



Job Vacancy

Job Title

Housing Options Advisor

Department Housing and Wellbeing Directorate

Salary

Grade 4

Location

Boston

Hours

37 per week (this might be negotiable)

Contract

12 month contract or secondment with possible extension.

Introduction

As a Housing Options Advisor you will usually be the first point of contact for members of the public who require general housing, homelessness and tenancy advice and assistance to prevent or relieve homelessness.

This would include obtaining and logging the required information from customers as well as referring them to other organisations and accommodation providers. You would refer those that required in depth advice and assistance to a more senior officer.

You would also be assisting with the management of the housing register including the provision of advice, assessment of applications and advertisement of social housing.

The role would require you to provide administrative support to the section including raising invoices, responding to Freedom of Information requests and data management.

The applicant ideally would have a minimum of 2 years experience within a relevant field and be able to demonstrate a passion for helping people plus be a team player.

Every day will be interesting and present different challenges and demands.

This is a full time post and will be based at Boston however the successful candidate will be able to work from home when not required to be in the office.

For further information please see the attached job description and person specification. For an informal chat or to submit an expression of interest, please contact Jason Oxby, Service Manager on 01507 613120 or email jason.oxby@e-lindsey.gov.uk.

Applications must be received by no later than midnight on 21st February 2021.

Interviews to take place on the week commencing 1st March 2021 however this is subject to change.

This is a 12 month contract or secondment opportunity and is open to staff members across both Boston Borough Council and East Lindsey District Council



served by One Team

JOB DESCRIPTION

POST TITLE:	Housing Options Advisor (12 month contract or secondment with possible extension)
DATE ISSUED:	February 2021
GRADE:	4
SERVICE / FUNCTION:	Housing and Wellbeing Directorate
RESPONSIBLE TO:	Housing Manager
JOB PURPOSE:	<p>To assist in the provision of a comprehensive Housing and Homelessness service including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of housing advice and options • Advice and assistance in regard to the Housing Register • Advice about Homelessness Prevention, Relief and Homelessness main duties • Assistance with the management of temporary accommodation • Administrative support
LIAISON WITH	Members of the public, council officers, external partners, statutory agencies, voluntary and community sector.
KEY COMPETENCIES:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational awareness • Awareness of the wider context within which the role operates • Effective communication • A focus on impact and outcomes • Working collaboratively across multiple teams and organisations • A commitment to continuous improvement and quality • Ability to influence and inspire trust and confidence • Ability to problem solve through collaboration and creative thinking • Ability to recognise and respond proactively if any changes to the approach is required to achieved the desired outcomes
<u>MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES, TASKS AND DUTIES</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be the first point of contact for members of the public who require general housing and homelessness advice, tenancy advice and assistance to prevent homelessness. • To assist with the provision of advice and assistance to applicants and others with a view to preventing or relieving homelessness. This could include contacting accommodation providers, landlords or lenders and other organisations, completing affordability checks, providing basic debt and welfare advice and making referrals for housing related support as appropriate 	

- To provide advice and assistance on the range of housing options which may be available to applicants and others in order to achieve rehousing or alternative solutions to their housing problem
- To refer clients to more senior team members when more detailed advice and assistance is required after obtaining the required case information.
- To identify applicants who may require advice and support from other departments or organisations to meet a particular need and to signpost or refer as appropriate
- To receive, acknowledge and assess applications for admission to the Council's Housing Register and to register eligible applicants onto the Housing Management computer system in accordance with the Housing Allocation Scheme. This will also include ensuring housing applications are accurate, verified and reviewed on a regular basis.
- To provide applicants with advice and guidance about all aspects of the housing register including making an application, eligibility and prospects of receiving an offer. This could also be through face to face appointments including home visits.
- To assist with advertising available properties and shortlisting applicants for nomination and monitoring the outcome.
- To provide administrative support to the Housing and Homelessness team including maintaining records, writing agenda's, minutes and arranging meetings
- To manage the processing of purchases, invoices and debts including adding to the IT system as required
- To assist the Housing Manager and Senior Officers with financial matters including the management of rent accounts for temporary homelessness accommodation and other housing debts. This could include issuing weekly rent statements; rent reminders, liaising with Housing Benefit/DWP about payments, managing debts, updating excel spreadsheets and providing advice to officers.
- To assist with the administration of the housing IT systems, standard letters, website content and other information sources such as policy, procedures, information sharing agreements and leaflets
- To manage and respond to requests for performance and statistical information including Freedom of Information Requests
- To assist the unit to comply with its data retention schedules and Data protection requirements
- To deal with written and verbal housing enquiries from the public, other Council staff, statutory agencies and other bodies within corporate timescales
- To maintain accurate written and computerised records about the progress and outcome of housing cases
- To maintain effective working relationships with other Council staff and a variety of statutory and voluntary agencies, including Social Services, Probation Service and the Police, local advice and housing providers and other local authorities
- To assist with the management of the Rent Assist Scheme including management of cases, sign ups, post tenancy work and bond claims.
- To create strong working relationships with letting agents and landlords to enable clients to access the private rented sector

- To assist with the allocation of extra care accommodation via the relevant lettings panels if applicable.
- To ensure safeguarding concerns are dealt with according to the policy
- To keep up to date with housing and related legislation and guidance, including homelessness, allocations, Landlord and Tenant law, benefits, immigration and asylum, matrimonial law and other matters
- To advise and assist junior members of the team and to provide cover if these officers are absent.
- To assist the Manager and Senior Officers with the development of new services, policies and initiatives relevant to the service area
- Any other duties appropriate to the post and grade

OTHER

1 The duties and responsibilities in this job description are not exhaustive. The post holder may be required to undertake other duties that may be required from time to time within the general scope of the post. Any such duties should not substantially change the general character of the post. Duties and responsibilities outside of the general scope of this grade of post will be with the consent of the post holder with the exception of those required at such a time when the Emergency or Business Continuity Plan is invoked during a genuine emergency situation where staff may be required to undertake work outside of their normal duties without prior consultation.

2 **Equal opportunities**
The post holder is required to carry out the duties in accordance with Council Equal Opportunities policies.

3 **Health and safety**
The post holder is required to carry out the duties in accordance with the Council Health and Safety policies and procedures.
All employees have a duty to take reasonable care for their own health & safety and that of others. In particular they must:

- Carry out all work in the prescribed manner and ensure that they follow training, information and instruction provided
- Use equipment correctly at all times
- Wear or use personal protective equipment provided
- Report all unsafe acts, conditions, accidents or near misses
- Suggest methods of eliminating hazards and reducing potential risks
- Co-operate in the investigation of accidents with the objective of introducing methods to prevent a reoccurrence
- Take part in risk assessments, workplace inspections, safety tours and audits when necessary
- Observe safe systems and methods of working at all times, avoid taking short cuts or improvising which may give rise to unnecessary risks

<p>4</p>	<p>Health Surveillance</p> <p>Employees are required to undertake such health surveillance, at the cost of the Council, as may be required. This may be identified by risk assessments or be a statutory provision such as those within the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and The Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Conduct</p> <p>The public are entitled to expect the highest standards of conduct from all employees who work for Local Government and that their conduct should never be influenced by improper motives. Employees should always remember the responsibilities to the community they serve and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial service to all groups and individuals within the community.</p> <p>Employees are required to follow the Councils Contract Procedure rules and Financial Regulations in any financial transactions and other dealings on behalf of the Council.</p> <p>Employees should be aware of the content of the Code of Conduct and ensure that they act within the Code at all times</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Information security & data protection</p> <p>Employees should ensure that confidential material including material about individuals is handled in accordance with the law.</p> <p>Employees are individually responsible for any information in their care whether computerised or manual.</p> <p>All Council policies on these issues should be adhered to.</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Safeguarding</p> <p>Employees have a responsibility to safeguard and promote the well-being of all vulnerable adults, children and young people who participate in our services or whom they come into contact with through discharging various functions. This includes situations where the Council works directly with adult, service users who have care of children. Employees should be able to identify abuse or neglect and understand their responsibilities and what to do should they ever suspect or become aware that a child is being neglected, is being abused or is likely to suffer abuse.</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Values</p> <p>We believe that everyone has a role to play in making our council successful.</p> <p>We expect everyone involved with Boston Borough Council to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • open and honest with people • enthusiastic, positive and proud about working for Boston Borough Council • patient with people and take time to understand their concerns • approachable and clear with people • open to new ideas and willing to learn • caring and to treat people with respect, consistency and fairness • focused on customers

PERSON SPECIFICATION**POST TITLE: Housing Options Advisor****DATE ISSUED: January 2021**

Attributes:	Essential Qualities:	Desirable Qualities:
Education & Training	Evidence of continuous relevant personal development relevant to the post.	A relevant professional/management qualification. Grade A - C or equivalent in Maths and English. NVQ level 2 or equivalent in a Business Administration course
Language	Ability to communicate to a range of audiences from clients, managers, councillors and other professionals	Ability to speak a second language, preferably Polish, Lithuanian or Latvian. Experience of working with people who have limited use of the English language
Experience	A successful track record of working with members of the public and multi-agency working Experience of working in a pressurised environment	A minimum of 2 year's experience within a relevant housing field such as Housing Advice, Housing Register, Housing Support or Homelessness A sound understanding of performance management Experience of using financial systems for purchase orders, invoices and debts. Experience of managing rent accounts including issuing statements, accounting for income and arrears management.
Knowledge	A good knowledge of housing, homelessness, tenancy law and Welfare Reforms Knowledge and understanding of Data Protection, Data Retention, Information Sharing Agreements and Freedom of Information legislation.	

<p>Skills and Competencies</p>	<p>Good written, numeracy, communication and presentation skills</p> <p>Ability to work on your own with minimal supervision, within a team and have a flexible approach to meet the needs of the section</p> <p>Ability to work to individual performance targets</p> <p>Competent with IT and ability to use Microsoft Office products.</p> <p>Highly motivated to achieve individual and team goals.</p> <p>Committed to clear, open and effective communication.</p> <p>Passionate about helping people in housing need</p> <p>Ability to remain calm when dealing with people in emotional and stressful situations</p>	<p>Ability to represent the Council at meetings at this level of the service area and to make effective links with key organisations.</p> <p>An understanding of the wider social, political and economic environment and their impact on the challenges facing housing and the Council.</p> <p>Advisory, guiding, negotiating and persuasive skills</p> <p>Understanding and commitment to a performance culture that is outcome and customer focussed.</p>
<p>Other</p>	<p>Full Driving Licence</p>	<p>Daily use of a vehicle</p>