

Job Description

Job Title: Domestic Abuse Pathway Officer	Service Area: Homelessness Prevention & Advice	
Directorate: Inclusive Economy & Housing	Post Number: 10021747	Evaluation Number: 7153
Grade: PO2 Fixed Term Contract: 12 months	Date last updated: December 2023	

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

Homelessness services operate within a rapidly shifting environment, with frequent changes to legislation and expectations of how we should meet our duties to prevent homelessness. The post holder is required to work flexibly to meet individual and service objectives, and will be subject to continual change and the management of conflicting priorities. This will include timely and effective responses to complex policy development and the management of Joint initiatives with partners.

The post-holder will work with cases and policy areas relating, but not limited, to women experiencing additional vulnerability or multiple disadvantage: this include experiencing domestic violence, involvement in offending and/or the criminal justice system, exploitation, prostitution or trafficking.

The post-holder is expected to work within a housing team to prevent homelessness in accordance with the provisions of the Homelessness Reduction Act, associated Government Codes of Guidance, case law and best practice. Working one to one with cases, supporting women requiring additional support through the housing system and providing specialist advice to Housing officers on issues affecting victims & survivors of domestic abuse. The post-holder will be the lead representative at MARAC from Housing Needs, ensuring relevant advice is given and actions followed up.

The post-holder will lead on the improvement and coordination of systems, policies and practice related to the prevention, relief and response to homelessness for vulnerable women acting as the Housing Needs lead

for the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) and with support from the Senior Manager Pathways, co-ordinate the processes and development to maintain accreditation.

The post holder will be expected to build close partnerships, working with a wide range of stake holders including (but not restricted to): VAWG Services, women's services, Pathway Providers, Adult and Children's Social Care, Mental Health services and NHS ELFT (East London Foundation Trust), CMHT (Community Mental Health Team) - raising awareness of the range of housing options available, to improve the advice and support that is offered and ensure effective referrals and housing placements are made in line with agreed protocols/working arrangements.

The post holder will be required to be innovative, dynamic and solutions focussed to prevent clients from becoming homeless and explore all housing options. In addition to this the post holder will contribute to the design and operational practice of the Homelessness Prevention and Advice Service as well as the wider objectives of the Directorate and Local Authority.

Newham HPAS officers must maintain high levels of good customer care and empathy throughout. We may not always be able to give people what they want, but we should always be honest and treat them with respect, in consideration of their situation.

Key Tasks and Accountabilities

Key tasks and accountabilities are intended to be a guide to the range and level of work expected of the post holder. This is not an exhaustive list of all tasks that may fall to the post holder and employees will be expected to carry out such other reasonable duties which may be required from time to time.

1. To prevent homelessness in accordance with the provisions of the Homelessness Reduction Act, associated Code of Guidance, case law and best practice.
2. To embed and support best practice around housing needs assessments for vulnerable people requiring additional support seeking housing assistance, ensuring that housing plans are tailored to the individual's needs and circumstances in accordance with the Homeless Reduction Act.
3. To advise clients, either face-to-face, via videolink or over the phone, on full range of housing options, in the context of a high demand London local authority. This includes appropriate intervention if threatened with homelessness, assistance to secure private rented accommodation, hostels, supported housing, refuges, etc, and any actions to make accommodation more affordable and accessible. To assist people to move out of London, if desired.
4. To maintain a regular and constructive relationship with the individual or family throughout their homeless application, ensuring that they are engaged in the *reasonable steps* agreed within their personal Housing Plan, in collaboration with their Housing Adviser.
5. To act as the Housing Needs lead at MARAC, attending all meetings (or arranging suitable cover) ensuring high quality advice and guidance is provided to the conference and relevant actions are communicated and acted on.
6. To create innovative and effective housing pathways for one of the vulnerable and complex cohort identified, which are designed around their specific needs and requirements. To then ensure those pathways are properly implemented across services and agencies, with mechanisms in place to track and monitor progress with appropriate escalation triggers in place to address emergencies.
7. To lead on building and maintaining effective partnerships with other professionals, services and agencies in order to develop suitable policies and practice across the relevant bodies working with the specific vulnerable and complex cohort. To use these partnerships to review and reflect upon the policies and practice in place in order to ascertain the success in achieving the outcomes anticipated, and making changes where required.

8. To act on behalf of the Directorate, ensuring that policies, pathways and practice reflect both the statutory housing requirements on the local authority, as well as organisational priorities, such as the reduction in Temporary Accommodation and creating a culture of homelessness prevention.
9. To strengthen strategic partnerships and good working practice by visiting other professionals, services and agencies, in order to gain a better understanding of the constraints they may be working within, and develop innovate and creative solutions and to provide training on housing and homelessness as directed.
10. To fully understand the complexities of the client group you are leading on, and operational practice of partners, to create a multi-agency strategy with the aim of minimising any disproportionate impact of becoming homeless. To evaluate and assess the effectiveness of these pathways, ensuring they achieve the desired outcomes and to make recommendations for adjustments or changes
11. To carry out detailed analysis of data, identifying existing and future trends, and using this evidence to produce detailed reports for the Directorate Management Team and Cabinet Members in order to shape and design service provision and improvements.
12. To minimise the risk to Council in terms of legal challenge by ensuring that housing solutions are tailored around individuals and families who are likely to face a disproportionately negative impact if faced with homelessness.
13. To comply with all relevant statutory requirements, Government Guidance and Codes of conduct, Newham policies and procedures, professional and performance standards and good housing and homelessness prevention practice.
14. To ensure full and accurate records of all clients, all advice and support provided. To maintain accurate written and computer records, reports, & other monitoring information as required in connection with the various duties and case management.
15. To assist in developing cohort specific information and communications as well as internal procedures. To understand the value of information to the council and to contribute to good information governance by keeping information safe, accurate and up to date and available to those who need it. The post holder is required to abide by the council's information governance policies.
16. To deal with enquiries, complaints and correspondence from clients and their advocates, including solicitors, councillors, MPs, the ombudsman and other housing providers, in line with the Council's complaints and enquiries procedure. This may include preparing information to support court cases for which the post-holder is responsible.

To undertake all responsibilities listed below:

17. To be a champion for excellent customer service delivery and customer care and contribute to the development and delivery of an integrated service.
18. 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.
19. To participate in 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.
20. 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.
21. 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.
22. 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.

23. To take responsibility, appropriate to the post for promoting diversity including tackling racism and good race, ethnic & community relations.
24. 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.



Personal Specification

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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

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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	Desirable	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
<p>KNOWLEDGE: A working knowledge of current legislation, policy and practice relating to key areas that impact vulnerable women; such as Violence Against Women and Girls, female offending, homelessness, substance use and mental health with a good practical understanding of the range of housing problems they may experience.</p> <p>An excellent working knowledge of the needs and experience of vulnerable women and of related service delivery.</p> <p>Knowledge of current legislation relating to prevention of homelessness</p>		<p>Application, Test and Interview</p> <p>Application and Interview</p> <p>Application and Interview</p>

<p>EDUCATION/QUALIFICATIONS Educated to degree level standard or equivalent or demonstrable suitable experience</p>		
<p>SKILLS, ABILITIES & EXPERIENCE: Substantial experience of working in the domestic violence/Violence against women and girls field.</p> <p>Experience of developing and delivering training programmes for professionals in a multi-agency setting with particular reference to key areas that impact vulnerable women</p> <p>Experience of developing and maintaining effective strategic and operational partnerships across both statutory and voluntary organisations.</p> <p>Experience of achieving performance targets and meeting departmental objectives.</p> <p>Experience of carrying out detailed analysis of data and using this to create high quality reports and implementing effective interventions.</p> <p>Proven experience of working with homeless or vulnerably housed women experiencing multiple disadvantages</p>		<p>Application and Interview</p> <p>Application and interview</p> <p>Application and Interview</p> <p>Application and Interview</p> <p>Application, Interview and Test</p> <p>Application and Interview</p>
<p>PERSONAL STYLE AND BEHAVIOUR: <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 strategic and operational partners.</p> <p><u>Communicates Effectively:</u> Excellent communication skills both verbally and in writing, including the ability to produce detailed policies, pathways 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>Calmness under pressure:</u> Ability to thrive in a challenging and pressurised environment, with competing service demands and tight deadlines</p> <p><u>Self-starter:</u> Ability to work unsupervised, prioritise workloads and achieve targets and deadlines.</p>		<p>Application and Interview</p> <p>Application and Interview</p> <p>Application and Interview</p> <p>Application, Test and Interview</p> <p>Application, Test and Interview</p> <p>Application and Interview</p> <p>Application and Interview</p>

<p><u>Respects and understands individual's needs:</u> Ability to work effectively and even-handedly with people from diverse backgrounds and circumstances.</p>		<p>Application and Interview</p>
<p>OTHER SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS: 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 & Safety Policies.</p>		<p>Application</p> <p>Application</p> <p>Application</p>