

# Job Description



<b>Job Title: Head of Homelessness Prevention and Advice</b>	<b>Service Area: Housing Needs</b>	
<b>Directorate: Inclusive Economy and Housing</b>	<b>Post Number: Fusion</b>	<b>Evaluation Number: LBN340</b>
<b>Grade: SMR C</b>	<b>Date last updated: 8/3/2021</b>	

## **People at the heart of everything we do**

We are committed to putting people – Newham residents and Council staff – at the heart of all we do. Our approach is a collaborative joint enterprise between residents, the Mayor, Members, Council staff and the Corporate Management Team.

## **Equality and diversity**

We are committed to and champion equality and diversity in all aspects of employment with the London Borough of Newham. All employees are expected to understand and promote our Equality and Diversity policy in the course of their work.

## **Protecting our staff and services**

Adherence to health and safety requirements and proper risk management is required from all employees in so far as is relevant to their role. All employees are expected to understand and promote good health and safety practices and manage risks appropriately.

## **Corporate parent**

We believe that every member of staff working for Newham Council should understand and fulfil our corporate parenting responsibilities for our looked after children that we have under the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

## **Overall Purpose of Job**

1. Provide strategic direction and leadership on all homelessness prevention, housing advice and housing options business matters. Lead the business unit on development issues, including the opportunities to innovate and maximise funding opportunities.
1. Manage teams providing advice, housing options and homelessness assessment to ensure casework is robust and legally compliant and in line with Council strategies. Ensure that services comply with the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) , Parts VI and VII and related case law, as well as other related legislation

2. Build strategic relationships with stakeholders such as accommodation providers, the third sector, the NHS, and social care; and effectively influence to deliver improved services and outcomes for residents.
3. Manage people, delegated budgets and other resources, utilising them innovatively and creatively to benefit residents, ensuring expenditure is contained within budget and risk and need are balanced, to deliver the best outcomes for service users and exemplary team performance.

### **Job Summary**

To undertake leadership responsibility for the Homelessness Prevention and Advice service area within the Housing Needs Service and to develop, manage and promote all aspects of the service area in accordance with the Council's objectives and priorities. To ensure the service maintains high levels of good customer care and empathy throughout.

As a member of the Housing Needs Senior Management Team to contribute to the effective development and implementation of policies for the management of the Housing Needs Service and the Council as a whole. To keep abreast of government policy and directives in this area of work and take a lead role in developing action plans and implementing change where necessary.

To review national and regional service delivery and legislative changes relating to designated service area, taking appropriate steps to keep Newham at the forefront of innovative service delivery developing new strategies, policies and procedures as necessary for your service area whilst ensuring the statutory provisions governing the functions of the designated service area are met.

### **Key Tasks and Accountabilities:**

1. To deliver the council's homelessness and rough sleeping strategy and related policies in a way that is commensurate with the legal duties but also takes into account the resource constraints as directed by the Council's senior management team.
2. To work with other parts of the housing function, social care, the council overall and with key stakeholders and partners to achieve this balancing act.
3. Keep abreast of key organisational issues and the wider local government agenda to be able to respond innovatively and effectively to corporate challenges and opportunities
4. To recruit, develop, appraise and motivate the designated service area staff and ensure they are motivated and trained to deliver excellent customer services. Ensure in liaison with appropriate training providers, that the training and development needs of staff are identified and provided for.

5. Ensure that HPAS achieves and maintains a customer-focused culture, that all staff promote a positive image of the Council; and that service delivery is regularly re-evaluated so as to meet the needs of its customers.
6. To adopt an approach that is based on prevention best practice and housing choices including maximum use of the private rented sector to discharge duties.
7. To minimise use of temporary accommodation through effective prevention and relief of homelessness.
8. To establish and maintain effective working relationships with all relevant internal, external partners and other relevant agencies over the formulation and implementation of Housing Needs related policies and ensure that the housing needs of vulnerable people are appropriately met.
9. To work with private rented sector landlords, to understand the market and make recommendations for incentives and other measures that would be attractive to them to sustain tenancies for Newham residents.
10. To work with Housing Benefits, Our Newham and Income Teams to minimise the financial impact of Welfare Reform including Universal Credit
11. To ensure that the homelessness statutory review process is managed effectively to minimize County Court and Judicial review challenges and that the Council's reputation is protected
12. To develop and constantly monitor and update a business plan to deliver the service objectives within a framework that is financially viable.
13. To achieve key performance indicators and outcome measures, evaluating the performance of the service, setting both quantitative and qualitative performance targets and taking appropriate action where targets are not met.
14. To maximise income from external sources including government grant, discretionary housing payment and housing benefit to aid homelessness prevention and tenancy sustainment.
15. Plan, allocate, monitor and manage the designated service area's budgets and associated risks. Ensure that action is taken where spending or income is not in line with the Council's Financial Strategy and/or budgets.
16. To ensure that appropriate written procedures, policies, practice notes and other publications are produced, reviewed and maintained for the designated service area staff, other stakeholders and customers
17. Provide accurate, sound and timely professional advice and information to elected Members, the Adult Social Care Strategic Commissioning & Community Directorate Management Team, Council Officers, the Local Government Ombudsman and other key stakeholders on all matters relating to the designated service area and to prepare and write reports, attend meetings and respond to enquiries as required.

18. To promote and represent this area of work within the council but also to external bodies, government and the profession.

19. To take a lead in maintaining and developing the council's main homelessness IT business systems to ensure they are fit for purpose and maximise efficiency as directed by the senior management team.

### **Other Duties**

1. To be a champion for excellent customer service delivery and customer care and contribute to the development and delivery of an integrated service.
2. To be self-serving with respect to administration, case record keeping and other related duties and utilise IT systems to update and record information required according to guidance and established procedures.
3. To lead on appraisals, one to ones, objective settings, personal development plans and working group meetings and take a full and active role in service development, including service reviews.
4. To carry out the duties of the post in accordance with the Data Protection Act, the Health & Safety at Work Act and other relevant legislation, as well as Council policies, procedures, Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
5. To carry out the duties of this post with due regard to the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy and to actively promote and uphold the Council's HEART values.
6. To take responsibility, appropriate to the post, for ensuring compliance with council policies and procedures aimed at promoting and safeguarding the welfare of vulnerable children and adults.
7. To take responsibility, appropriate to the post for promoting diversity including tackling racism and good race, ethnic & community relations.
8. To undertake any other duties appropriate to the grade, that may be required. These may be varied from time to time to meet the needs of the service.
9. The post holder may be required to work evenings, weekends and occasional public holidays, in order to meet the needs of all service users and stakeholders.

# Personal Specification



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<b>Grade:</b> SMRC	<b>Date last updated:</b>	

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

The criteria listed in this Person Specification are all essential to the job. Where the Method of Assessment is stated to be the Application Form, your application needs to demonstrate clearly and concisely how you meet each of the criteria, even if other methods of assessment are also shown. If you do not address these criteria fully, or if we do not consider that you meet them, you will not be shortlisted. Please give specific examples wherever possible.

## EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

We are committed to and champion equality and diversity in all aspects of employment with the London Borough of Newham. All employees are expected to understand and promote our Equality and Diversity Policy in the course of their work.

## PROTECTING OUR STAFF AND SERVICES

Adherence to Health and Safety requirements and proper risk management is required from all employees in so far as is relevant to their role. All employees are expected to understand and promote good Health and Safety practices and manage risks appropriately.

CRITERIA- Essential	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
<p><b>KNOWLEDGE:</b></p> <p>A comprehensive knowledge of the relevant legislation relating to housing and homelessness, Codes of Guidance and case law.</p> <p>A comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the housing, safeguarding and support needs of homeless and housing applicants and tenants.</p> <p>A full understanding of the housing issues facing a high demand London local authority.</p> <p>A broad knowledge of welfare rights law and practice and</p>	<p>Application and Interview</p>

<p>specific knowledge of welfare reforms and their impact on homelessness.</p>	
<p><b>EDUCATION/QUALIFICATIONS</b></p> <p>Educated to degree level standard or equivalent or demonstrable suitable experience</p>	<p>Application and Interview</p>
<p><b>SKILLS AND ABILITIES:</b></p> <p><b>EXPERIENCE:</b></p> <p>Substantial experience of leading, motivating and managing services with multi-disciplinary teams to achieve significant, sustainable improvements and positive outcomes through internal and external partnerships</p> <p>Experience of delivering a high quality homelessness prevention and advice service in a related area for a large local authority or comparable organisation.</p> <p>Experience of monitoring performance, producing reports and analysing data in order to drive service improvements.</p> <p>Experience of successfully implementing a prevention and options approach in tackling the issue of homelessness and of coaching and helping staff to use negotiation tools in an advice or advocacy setting.</p> <p>Experience as a team manager within a large, complex, customer-focused organisation with a significant emphasis on performance management.</p> <p>Experience of managing a large budget and managing risk.</p> <p>Experience of dealing with complaints and/or Member Enquiries, with demonstrable evidence of using these to enhance service delivery.</p> <p>Experience of change management across a large team, service or multiple teams</p> <p>Understanding of the challenges faced working in a political environment, with demonstrable evidence of managing such demands</p>	<p>Application and Interview</p> <p>Application and interview</p> <p>Application and Interview</p> <p>Application and Interview</p> <p>Application and Interview</p> <p>Application and Interview</p> <p>Application and Interview</p> <p>Application and Interview</p>

<p><b>PERSONAL STYLE AND BEHAVIOUR:</b></p> <p><u>Focuses on People:</u> Excellent interpersonal skills including active listening, advocacy and a win-win approach with all stakeholders</p> <p><u>Takes Ownership:</u> Proactive in seizing opportunities and takes responsibility for ensuring the best possible outcome for clients</p> <p><u>Works Collaboratively:</u> Ability to gain, and retain, the confidence and respect of staff, service users and other contacts.</p> <p><u>Communicates Effectively:</u> Excellent communication skills both verbally and in writing, including the ability to produce detailed technical letters and reports.</p> <p><u>Focuses on Results:</u> Ability to gather information and interpret complex issues e.g. legislation and case law quickly, to think creatively about problems and identify solutions.</p> <p><u>Coaching and development:</u> Ability to identify people's strengths and weaknesses and create a supportive environment whereby staff are able to fulfil their potential</p> <p><u>Calmness under pressure:</u> Ability to thrive in a challenging and pressurised environment, with competing service demands and tight deadlines</p> <p><u>Respects and understands individual's needs:</u> Ability to work effectively and even-handedly with people from diverse backgrounds and circumstances, ensuring there are practices in place to reflect this.</p>	<p>Application Form/Interview/Test</p> <p>Application Form/Interview/Test</p>
<p><b>OTHER SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:</b></p> <p>Willing to work outside normal working hours to respond to emergencies or attend meetings as required.</p> <p>Demonstrate an understanding of the issues relating to equal opportunities in service delivery and provision and to actively promote ways of eradicating racism, sexism and other forms of negative discrimination through the Council's policies and procedures.</p> <p>To comply with the Council's Health &amp; Safety Policies</p>	<p>Application Form/Interview</p> <p>Application Form/Interview/Test</p> <p>Satisfactory clearance at conditional offer stage</p> <p>Application Form</p>

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