Grading
Job Description and Employee Specification

Job title: Housing Advice Officer	**Service area:** Adults & Health
Post number:	**Division:** Housing, Rehabilitation & Recovery
Grade: Grade 5 (career grade 5/6/7)	**Section/team:** Housing and Homeless Prevention

Overall purpose of job:

Deliver a professional Housing Options and Homeless service providing advice, support and guidance to ensure that all clients receive timely interventions and assessments to support them into permanent and settled affordable accommodation.

Ensure the council fulfils its statutory homelessness duties and provide the necessary advice and assistance appropriate to each person using a person-centred and strength-based approach.

Post holders will be expected to be flexible in undertaking the duties and responsibilities attached to their post and may be asked to perform other duties, which reasonably correspond to the general character of the post and are commensurate with its level of responsibility.

Main responsibilities:

- Identify problems causing potential homelessness and provide tailored solutions, advice and assistance to facilitate and secure alternative settled accommodation and prevent homeless.
- Investigate cases of actual or threatened with homelessness to fulfil the council's statutory duties in respect of homeless applicants. Make recommendations to the Housing Advice Co-ordinator regarding the council's responsibilities.
- Work proactively with clients to prevent homelessness wherever possible, through providing an advisory and advocacy role in areas such as negotiating with families; landlords/agents; lenders, providing debt advice; liaising with other agencies and attending court.
- Attend and participate in multi-agency meetings such as Child in Need, Child Protection MAPPA, MARAC, ASB and Community Safety groups. Developing specialisms where appropriate under the guidance of the Housing Advice Co-ordinator or being a "champion" for specific targeted groups to further develop pathways and frameworks to tackle more specific issues relating to homelessness within these groups.
- Liaise with other council departments and external organisations, agencies, and service providers as appropriate including Adult and Children Services, medical professionals, the Police, Citizens Advice, Probation service, Department of Works and Pensions and Support agencies as required.

- Attend advice and options surgeries, undertake home visits and property inspections to customers who are threatened with homelessness as necessary.

- Complete all casework and homelessness prevention and/or relief activity (including research and information gathering, record keeping, assessments, the development and ongoing review of personalised housing plans, and the timely production of notifications and decision letters) in accordance with Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, relevant guidance and case law, and the council's policies and procedures.

- Ensure that families and individuals are placed appropriately in temporary accommodation that fully meet their needs, ensuring that move on plans are in place and that clients do not exceed legal deadlines.

- Provide customers with comprehensive advice on their housing options, considering their overall financial situation, their needs and aspirations, their eligibility for assistance under the homelessness legislation, their priority on the Housing Register and whether they can sustain a tenancy.

- Keep up to date on all housing and other related and relevant case law, policy and housing and welfare benefit issues and maintain knowledge on council policy and procedures.

- Acts as an ally to ensure an inclusive working environment.

Knowledge, skills and experience:

- Willingness to work towards the relevant level of professional Chartered Institute of Housing qualification.

- Ability to work with homeless people or rough sleepers, including vulnerable adults.

- Basic understanding of housing options in North Lincolnshire.

- Good knowledge and understanding of support services across both the council and partner organisations.

- Ability to maintain an extensive, up-to-date, in-depth knowledge of relevant legislation, guidance and case law, and share learning with colleagues, in order to ensure that the Council meets its statutory obligations.

- Ability to work independently and as part of a team

- Ability to structure your time and manage your own caseload with support and advice required.

- Understanding of and commitment to confidentiality and professional boundaries.

- Ability to conduct client's assessments, interviews, homeless investigations with appropriate supervision.

- Proficient in the use of relevant IT applications e.g., Microsoft Office

- Ability to prioritise work and meet tight deadlines.
- Required to work in an agile way.
- Ability to transport self around North Lincolnshire in a timely manner.

Creativity and innovation:

- The post holder will use their knowledge, experience and skills on a daily basis to investigate client's unique circumstances to identify key issues and solve problems, seeking support for more complex matters.
- Identifying and acquiring relevant information, with guidance interpreting legislation, and developing individual or innovative solutions, involving external partners or service providers in some instances.
- Creatively support individuals, to arrange and implement advice/ support that is responsive to need and person-centred to achieve identified strength-based outcomes.
- Contribute positively to the development of new working practices and initiatives that help to prevent homelessness.

Contacts and relationships:

- **General public** (daily) - receiving requests for service, fact-finding, interviewing, advising, persuading, negotiating, educating and mediating. It will also involve the interviewing of members of the public who may not have English as a first language.
- **Colleagues in other parts of the council** (daily) - communicating, advising, negotiating, providing or obtaining information, motivating, influencing, instructing and working in partnership.
- **External bodies and agencies** (daily) - supporting, advising, fact-finding, motivating, influencing, persuading and sign-posting clients. Attend and participate in multi-agency meetings such as Child in Need, Child Protection MAPPA, MARAC, ASB and Community Safety groups.
- **Team Members** (daily) – supporting, advising, exchanging information/ knowledge, and communicating.
- **Other service members** (daily) – supporting, advising, exchanging information/ knowledge, communicating, and sharing workload.
- **Housing Advice Co-ordinator** (daily) - communicating, appraising on key issues. Provide information on own/ team performance.
- **Local Landlords/ property agents** (weekly) - communicating, advising, negotiating, providing/ obtaining information, motivating, influencing, instructing and working in partnership.

Grading
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Decision making:

- Prioritise own workload with support from line manager.
- Utilise supervision effectively.
- Refers more complex issues to line manager e.g., relating to health and wellbeing, personal housing plans and/or safeguarding of customers.
- Within defined procedures, make decisions regarding the most appropriate advice and support when investigating all homelessness cases received from Triage services. Seek support from senior colleagues where there are a wider range of options available within the scope of decision making. (e.g., determination of eligibility of people for housing provision, access to temporary accommodation, payment of bond money or storage of belongings are some of the decisions to be made on a daily basis).
- Decisions and recommendations will be made on the basis of evidence acquired that is always subject to interpretation and challenge.

Responsibility for resources:

- Sole responsibility for laptop and mobile phone with a combined value of £850. Working away from the office base up to 50% of working time.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

Work demands:

- Manages own workload and prioritise tasks.
- Nature of work dictates a changing environment with a degree of unpredictability relating to new and unknown people.
- Need to be flexible to meet demands of the service that may be required across North Lincolnshire.

Physical demands:

- Normal physical effort.

Working conditions:

- Work will normally be carried out in an office / home / various community locations. Home conditions may be considered as disagreeable.
- Participation in the Council's out of hours homelessness emergency service where required.
- Requirement to attend the office base as requested.

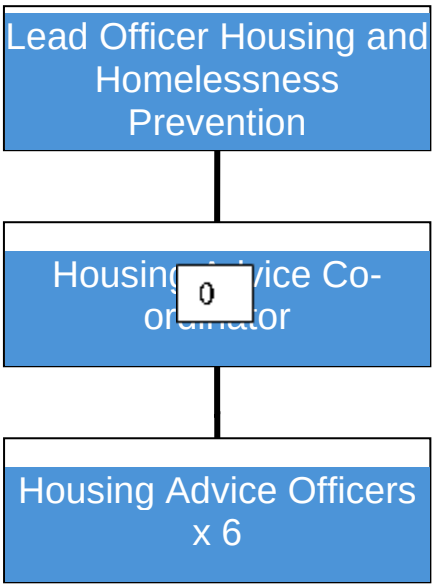
Grading
Job Description and Employee Specification

Work context:

- Some risk of challenging behaviours

Position in organisation:

Indicate how many staff the post is directly accountable for: 0



Job Description Version Control	
Date evaluated	
Date updated	
Updated by (manager name)	
Checked by (HR name)	

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ESSENTIAL CRITERIA	ASSESSED THROUGH:
Knowledge, Skills and Experience	**Application form (follow up at interview)**
• Ability to work with homeless people or rough sleepers, including vulnerable adults. • Basic understanding of housing options in North Lincolnshire. • Good knowledge and understanding of support services across both the council and partner organisations. • Ability to maintain an extensive, up-to-date, in-depth knowledge of relevant legislation, guidance and case law, and share learning with colleagues, in order to ensure that the Council meets its statutory obligations. • Understanding of and commitment to confidentiality and professional boundaries. • Proficient in the use of relevant IT applications e.g., Microsoft Office	
Knowledge, Skills and Experience	**Interview**
• Ability to prioritise work and meet tight deadlines. • Ability to structure your time and manage your own caseload with support and advice required. • Ability to conduct client's assessments, interviews, homeless investigations with appropriate supervision. • Ability to work independently and as part of a team	
Education, Training and Qualifications	**Original documents**
• Willingness to work towards the relevant level of professional Chartered Institute of Housing qualification.	
Working Arrangements	**Interview**
• Required to work in an agile way. • Ability to transport self around North Lincolnshire in a timely manner.	

THE POST IS SUBJECT TO:
Disclosure of convictions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders (Exemption) Act 1974
Yes
Political restriction
No
The ability to speak fluent English under the Immigration Act 2016
Yes

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• Version Control	
Author	HR Policy Team
Status	V0.1
Date approved	19 September 2012
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