

Folkestone & Hythe District Council Job Description

JOB DETAILS	
Job title	Initial Housing Advice Officer
Service Area / Team	Housing / Housing Advice & Prevention
Reports to	Housing Advice & Preventions Team Leader
Post Number	TBC
Grade & Annual Salary	Grade D
Politically Restricted Post	No
DBS Requirement	Enhanced

JOB PURPOSE
To carry out a “triage” style service for housing options, acting as the first point of contact for service users seeking housing advice, providing initial advice and assistance, direct intervention, and signposting to other services where appropriate.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES	Frequency
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under the direction of the Housing Options Team Leader, provide an efficient and effective Housing Advice and Prevention “triage service”, ensuring detailed housing advice and intervention is provided at the point of first contact 	Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide comprehensive housing advice and assistance to clients in all types of tenure including Security of tenure, Harassment and Illegal Eviction, Disrepair, Money management including benefits, Relationship breakdown, Homelessness. 	Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To work proactively with clients to prevent homelessness wherever possible, including providing an advisory and advocacy role in areas such as negotiating with families / landlords at the point of first contact. 	Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To liaise with the wider Housing Options Team where a housing duty may be owed to look at longer term accommodation options. 	Daily

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To liaise with other agencies, council departments, client relatives and landlords to ensure the best advice is available for clients with a view to preventing homelessness 	Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To manage customer expectations providing up to date information and advice not just of the constraints but also innovative alternative housing options. 	Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide clients with assistance to complete relevant forms, both paper and online, ensuring all necessary information is available to complete the same, or advising clients how to undertake this online. 	Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To advise clients seeking accommodation on the availability of housing locally in the public and private sectors. Such advice shall include the likelihood of rehousing under the Council's Choice Based Lettings Scheme. 	Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To maintain comprehensive records and information on available housing options advised to clients, updating Humme and all relevant data management systems. 	Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To construct and issue, where possible, initial decision letters, such as No Material Change, Not Homeless, and Advice letters, and other letters as and when required under the direction of the Housing Options Team. 	Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To assist households who wish to make applications to the Council's Housing Register and to assist applicants with using the Kent Choice Based Lettings scheme. 	Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To undertake a degree of initial investigation of approaches for assistance in cases of actual or threatened homelessness and to make recommendations to the Housing Advice and Preventions Team Leader regarding the Council's responsibilities. 	Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To attend team meetings and participate in options surgeries and outreach sessions where possible and as required. 	Monthly
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support the Duty to Refer, people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, who are unlikely to be owed a main Housing Duty by the council, to relevant agencies for assistance with housing and any other issues impacting on their housing situation. 	Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure accurate recording of statistical data in order for the Senior Homelessness Reviews & Service Improvement Officer to produce accurate reports and returns. 	Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide training to others, to facilitate cover of the Initial Assessments Post, while also supporting other staff to identify early warning signs of homelessness and ways to prevent it. 	Daily
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To refer households to Children and Families Social Services as per guidance in the Housing Act 1996 and the Children's Act 2004. (Safeguarding Referrals) 	As required
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To gather evidence regarding incidents of harassment and illegal eviction as defined within the Protection from Eviction Act 1977. 	As required

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To develop and maintain an up-to-date knowledge of the legislation and Council policy in relation to the following issues: homelessness; children; landlord/tenant; matrimonial; domestic violence; and housing and welfare benefits. 	Ongoing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assist the Team Leader and other housing sections with the induction/training of new staff by mentoring and job shadowing. 	As required

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITIES

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To actively demonstrate the values and behaviours of the council.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure our customers are valued by taking into account their views and needs in all that we do.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To contribute to the development and achievement of relevant corporate and service objectives by suggesting ideas for service improvements.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To communicate openly and honestly with colleagues, members and customers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To undergo any training necessary to be able to fulfil the requirements of the job.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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: Initial Housing Advice 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Good basic education to GCSE A-C standard or equivalent (including Maths & English) or relevant experience that demonstrates proficiency. 	✓		
	Desirable <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant Housing qualification 	✓		
Experience and Knowledge	Essential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recent and relevant demonstrable experience within a customer facing context. Demonstrable knowledge of public and private sector housing options Experience of working with advice and support services relevant to the department's customers. 	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience managing complex and sensitive cases with professionalism and empathy. • Experience of dealing with difficult and vulnerable clients or customers. • Experience of operating MS Office systems such as Microsoft Word, Excel and Outlook. • Experience of advising on housing options, welfare benefits, and related support services. • Knowledge and experience of the challenges faced by Afghan and Ukrainian households when resettling in the UK. 	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	
	<p>Desirable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working in a Housing context, including advising homeless people and others experiencing housing difficulties. • Demonstrable current knowledge and application of legislation relevant to the role including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Housing Act 1996 ○ Homeless Reduction Act 2017 ○ Landlord & Tenant Act 1985 ○ Renters Rights Act 2025 ○ Protection from Eviction Act 1977 • Experience in using systems such as Huume • Demonstrable current knowledge of welfare benefits • Knowledge of the social and health issues that are impacted by housing 	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	

Skills and Abilities	Essential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proven ability to work collaboratively with partner agencies, including statutory and voluntary sector organisations. • Ability to work as part of a team • Ability to operate on own initiative • Ability to communicate effectively with a range of colleagues, customers, stakeholders, members of the public and councillors, both orally and in writing • Excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to operate and build excellent working relationships at all levels • Strong analytical skills, high level of attention to detail and accuracy, and ability to interpret legislation and apply it to a range of circumstances • Competent user of IT, particularly Microsoft Office • Proactive and committed to continued service and personal development • Ability to adapt and proactively organize 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 						
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