# Grading
# Job Description and Employee Specification

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|---|---|
| **Job title:** Housing Advice Officer | **Service area:** Adults & Health |
| **Post number:** | **Division:** Housing, Rehabilitation & Recovery |
| **Grade:** Grade 7 (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.

- Manages this caseload autonomously and professionally within appropriate delegations.

- Provides advice, guidance, support, coaching, mentoring and supervision to new members of the team and less experienced housing officers within the team.

- Provides an advanced level of Housing expertise and knowledge to the team and uses this knowledge to support other less experienced workers and to develop professional housing practice across the service.

- Acts as a role model demonstrating positive behaviours that reinforce the council's values, acting as an ally to ensure an inclusive working environment.

**Knowledge, skills and experience:**

- Holds the Level 4 CIH qualification or equivalent knowledge skills and experience.

- Practical knowledge and understanding of housing options in North Lincolnshire.

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

- Extensive experience of working with homeless people or rough sleepers, including vulnerable adults.

- Excellent verbal and written communication skills

- Ability to demonstrate diplomacy, tact and sensitivity

- Experience of conducting client's assessments, interviews and homeless investigations.

- Excellent time management skills
- Good understanding of statutory and legal responsibilities to homeless households.
- Ability to support practice across the service by providing training, coaching, mentoring and co-working in order to develop the skills of other less experienced workers.
- Experience of working within multi-agency safeguarding arenas e.g. MAPPA or MARAC.
- Proficient in the use of relevant IT applications e.g., Microsoft Office, Arbitras.
- 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.
- 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).
- 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.

**Contacts and relationships:**

**General public** (daily) - receiving requests for service, fact-finding, interviewing, advising, persuading, negotiating, educating, mediating, and enforcing. 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, mentoring, coaching 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.

**Decision making:**

- Within delegations prioritise own workload and manage caseload autonomously and professionally taking responsibility for how the work is to be undertaken and the approaches and methods used. Such decisions can impact individuals requiring support, the service, and reputationally the council as a whole.
- Support junior colleagues with their decision making
- Make decisions regarding the most appropriate advice and support when investigating all homelessness cases received from Triage services (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.
- Support others in the team with more complex issues e.g., relating to health and wellbeing, personal housing plans and/or safeguarding of customers.
- To deliver appropriate training identified for others within the team.

**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

**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.

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**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)** |
| • Practical knowledge and understanding of housing options in North Lincolnshire.<br>• Comprehensive knowledge of support services across both the council and partner organisations.<br>• Extensive experience of working with homeless people or rough sleepers, including vulnerable adults.<br>• Experience of conducting client's assessments, interviews and homeless investigations.<br>• Good understanding of statutory and legal responsibilities to homeless households.<br>• Ability to support practice across the service by providing training, coaching, mentoring and co-working in order to develop the skills of other less experienced workers.<br>• Experience of working within multi-agency safeguarding arenas e.g. MAPPA or MARAC.<br>• Proficient in the use of relevant IT applications e.g., Microsoft Office, Arbitras. | |
| **Knowledge, Skills and Experience** | **Interview** |
| • Excellent verbal and written communication skills<br>• Ability to demonstrate diplomacy, tact and sensitivity<br>• Excellent time management skills<br>• Ability to prioritise work and meet tight deadlines. | |
| **Education, Training and Qualifications** | **Original documents** |
| • Holds the Level 4 CIH qualification or equivalent knowledge skills and experience. | |
| **Working Arrangements** | **Interview** |
| • Required to work in an agile way.<br>• 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 |
| **Last updated** | 21 December 2021 |