

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

JOB DESCRIPTION QUESTIONNAIRE

Job Title:	Senior Housing Needs Officer
Reports to:	Housing Needs Manager
Department:	Housing Needs
Section:	Housing
Date written:	01/04/16

Purpose of the Job

Duties include operational supervision of the Housing Needs Officers (HNOs), ensuring they are able to carry out core functions which include assessing housing applications under Housing Act 1996 (part vi and part vii), allocation of temporary accommodation, supported housing, and the shortlisting for social housing, viewings of temporary accommodation and inspection of emergency accommodation in accordance with policy and business processes. The SHNO role also includes liaising with social landlords and other accommodation providers.

Principal Accountabilities

- 1) To ensure the Housing Needs duty service runs efficiently by liaising with the other Senior Housing Needs Officers, Housing Needs Officers and the duty manager to identify and respond to service pressure.
- 2) To carry out reviews of housing register applications (part vi, Housing Act 1996).
- 3) To authorise homeless applications (part vii Housing Act 1996), in cases there is no reason to believe there is a statutory duty to investigate further, or to provide interim emergency accommodation.
- 4) To ensure we make best use of all forms of temporary accommodation, including emergency accommodation. To do this by maintaining void turn around targets, and keeping use of nightly booked accommodation to a minimum.
- 5) Maintain a working knowledge of BHCCs allocations policies and homelessness strategies, and the legislative framework these sit within.
- 6) Advising others when to refer to other specialist teams for casework intervention and/ or refer to non statutory services.
- 7) To implement and have regard to achieving excellent customer service standards and to actively contribute to developing policies and procedures to improve the service.
- 8) To represent the Housing Needs service at internal and external meetings as appropriate to the post.
- 9) To have some supervisory responsibility including undertaking some scheduled supervision and chairing team meetings.

The postholder must be prepared to implement the Council's Equalities Policy at a level appropriate to the job and must at all times carry out your duties with due regard to the Council's Equalities Policy.

You must be prepared to be responsible for the implementation of, and compliance with, the provisions of legislation relating to the health and safety of such employees and areas of the workplace as fall under your direct control and for complying with legislation relating to such works and contracts as are within your direct responsibility.

General Accountabilities

Your duties will be as set out in the above job description but please note that the Council reserves the right to update your job description, from time to time, to reflect changes in, or to, your job.

You will be consulted about any proposed changes.

The list of duties in the job description should not be regarded as exclusive or exhaustive.

There will be other duties and requirements associated with your job and, in addition, as a term of your employment you may be required to undertake various other duties as may reasonably be required.

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PERSON SPECIFICATION

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Reports to:	Housing Needs Manager
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Essential Criteria

Job Related Education, Qualifications and Knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An up to date working knowledge of the responsibilities of tenants, landlords and other accommodation providers.• Excellent Knowledge of the Housing Act 1996 (specifically parts VI & VII), and the Care Act 2014.• Good working knowledge of main welfare benefits and housing benefits• Knowledge of accommodation options• An understanding of the impact of changes in national policy on accommodation solutions.• Demonstrable knowledge of equalities issues and how these inform service delivery.
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experience of leading and supporting a team• Experience of delivering service improvements• Experience of writing, communicating and implementing new procedures and making changes to existing procedures• Experience of consulting with staff to improve the service. Experience of using communication skills to provide a customer focussed service.• Experience of interrogating and updating computer and manual systems.• Experience of managing customer expectations, sensitively and with clarity.• Experience of assessing housing need.
Skills and Abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effective negotiation skills• Excellent oral and written communication skills when communicating with customers, colleagues and outside agencies• Ability to work flexibly as part of a team.• Ability to organise and prioritise own workload.• Ability to liaise and negotiate with landlords and support providers.
Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To be able to demonstrate a commitment to the principles of Equalities and to be able to carry out duties in accordance

	with the Council's Equalities Policy.
Other Requirements	

Organisational Chart

The proposed structure is attached, and forms part of the Housing Needs service redesign.

Hardest Part of the Job

Maintaining an up to date understanding of the legal framework and changes to local policy, as they impact on housing need and assessment.

To maintain a broad over view of service pressures, and be able to respond flexibly whilst motivating a team.

Being able to manage expectations of third parties regarding accommodation options and provision.

Ability to provide support and guidance to a team with different fields of expertise.

Dimensions

In the current proposed structure the SHNO will be in a team of three SNHOs. Between them they will provide operational guidance to 17.5 HNO posts.

They will authorise around eight homeless applications per week

Carry out reviews on about ten housing register applications per week.

Undertake one supervision meeting per week.

Scope for Impact

The effect of this job is to ensure that customers in housing need are assisted effectively. This means ensuring the frontline service is able to operate effectively, according to corporate guidance and standards. They will also ensure the HNOs have access to up to date resources to enable them to deliver information on prevention of homelessness and accommodation options.

They will also need to ensure we are making best use of accommodation Housing Needs teams and partners have access to via our service under a Service Level Agreement.

Job Context

This can be a demanding role, as the Housing Needs service is responding to the needs of households who may present in an emergency, and who may have multi agency involvement and support.

