

Waverley is an ambitious authority, committed to being one of the leading Councils in the country at a time of major change by developing a high performing, highly engaged staff team to share the organisation's values and deliver our corporate objectives.

JOB DESCRIPTION	
<b>Job title:</b>	<b>Specialist Housing Options Officer</b>
<b>Service:</b>	Housing
<b>Team:</b>	Housing Options
<b>Location:</b>	The Burys, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 1HR
<b>Reporting to:</b>	Specialist Housing Options Officer
<b>Responsible for:</b>	NA
OUR ORGANISATIONAL VALUES	
<b>Openness</b>	In Waverley we value <b>openness and honesty</b> where <b>communication</b> is <b>clear and constructive</b> and actions are <b>transparent</b> .
<b>Excellence</b>	In Waverley we value <b>excellence</b> , working in a <b>consistent</b> and <b>professional</b> way to achieve the highest standards possible, taking the time to recognise and <b>celebrate success</b> .
<b>Fairness</b>	In Waverley we value <b>fairness and respect</b> , working with <b>integrity</b> to ensure that everyone is treated well and has <b>equal access</b> to the <b>opportunities</b> available.
<b>Team Work</b>	In Waverley we value <b>team work and collaboration</b> , with <b>approachable</b> staff <b>actively contributing</b> to our shared corporate goals.
<b>Taking Ownership</b>	In Waverley we value taking <b>ownership</b> , where everyone feels <b>personally committed</b> to issues at hand and is working towards a <b>positive outcome</b> .
PRINCIPAL PURPOSE OF THE ROLE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To assist the Housing Options Team as needed in delivering the new homeless prevention duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. This includes initial reception triage and managing cases that need additional support to sustain their tenancies or help to find alternative accommodation and preparation of Personal Housing Plans.</li> <li>To provide housing support to vulnerable residents who have multiple or complex support needs and who are often trapped in cyclical patterns of homelessness, to enable them to sustain their tenancies.</li> </ul>	

- Liaison, mediation and support to both tenants and landlords to ensure that tenancies can be sustained.
- Supporting households with a range of needs around: mental and physical health, learning disability, domestic abuse, substance misuse, leaving care, unemployment, offending history, other disadvantaged groups and safeguarding concerns which will need consistent support to unlock the pattern of dysfunction and repeat homelessness.
- Liaison and negotiation with clients' landlords, relatives, friends and other agencies and supporting clients in applying for appropriate benefits and completing necessary forms to ensuring applicants are registered and linked in with relevant support agencies e.g. GP's, Social Workers, CPN's, Outreach services etc., and able to bid for social housing through the Council's Choice Based Lettings scheme.
- Once homelessness/threat of homelessness has been resolved, help and encourage clients to obtain and maintain employment and wider Care Act 2014 health and wellbeing outcomes such as participating in social/leisure activities and voluntary, educational or training activities.

## MAIN DUTIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES

- Carry out Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 assessments face to face and over the phone and record details electronically. Determine the Council's homelessness duties, reasonable steps, prepare and issue Personal Housing Action Plans and Support Plans following the assessments and issue prevention/relief acceptance/discharge letters and co-ordinate reviews.
- Assist customers into appropriate and sustainable accommodation having assessed their needs and provide follow up support needed in order for them to sustain their tenancies
- Provide a responsive service receiving and assessing support referrals from Housing Options Officers, Homechoice team, Housing management, Locality Offices and other external organisations. To assist and provide support in person, by telephone, letter or e-mail.
- Undertake a full assessment of clients' housing and support needs including a risk assessment and provide appropriate support based on outcome of assessments and current caseload. Sign post clients to other support providers where appropriate and monitoring these services to ensure they are effective
- To provide duty rota support and additional cover/support within the housing options team: giving homelessness prevention/relief advice, assisting with tenancy management issues in the Council's temporary accommodation and liaising with private landlords regarding private sector tenancy issues of housing options cases
- Provide tailored support for the particular needs of each client with a view to enabling the client to take greater control of their situation over a longer period of time. This includes making appropriate welfare benefit claims and ensuring rent payments are made, and compliance with tenancy conditions.

- Assess family function, dynamics, routines and relationships within households to help identify the root cause of difficulties
- To provide basic money management advice to clients whose financial situation is jeopardising their ability to fund and retain their existing accommodation and signpost clients to CAB or specialist providers for further assistance
- Initiate and co-ordinate packages of care and support with the appropriate services, providing written reports as required and arranging visits and services where necessary
- Attend Team Around the Family (TAF), Early Help meetings and Child in Need meetings and Adult/Child Protection Conferences and contribute and provide detailed reports where required
- Contribute to Waverley's corporate vision of multi-agency working and "Early Help" provision.
- Liaise with landlords and families to help them address any tenancy management issues which otherwise may lead them to the client becoming homeless. This includes visits, mediation and follow up actions
- Monthly liaison meeting with social letting provider to discuss tenancy sustainment issues and agree required interventions
- To develop and maintain a working knowledge of housing and related legislation such as homelessness law, landlord and tenant law, family law, welfare benefits, money debt advice, immigration, security of tenure etc.
- Where supported housing is identified as the best option, help the customer complete necessary application forms and support them through the assessment process
- Ensure the eligible clients are registered and correctly prioritised on the Council's Housing Register in accordance with policies and procedures and where necessary prepare necessary social/welfare priority reports.
- To assist in assessing the mental, physical and emotional well-being of clients by observing and listening to them, whilst giving appropriate advice and encouraging them to accept support, enabling them to maintain their well-being and independence
- To maintain manual and computerised accurate and comprehensive records.
- Record and report on statistical information regarding caseload including new cases, open cases, cases closed and reason for closure and outcome information for inclusion in internal reports and reports to Surrey County Council
- Build and develop positive working relationships with statutory and voluntary agencies and private sector landlords, in order to maximise support and accommodation opportunities for clients.
- .To attend relevant training as required
- To assist in the detection of housing and benefit fraud through vigilance and client record verification.
- To carry out any other duties as shall be specified by the Specialist Housing Options Officer or Housing Options Manager which are consistent with the level of the post.
- **Health and Safety**  
Comply with all Health and safety legislation for your area of work, ensuring that risks are identified, managed and monitored as required

## DIMENSIONS OF THE ROLE

- The Housing Options team deal with 900 - 1000 new housing advice enquiries a year
- Approximately 5 reception enquiries per week.
- Approximately 5 housing options interviews per week.
- Approximately 6 visits a week
- Support case load of up to 20 cases
- Ongoing liaison with the Housing Options and Homechoice team regarding housing pathways and determining applicant's eligibility for homelessness duties, private sector housing, social housing and supported housing

## AREAS OF ACCOUNTABILITY/PROBLEM SOLVING – DECISION MAKING / SCOPE FOR IMPACT

- Tailoring housing support and advice to fit each client's circumstances.
- Deciding extent and type of support based on assessment including safeguarding, risk assessment and any associated dangers identified.
- Verification of information to establish client's situation in order to proceed on a sustainable basis.
- In carrying out duties able to identify and report adult and child safeguarding concerns (including domestic abuse MARAC referrals) taking into account the sensitive balance between client consent and duty of care.
- Negotiating on behalf of clients with family, landlords and other third parties.
- Deciding whether homelessness prevention or relief duties are triggered and client and Council actions as part of the Personal Housing Plan
- Identifying cases of fraud and passing to relevant section.
- In making the above decisions, Officers have a positive, neutral or negative effect upon the lives of clients who approach the service as well as their relatives and other third parties. The above decisions may also impact upon the work of other Sections within the Council. Such decisions, and the manner in which they are made, also reflect the image and corporate values adopted by the Council
- Ensuring public funds are used prudently to support those in greatest need.
- Deputise for Specialist Housing Options Officer at MARAC and CHaRMM meetings

## PLANNING/ORGANISING/CONTROLLING

- Excellent negotiation and communication skills; able to speak to people at all levels in an assertive but diplomatic manner.
- Case records and statistical outcomes
- Participate in case reviews to find solutions, agree the escalation of cases and ensure that the lessons learnt from cases are disseminated and embedded in the Council's procedures where appropriate
- Adaptable, flexible approach to achieve best outcome for client
- Emotionally intelligent and have the resilience to maintain the LA's position when under pressure, and to achieve good outcomes
- Able to work proactively, on own initiative to achieve results and manage

conflicting priorities

## CUSTOMERS AND CONTACTS

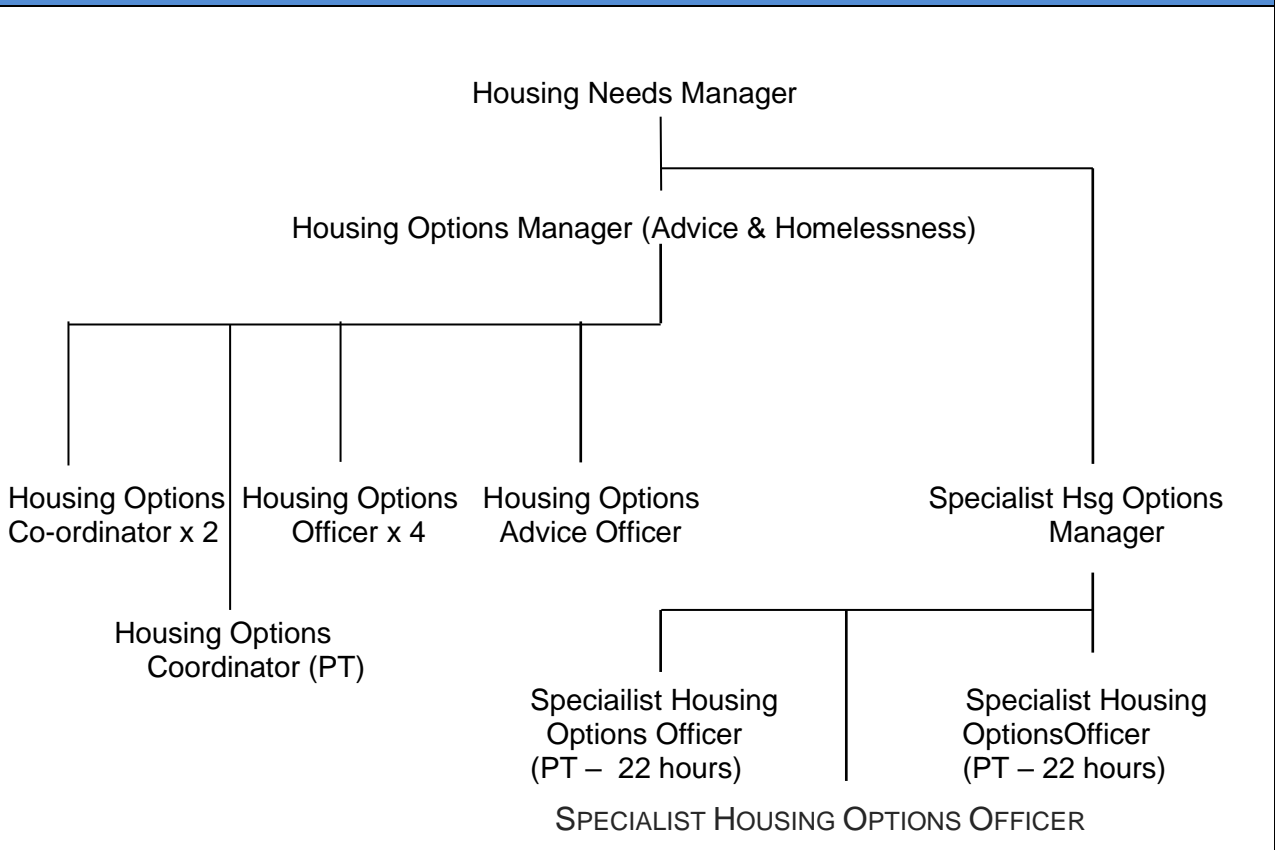
### INTERNAL

- Housing Options, Homechoice, Housing repairs and maintenance, the Housing Benefit team, Tenancy & Estates, Exchequer Services and the Recoveries team IT, the scanning team, elected members, corporate management team and other senior managers.

### EXTERNAL

- Members of the public, Citizens Advice Bureaux, Social Services – all teams, Health Visitors, private landlords, the Police, letting agents, the Community Mental Health Recovery Service, DWP, JCP, debt advice agencies, Letting Agents, utility providers, Domestic Abuse Outreach Service

## SERVICE/TEAM STRUCTURE



## PERSON SPECIFICATION

Candidates must be able to demonstrate, giving examples, **all essential criteria** within their application form to be shortlisted for this role.

	PERSON SPECIFICATION			
	ESSENTIAL CRITERIA	HOW ASSESSED	DESIRABLE CRITERIA	HOW ASSESSED
<b>QUALIFICATIONS/ EDUCATION / TRAINING / EXPERIENCE</b>	Educated to at least A level (or NVQ equivalent)	<b>CA</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safeguarding training</li> <li>• Stress management</li> <li>• Domestic abuse training</li> <li>• Mental health training</li> <li>• CIH qualification</li> </ul>	<b>AI</b>
	Considerable experience in a similar role and/or a housing related qualification (e.g.CIH or equivalent), or willing to work towards or a professional vocational qualification in Social Work, Education or Youth Work	<b>CA</b>		
	Experience of delivering services and advice to vulnerable or distressed households	<b>AI</b>	Housing, welfare benefits, IT, customer care training	<b>CAI</b>
	Experience of working within Housing, Social Welfare, Health Sectors	<b>AI</b>		<b>CAI</b>
<b>KNOWLEDGE /TECHNICAL SKILLS</b>	Understanding of the needs of homeless people, homelessness legislation and current housing issues.	<b>AI</b>	Understanding of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017and likely impact on customers and Councils	<b>AI</b>
	A commitment to equality of opportunity and an ability to work with diverse communities.	<b>AI</b>	Knowledge of safeguarding	<b>AI</b>
	Understanding of working in partnership with the statutory, voluntary and community sectors and achieving positive outcomes.	<b>AI</b>		

<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	Excellent negotiation and communication skills; able to speak to customers at all levels in an assertive but diplomatic manner	<b>AI</b>		
	Able to remain calm and professional in difficult circumstances, influencing others to achieve good outcomes.	<b>AI</b>		
	Able to explain complex legislation in an understandable way.	<b>AI</b>		
<b>CUSTOMER SERVICE</b>	Understanding of and commitment to promoting equality and diversity in service delivery and employment.	<b>AI</b>		
	Commitment to customer care and able to deal with sensitive, confidential and complex scenarios	<b>AI</b>		
	Able to produce well written grammatically correct correspondence which customers can understand.	<b>A</b>		
<b>TEAM WORKING</b>	Able to demonstrate how to play a full part within the team to achieve individual, team and corporate objectives.	<b>AI</b>		
	Flexible approach.	<b>AI</b>		
<b>MANAGING SELF AND OTHERS</b>	Emotionally intelligent, able to effectively manage time and keep accurate notes and able to exercise professional curiosity to establish the true circumstances of each case	<b>AI</b>		
	Able to work under pressure and to use initiative to work proactively to achieve results and manage	<b>AI</b>		

	conflicting priorities.			
	Committed to a empathetic and assertive approach	<b>AI</b>		
<b>CAN DO APPROACH / ACHIEVING RESULTS</b>	Able to assess, analyse and respond to complex needs in a calm and measured way	<b>AI</b>		
	Able to absorb, put into practice and retain new information, policies and procedures quickly.	<b>AI</b>		
	Excellent IT skills including Microsoft packages, other database systems and able to learn to use document scanning systems	<b>AI</b>		
<b>ADDITIONAL SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS POST</b>	For business continuity purposes you are required to have access to the internet at home via broadband on a PC, laptop or tablet.	<b>A</b>		
	Full driving licence and car available for work purposes	<b>IAC</b>		
	Able to deal with sensitive and confidential information discreetly.	<b>AI</b>		

#### How assessed

- A = Application CV/Personal Statement
- C = Certificates/professional Registration
- D = DBS police check
- E = Exercise
- I = Interview
- M = Medical assessment

For Official Use only			
<b>Job title:</b>	Housing Options Support Officer	<b>Post no:</b>	HC
<b>Service:</b>	Housing	<b>JE score:</b>	282
<b>Team:</b>	Housing Options	<b>Pay band:</b>	7
<b>Location:</b>	The Burys Godalming, Surrey GU7 1HR	<b>Position type:</b> (if part time, working pattern)	Full time 37 Hours/ Five day week
<b>Competencies: (level 1 – 4)</b>	Communication:	<b>2</b>	
	Customer Service:	<b>2</b>	
	Team Working:	<b>2</b>	
	Managing Self and Others:	<b>2</b>	
	Can do approach/Results	<b>3</b>	



<b>REVIEWED BY:</b>	Specialist Housing Options Manager	<b>DATE:</b>	December 2020
<b>CHECKED IN:</b>	HR	<b>DATE:</b>	December 2020
<b>LAST UPDATED:</b>	HR	<b>DATE:</b>	December 2020