties as may be required commensurate with the grading of the post.

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Selection Criteria	Essential Or Desirable	Assessment Method
<b>Qualifications</b>		
1. An appropriate qualification equal to NVQ level III in a relevant subject e.g. Housing, Social Work or other related areas.	Essential	Application Certification
<b>Knowledge, skills, abilities and experience</b>		
2. An excellent working knowledge of homelessness legislation i.e. Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 as amended and associated Code of Guidance	Essential	Application Interview
3. Extensive experience of working with assessment and advice giving procedures in a welfare setting within local government or other appropriate agency.	Essential	Application Interview
4. Excellent communication skills, which would enable the post holder to converse with customers both verbally and in written format, draft letters, emails and reports as required	Essential	Application Interview
5. The ability to be self-motivating and work on own initiative, with a systematic and methodical approach under minimum supervision to agreed timescales.	Essential	Application Interview
6. The ability to liaise/negotiate with internal and external partners and customers.	Essential	Application Interview
7. The ability to contribute towards the evaluation of / and development of policy & procedures.	Essential	Application Interview
8. Experience of using office based IT systems including a database for record keeping of homelessness client's data, MS Outlook for email purposes, MS Word to write letters and MS Excel for inputting data.	Essential	Application Interview
9. Numeracy skills sufficient to keep and monitor accurate records e.g. petty cash / excel spreadsheets etc.	Essential	Application Interview
<b>Special Requirements</b>		
10. Willingness to work beyond 5pm occasionally Monday to Friday if service needs exist.	Essential	Application Interview
11. A current driving licence, and willing to use own vehicle for work (casual user car allowance will be payable) or other means of attending meeting / appointments away from the office.	Essential	Application

Date: 6<sup>th</sup> October 2021