

Folkestone & Hythe District Council Job Description

JOB DETAILS	
Job Title	Private Sector Housing Officer
Service Area / Team	Strategic Housing / Private Sector Housing
Reports to	Private Sector Housing Manager
Post Number	TBC
Grade & Annual Salary	E/F (subject to competency framework) Grade E £32,103 to £36,389 Grade F £37,204 to £42,285
Politically Restricted Post	No
DBS Requirement	Standard

JOB PURPOSE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To carry out the Private Sector Housing team's work to improve the conditions and standards of management of private sector housing as required by statute and the policies of Central Government and the Council.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES
Response to complaints about Housing Conditions
To respond to complaints from tenants about poor housing conditions.
To provide advice and guidance to landlords, tenants, managing agents and owner occupiers in relation to the improvement of housing in the district.
To advise landlords, tenants and owner occupiers on their statutory rights, obligations and duties and to advise landlords on how to develop best practice and comply with legislation.
To advise landlords, tenants and owner occupiers about financial assistance available to deal with housing repairs, renovation and disabled adaptations.
To refer eligible customers to the appropriate agency to initiate the application for a grant or loan.
To carry out inspections, investigations and detailed surveys of private sector residences in response to enquiries from the occupants.
To hazard assess properties using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), (a system prescribed under Housing Act 2004).
To interpret the results of the HHSRS assessment and decide on an appropriate course of action to deal with each hazard identified.
To record the results of the assessment and site notes on Salesforce data base system with accuracy and appropriate detail.

To write reports, detailed schedules of work and letters to inform the landlord about works required or actions to be taken to comply with The Housing Act 2004, the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and other relevant pieces of legislation and guidance.

To draft appropriate, accurate and articulate enforcement notices which give clear instruction to the recipient and are not open to interpretation and follow statute. To serve the notices according to the legislation and guidance and in accordance with the level of delegated authority given to the post holder.

To monitor the progress of any improvements, changes, raising of standards, which occur as a result of previous inspections and action. To negotiate with the landlord regarding timescales for completing remedial works and methods for carrying out these works.

To take appropriate enforcement and prosecution or civil penalty action as required and within the authorisations delegated to the post holder.

This involves revisiting the property to gather evidence (notes and photographs) to establish whether an offence has been committed, interviewing the offender under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act conditions (recorded interviews), preparing a case for Legal Services to take to court, writing a witness statement and gathering statements from any other witnesses, attending court to give evidence or serving civil penalty notices.

Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)

To identify and inspect houses in multiple occupation and ensure that they are licensed in accordance with the mandatory licensing scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation (under the Housing Act 2004).

To provide advice and guidance to owners, prospective owners and managers of HMOs about the standards and legislation relevant to HMOs. (Includes Housing Act, Housing and Planning Act 2016, Management Regulations and fire safety legislation)

To process mandatory HMO license applications (which involves reviewing the application form, applying guidance and standards to determine whether the property is suitable to be used as an HMO, visiting the premises, inspecting under HHSRS and measuring rooms, processing the payment of the licence fee, and recording details on Salesforce system. To follow up on any remedial works necessary (involving taking enforcement action where necessary).

To draft and serve the relevant notices and licenses at proposed and formal stages (within the timescales set down in legislation)

To keep the public register (statutory requirement) of HMO licenses up to date and ensure that licenses that are due to expire are renewed.

To ensure that non-licensable HMOs are compliant with HMO management standards and regulations and are free from hazards.

Fire Safety

To identify and inspect the common parts of buildings which have been converted into or are purpose built self contained flats and ensure that they meet the appropriate standards for means of escape in case of fire and other fire precautions

To liaise with freeholders, leaseholders and tenants of converted and purpose built blocks of flats to ensure that the appropriate fire safety measures are installed. (this includes hard wired fire alarm systems, emergency lighting, upgrading of doors and partitions and fire fighting equipment).

To draft detailed schedules of work (using the statutory guidance and relevant British Standards) to bring converted and purpose built blocks of flats up to the required fire safety standard.
To take appropriate enforcement action (by service of notice, prosecution and/or organising works to be carried out in default) to ensure that converted and purposed built blocks of flats have adequate means of escape in case of fire and other fire precautions.
To consult with Kent Fire and rescue Service when determining the appropriate fire safety measures for all residences.
To enforce the Smoke and Carbon Monoxide regulations within private rented properties (which includes carrying out works in default and serving fix penalty notices of up to £5000).
To keep up to date on current specifications of fire warning systems and emergency lighting and how to identify the correct standard of installation.
Energy Efficiency
To give energy efficiency advice to landlords and tenants. To assist the vulnerable, elderly and those in fuel poverty to access funding to improve the energy efficiency of their homes.
To enforce the Minimum Energy Efficiency standards in privately rented homes.
Filthy and Verminous Premises
To respond to complaints from members of the public or external agencies (including mental health teams, GPs, social workers, voluntary sector) regarding filthy and verminous premises (involving vulnerable occupants).
To liaise with agencies or volunteer sector workers and the occupant's family in order to assist the occupants of a filthy and verminous property to clear and cleanse the property as necessary.
To take appropriate enforcement action to clear and cleanse filthy and verminous premises where there is no prospect of doing so with the occupant's consent and where the health of the occupant is at risk or the property is causing a nuisance to neighbouring occupants.
Empty Homes
To take targeted action to identify and bring empty homes back into use.
To review, inspect and prioritise empty and derelict residential buildings so as to develop a programme of action which tackles dereliction by targeting on a "worst first" basis.
To maximise the impact of monies committed to empty property activity including securing external funding wherever possible
To support and liaise with other Council departments involved in targeting empty homes and bringing them back into use.
To develop and maintain Folkestone & Hythe's register of Empty Homes.
To produce schedules of dilapidation and specifications of work.
To take action to secure empty and derelict properties against further entry by intruders. This may involve liaising with the owner of the property and serving a notice to board up the property. Where necessary, to arrange for works in default to be carried out.
To liaise with and encourage private developers and affordable housing provider partners to become actively involved in the refurbishment or redevelopment of empty/derelict property.

To maintain and attend a contact network (forum) so as to maximise cross organisational activity on empty homes (other Kent Local Authorities, Kent County Council and Housing Associations).
To be a point of contact for Ward members and the portfolio holder for Housing in respect of Empty Homes queries and complaints.
Electrical Safety Regulations
To ensure that landlords are adhering to the current electrical safety standards and to take enforcement action where appropriate.
Statutory Nuisances (Environmental Protection Act 1990)
To investigate complaints from neighbouring occupiers who are experiencing a nuisance caused by the poor condition of property.
To liaise with the neighbour to draw their attention to the nuisance and advise them of how to abate the nuisance
To take enforcement action (which may involve service of notices, taking prosecution action and/or carrying out works in default) if the nuisance cannot be abated by using an informal approach.
Planning applications
To respond to consultation requests from the planning department on planning applications for residential premises. Provide the appropriate guidance and advice using housing legislation, guidance and standards.
Inspections for Housing Options Team
To carry out inspections of properties to be used by the Housing Options Team for Emergency Accommodation or for discharging their duties into private rented sector.
To report the presence or absence of hazards to the Housing Options Manager or Manager in order that they can make an informed decision whether to use the accommodation.
To follow up on remedial works required and ensure that any hazards found are addressed by the landlord prior to tenants moving into the property.
To promote the work of ABC Lettings and Housing Solutions to landlords where possible.
Immigration inspections
To respond to a request for an immigration inspection (including Homes for Ukraine Scheme).
To carry out the inspection and write a letter for the Home Office or report back to inspection requestor, detailing the layout of the property, whether there are any hazards present and to confirm that the property will or will not be suitable to house the visa applicant(s).
To follow up on any deficiencies found by liaising with the owner, which may result in enforcement action.
Grants and Loans
To accompany the Home Improvement Agency's Surveyor on final inspections of disabled adaptations or Home Improvement Loan completion inspections and report back to the Private Sector Housing Manager.
General Duties
To assist the Private Sector Housing Manager to set and maintain appropriate standards of professional performance and conduct and safe working practices.
To attend meetings with peers, Councillors, Officers, other professionals/organisations and the public, as required or directed.

To actively participate in landlord and tenant engagement events (e.g. Landlord Forum).

To keep up to date with legislation and guidance and maintain comprehensive knowledge of the law and policy options relevant to the field of work.

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITIES

- Adhere to the council's safeguarding policies and procedures and undertake relevant training in order to help protect children and vulnerable adults within the district.
- To comply with legislation, council policies and procedures including the Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act, Information Security Policy, the Code of Conduct for Officers and to participate in any Emergency Planning activities as required.
- To actively demonstrate the values and behaviours of the council.
- To ensure our customers are valued by taking into account their views and needs in all that we do.
- To contribute to the development and achievement of relevant corporate and service objectives by suggesting ideas for service improvements.
- To communicate openly and honestly with colleagues, members and customers.
- To undergo any training necessary to be able to fulfil the requirements of the job.
- To carry out other duties commensurate with the grade, skills, experience and qualifications of the post holder as directed and as may be required from time to time.

Folkestone & Hythe District Council Person Specification

Post Title: Private Sector Housing Officer

Important Information for Applicants:
The criteria listed in this person specification are the requirements for the post. 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, you may not be shortlisted. Please give specific examples wherever possible.**

Factors	Criteria	Means of Assessment		
		Application	Interview	Test
Qualifications	Essential – Grade E <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A – C Maths and English GCSE, Level 2 literacy and numeracy (or equivalents) or recent and relevant experience that demonstrates proficiency in English and Maths. HNC/HND or equivalent in Environmental Health, Housing, Construction/Building or Surveying or two years recent and relevant experience in a Housing or constructions service. 	✓		
	Desirable – Grade F <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant attendance to a recognised training course for the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and obtained Certification to show competency to assess under this system – for example the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health's HHSRS Practitioners Course (2 day with assessment and certificate). 	✓	✓	
Experience and Knowledge	Essential – Grade E <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recent and relevant experience of operating MS Office systems such as Microsoft Word, Excel and Outlook. Recent and relevant experience of working within a customer focused environment. Knowledge of Housing, Health and Safety Rating System and the Housing Act 2004. One year's recent and relevant experience in dealing with environmental health or housing matters. 	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	

Skills and Abilities				
	Desirable – Grade F			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of using Salesforce Reg Services. • At least 2 years relevant experience in dealing with environmental health or housing matters, including statutory nuisances and filthy and verminous premises (including working at a Private Sector Housing Officer) 	✓ ✓	✓ ✓	
	Essential - Grade E			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ability to work as part of a team ▪ Ability to operate on own initiative with minimal supervision ▪ Excellent written and oral communication skills ▪ High level of attention to detail and accuracy ▪ Competent user of IT, particularly Microsoft Office ▪ Proactive and committed to continued service and personal development ▪ Ability to adapt and proactively organise and prioritise work effectively in order to meet deadlines and maintain high standards at all times. ▪ Ability to demonstrate a professional and customer orientated approach ▪ Excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to operate and build excellent working relationships at all levels ▪ Ability to travel around the district and to customers' homes as required in an efficient and effective manner ▪ Ability to negotiate and compromise where appropriate 	✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	
	Desirable – Grade F			
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent experience in working with a Private Sector Housing enforcement caseload within a Local Authority. • Ability to make enforcement decisions and drafting and serving enforcement notices • Experience of taking enforcement action e.g. prosecutions and/or civil penalties. 	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	

Core Competency Framework for Private Sector Housing Officers

PSH Officer – Grade E	PSH Officer – Grade F
To be able to communicate effectively both verbally and in all written communication, ensuring customers are responded to politely and all problems dealt with in a professional manner on most occasions.	To be able to communicate effectively both verbally and in all written communication, ensuring customers are responded to politely and all problems dealt with in a professional manner consistently and occasionally exceeds targets.
To be able to co-operate effectively and flexibly as part of a team by actively helping others and supporting other team members.	To be able to co-operate effectively and flexibly as part of a team by actively building team spirit, helping others and supporting other team members consistently and occasionally exceeding targets.
To be able to utilise and maximise IT systems using Microsoft Office applications including Word, Excel, Outlook and Explorer to a satisfactory level to undertake the duties of the job.	To be able to utilise and maximise IT systems using Microsoft Office applications including Word, Excel, Outlook and Explorer to a satisfactory level to undertake the duties of the job in a proficient and effective manner, ensuring all duties are performed in a professional and timely manner.
Commitment to undertake and complete relevant training courses	Commitment to undertake any other relevant training courses as requested
Have passed one of a Higher National Certificate (HNC) or Ordinary National Certificate (ONC) in Environmental Health, Housing or Construction/Building, Higher National Diploma (HND) or Ordinary National Diploma (OND) in Environmental Health, Housing or Construction/Building,	Have passed one of a Higher National Certificate (HNC) or Ordinary National Certificate (ONC) in Environmental Health, Housing or Construction/Building, Higher National Diploma (HND) or Ordinary National Diploma (OND) in Environmental Health, Housing or Construction/Building,

<p>BTec in Construction, or equivalent Qualification OR To have a minimum of 2 years relevant employment experience in a Construction-related or Local Authority arena.</p>	<p>BTec in Construction, or equivalent Qualification OR To have a minimum of 2 years relevant employment experience in a Construction-related or Local Authority arena.</p>
	<p>To have attended a recognised training course for the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and obtained Certification to show competency to assess Properties by using this system.</p>
	<p>To have attended recognised courses for the Enforcement of the HHSRS, Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing and Fire Safety.</p>
	<p>To have, within the two-year period, been the case officer for 4 Improvement Notices, 2 Emergency Actions (1 Prohibition Notice, and 1 Emergency Remedial Action), 2 HMO Licensing applications, 1 Filthy and Verminous property, 1 Emergency Boarding-up and 2 Civil penalty notices. If the post holder has been unable to demonstrate competency on any of the above within the two-year period by evidence from actual cases, it will be acceptable to provide properly documented model case examples.</p>