Grading
Job Description and Employee Specification

Job title: Housing Advice Officer	**Service area:** Adults & Health
Post number:	**Division:** Housing, Rehabilitation & Recovery
Grade: Grade 6 (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 increasing complexity 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 deputise for the Housing Advice Co-ordinator in multi-agency meetings such as Child in Need, Child Protection MAPPA, MARAC, ASB and Community Safety groups. Be a "champion" for specific targeted groups to further develop pathways and frameworks to tackle more specific issues relating to homelessness within these groups.
- Liaise and deputise for the Housing Advice Co-ordinator 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.
- Investigate and provide information, within specified timescales, in response to service enquires or complaints from local councillors, MPs and other official bodies.
- Acts as an ally to ensure an inclusive working environment.

Knowledge, skills and experience:

- Working towards the Level 4 CIH qualification or equivalent knowledge skills and experience.
- A good understanding of housing options in North Lincolnshire.
- Practical knowledge of support services across both the council and partner organisations.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- Ability to demonstrate diplomacy, tact and sensitivity.
- Experience of conducting client's assessments, interviews and homeless investigations
- Experience of working with homeless people or rough sleepers
- Proficient in the use of relevant IT applications e.g., Microsoft Office
- Ability to use service specific IT systems.
- 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 complex problems.
- Identifying and acquiring relevant information, 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.
- Actively consider new and innovative ways of doing things, recognising, and promoting the positive benefits of change as a means of improving services and achieving outcomes.
- Help develop 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
Job Description and Employee Specification

Decision making:

- The postholder is empowered to make their own decisions on a wide range of issues to reflect that the range of circumstances faced exceeds the scope of the general policy guidelines available. Such decisions can impact individuals requiring support, the service, and reputationally the council as a whole.
- 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.
- Prioritise own workload. Use reflection techniques to improve own practice.
- Decide on more complex issues that go to an individual's wider support e.g., relating to health and wellbeing, personal housing plans and/or safeguarding of customers.

Responsibility for resources:

- Sole responsibility for laptop and mobile phone with a combined value of £850. Working away from the office base up to 25% 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.

Work context:

- Some risk of challenging behaviour.

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)	

Grading
Job Description and Employee Specification

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA	ASSESSED THROUGH:
Knowledge, Skills and Experience	**Application form (follow up at interview)**
• A good understanding of housing options in North Lincolnshire. • Practical knowledge of support services across both the council and partner organisations. • Excellent verbal and written communication skills • Experience of conducting client's assessments, interviews and homeless investigations • Experience of working with homeless people or rough sleepers • Proficient in the use of relevant IT applications e.g., Microsoft Office	
Knowledge, Skills and Experience	**Interview**
• Ability to use service specific IT systems. • Ability to demonstrate diplomacy, tact and sensitivity. • Ability to prioritise work and meet tight deadlines.	
Education, Training and Qualifications	**Original documents**
• Working towards the Level 4 CIH qualification or equivalent knowledge skills and experience.	
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

Grading
Job Description and Employee Specification

• Version Control	
Author	HR Policy Team
Status	V0.1
Date approved	19 September 2012
Last updated	21 December 2021