**London Borough of Redbridge**

**Role Description and Person Specification**

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| **Role Title:** | Housing Solutions Manager | | |
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| **Directorate:** | Place | **Grade:** | 15 |
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| **Department:** | Housing | **Hours/weeks:** | 36 hours/52.14 weeks |
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| **Function:** | Housing Needs | **Post number:** | TBC |
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| **Team:** | Housing Needs | **Base/location:** | Lynton House |
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| **Reports to:** | Head of Housing Needs | | |
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| **Responsible for:** | Housing Solutions Team Leader and Housing Customer Contact Team Leader | | |
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| **Role and Context** | | | |
| **Overall, Role Purpose:** | To lead the delivery of an effective, professional and comprehensive Housing Solutions service offering customers in housing need a full range of advice and interventions on their housing options in the private and public sector with the aim of ensuring a comprehensive service to prevent homelessness making full use of any available schemes and initiatives.To lead the delivery of an effective, professional homelessness service including the assessment and investigation of homeless approaches and applications in line with the Councils' statutory duties under Housing Act 1996 Part 7 and relevant case law.To put in place a management system that ensures high quality assessment of customers housing needs in accordance with the Homelessness Act 2017. A high percentage of customers presenting as homeless will be vulnerable and it is essential to assess the customers' needs accurately in accordance with the Care Act 2014, the Children Act 1989 and all relevant housing legislationTo ensure there are management structures in place to robustly monitor and review the Personalised Plans issued by officers following their detailed work with customers to develop, update and review Personalised Housing Plans for customers on behalf of the council in light of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Ensuring there is effective work with customers to implement these plans to ensure that homelessness is prevented or relieved through active interventions and pursuit of effective housing optionsTo ensure the services meets key priorities to reduce the use of temporary accommodation and resulting expenditure through early intervention, prevention and relief of homelessnessTo lead the delivery of an innovative, best practice service that leads effective homelessness solutions as a means of mitigating the negative impact of welfare reforms.This is a specialist management role that will be at the forefront of the prevention of homelessness, and at the cutting edge following the introduction of the Homelessness Act 2017.To manage the collation of high quality, key homelessness data for submission to the Department for Communities and Local Government ensuring key trends on homelessness, the causes and solutions Participate in the management of the Housing Needs Service as a member of the Housing Needs management team | | |
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| **Role Context:** | Needs to support the Councils key values and strive to operate a service which promotes honesty, fairness, excellence and collaboration, with the aim of improving resident's quality of life, promoting opportunity and building strong communities. Ensuring we can respond rapidly to change, build on those strong communities, can be financially self- sufficient and promote local democracy.  This position is fundamental to the provision of housing advice and homelessness services to vulnerable customers who may approach the council for assistance as a result of the Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Reductions Act 2017 and other key housing legislation, alongside the Children Act and the Care Act. It is a specialist role where the post holder is expected to apply knowledge and experience to the development of innovative accommodation solutions to meet housing need.  This is a very specialist role that will be at the forefront of the prevention of homelessness, and at the cutting edge following the introduction of the Homelessness Act 2017. In particular the new prevention obligations and need to creatively work with customers to identify solutions within the constraints of funding. | | |

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| **Key Accountabilities and Result Areas** | |
| 1. **Strategy and Planning** | Contribute to the overall management of the Housing Needs Service and report to and deputise for the Head of Housing Needs  Ensure the effective and efficient management of the Housing Solutions Services, taking into account current legislation and Council policy.  Ensure effective services and put policies and procedures in place to ensure this happens.  Lead the relationship management between Housing Needs and Corporate Services across the range of housing challenges in which they may be jointly involved.  Monitor the performance of the Service area and ensure it is delivered efficiently and effectively to a high standard of customer care and that timescales and deadlines for assessments, allocations, void management, responses to complaints and advocacy and supply targets are met and there is high quality decision making.  With the Head of Housing Needs develop and maintain a robust strategy to maximise prevention and reduce homelessness. Maintain clear plans to increase prevention performance, reduce statutory homelessness and use of temporary accommodation.  Develop and implement a range of new initiatives to prevent homelessness, including commissioning provision via the third sector and identifying and putting in place innovative approaches to service delivery.  Lead and co-ordinate services related to supporting rough sleepers and lead the relationship with council enforcement and support services, other statutory agencies, local businesses and central and London.  Contribute to the development of the Housing Needs Service policies, plans and key priorities.  Ensure teams meet relevant key objectives from the Council's Homelessness Strategy. |
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| 1. **Operations and Support** | To contribute to the overall development of the Council's Housing Needs service.  To have senior management oversight of a range of decisions including the offer of accommodation, resources for prevention initiatives, allocations and social housing priority  Identify, prepare and contribute to bids for funding opportunities.  Represent the service at key meetings internally and with external partners.  To ensure the team consider customers vulnerability under either the law on housing, the Care Act 2014, or the Children Act 1989.  To be responsible for the team’s appropriate development of high-quality Personalised Housing Plans.  To be responsible for the team’s effectively assessing customers support needs and these are recorded and acted upon, and referrals are made for resettlement support as required.  To direct and prepare responses to complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman as directed.  Approve recommendations for applications for housing assistance seeking assistance through the bond and incentive scheme and prevention payments where expenditure on and discretionary assistance of this type is appropriate.  To ensure effective response to Members Enquiries, Complaints, and Ombudsman Enquiries, Freedom of Information Requests and acts as the lead manager in terms of the preparation and submission of complex responses across the whole service.  To liaise as appropriate with the Housing Supply Manager and Reviews and Service Improvement Manager on needs and standards of accommodation.  Ensure all applicants for accommodation receive a thorough assessment of their needs in terms of suitable accommodation and that the critical link between Housing Solutions and Housing Supply in meeting customer's needs and ensuring appropriate decisions.  Homelessness prevention:  Plan and deliver homelessness prevention relief and assessment processes which ensure options are identified, in conjunction with customers, which produce positive housing outcomes.  Ensure the completion of assessment processes, decisions and interventions to meet the council duties to homeless households under part VIl of the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.  Ensure there is a structure in place for the delivery of services to single homeless people, families with children and specific needs group and that these are responsive and adaptable to specific needs.  Develop the services approach to early intervention and ensure that referrals protocols and processes have been negotiated and put in place with key agencies in line with new statutory requirements.  Lead the development of Housing Needs front facing service delivery face to face, online and over the phone and work with the Customer Services structures within the council to do this.  Manage projects to deliver new homelessness prevention and support services for those in housing need and at risk of homelessness.  Work closely with People Directorate to ensure joined up service provision for those at risk of homelessness where there are children and vulnerable adults. Ensure effective joint working and joint assessment processes are developed and delivered.  Develop and share expertise in homelessness prevention, relief and assessment.  Projects, special needs and support:  Deliver an assessment service for applicants in housing need experiencing domestic violence, racial and other harassment, modern slavery and sexual exploitation. Ensure services are joined up with other Council and external services that are required to ensure effective service delivery.  Lead on the delivery of housing needs services that effectively support those affected by welfare change debt and poverty.  Ensure those in housing need at risk of homelessness receive general and specialist support services.  Deliver services that enable mobility including to council tenants, registered provider tenants and those in the private sector. Effectively supporting overcrowded households, under occupiers and those in housing need to use specialist mobility options including mutual exchange, Homefinder etc  Take responsibility for teams effectively responding to challenges and complaints about assessments, including dealing with step 1 and step 2 complaints and the drafting of responses to the Local Government Ombudsman.  Rough sleeping:  Lead the development and management of services to support rough sleepers, including commissioning of contracted services.  Co-ordinate multi-agency efforts to support rough sleeping including working with council support and enforcement services, statutory partners and the voluntary and business sector. Linking with central and London Government and being a lead officer for this issue.  Develop effective reporting and protocols. Prepare and lead relevant bids. |
| 1. **Systems and Process Development and Improvement** | Ensure the teams operate within agreed systems for financial management. Develop and revise systems within the area of responsibility in order to ensure robust financial management.  Work as the key partner in Housing Needs with Redbridge Customer service in relation to front line service delivery to customers.  Provide operational advice on relevant elements of the law, best practice and emerging trends and approaches.  Work professionally with service users, their representatives and other agencies involved with the service.  Lead on the delivery of an effective and efficient prevention, relief and assessment service which delivers high quality, legally compliant, customer focused and accessible front line services.  Work effectively and efficiently with colleagues within the service, across other departments and external agencies to deliver and excellent customer focused service meeting individual, team, service and corporate targets & KPIs.  Develop and maintain close working relationships with other Council services and a wide range of other stakeholders in order to facilitate the flow of information, encourage joint working and co-operation, achieve the prompt resolution of complex problems and ensure that, even where an input is required from a number of teams, service delivery is properly co-ordinated, and the service user is kept fully informed of developments.  To develop and maintain effective working relationships with key partners, service providers, stakeholders and the wider community through partnership and collaborative arrangements with external bodies, internal departments and voluntary and statutory agencies and their clients in order to facilitate the delivery of high-quality services that meet user needs.  To attend and lead meetings of relevant partnership boards and agencies and to represent the service and/or council as required.  To ensure the provision of a full range of information and publicity for all customers, including on the website, 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. Officers are required to abide by the council's information governance policies. To ensure team members also understand this issue.  To ensure the provision of advice services to customers through personal or telephone interviews, correspondence, advocacy, reception, home visiting, outreach work and surgeries, workshops and talks to customer groups. To ensure there are systems in place to support this provision and to set up new systems as required.  To ensure enquiries, complaints, freedom of information requests and correspondence from clients and their advocates, including solicitors, councillors, MPs, the ombudsman and other housing providers, is dealt with, in line with the Council's complaints and enquiries procedures.  To ensure the preparation of information as required to support court cases involving the teams including reviews and judicial reviews. |
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| 1. **Communication Partnership** | To lead the production of core service management information including the submission of the HCLIC statutory reporting information, other submissions and trend analysis to support service improvement.  To lead the development design and implementation of new policies and processes within Housing Supply to contribute to the development and review of policy and process across Housing Needs more broadly.  To ensure the team maintain customers electronic files on info@work providing a thorough audit trail of activity and key documents in line with agreed process.  To put in place monitoring systems in response to service issues and needs which support the provision of a high quality, legally compliant service.  To manage computerised systems ensuring appropriate steps are taken to protect data integrity and that all users comply with the IT security policy.  To develop learning opportunities, training and service improvement exercises across Housing Needs in response to service needs.  Ensure officers liaise with customers, statutory organisations, advocates and third sector providers to arrive at a sustainable housing solution for customers with complex and multiple needs for example mental health combined with drug and or alcohol addiction.  Develop partnership work with Children's Services and Adults Services and Health to establish single joint assessment process.  Key internal contacts  Housing Service managers, Housing Supply and Reviews Manager and staff teams, Housing Management, Customer Services, People Directorate, Private Sector Housing - particularly Housing Standards and Empty Homes functions, Legal Services, Payments and Benefits, Redbridge Enforcement.  Key external contacts  Organisations - Main contact for Councils' private sector accommodation providers  Private sector landlords, agents, private developers and property companies, London Council's Homeless and Lettings Group, East London Housing Partnership, Other Local Authority Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation services, Choice Homes UK (CBL partner), Voluntary Sector Advice and Support Services Members, MPs, Solicitors, Advocates, Advice Agencies, People Directorate, Health, Redbridge Enforcement, Youth Offending Team, Police, Probation Service, third sector providers, service users, their friends, relatives and advisors |
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| 1. **Performance and Standards** | * Identify and progress opportunities to improve services with teams managed and within the wider functional unit. * Manage housing solutions budgets. * Lead on responding to audits of services within teams scope, particularly homelessness assessment * Identify and respond to risks and emergencies in the delivery of a front-line service of this type. * Ensure the service carries out functions effectively and in a timely manner. Ensure the process minimises costs including expenditure on temporary accommodation and supports the efficient management of the service. * Be responsible for the teams’ budgets and manage overall budget for temporary accommodation.   Support the delivery of services which help to achieve the objectives in the Council's corporate strategy, including to   * Increase fairness and respond to the aspirations of the Borough. * Empower our communities to help shape our Borough and the services we deliver. * Improve the quality of life and civic pride amongst our communities. * Transform our Council in tough times to be dynamic and responsive to the challenges of the future.   Contribute to setting and achieving Housing and Housing Needs service plan priorities and objectives and making sure that key targets are met. The post holder will be required to contribute to the development and implementation of the Council’s corporate objectives including:  * Health and safety in the workplace * Performance management * Equality and Diversity policy * Customer service strategy * Corporate priorities and strategies   To ensure that services in the team and across Housing needs are innovative and quality driven and:   * Are responsive to customer’s needs and service requirements. * Demonstrate clear departmental direction, vision, and style. * Achieve effectiveness and efficiency in operation. * The Council’s Equality and Diversity policy is adhered to. * To carry out the duties and responsibilities of the post, in accordance with the Council’s Health & Safety Policy and relevant Health & Safety legislation |
| ***Key Performance Outcomes*** | Homelessness is prevented.  Temporary accommodation numbers are reduced.  Homelessness decision making targets are met.  Qualitative performance on decision making.  Expenditure on temporary accommodation is reduced. |
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| 1. **Resource Management** | Commission cost effective arrangements with partners for prevention and support services that improve outcomes for customers.  Contribute to functional unit budget monitoring processes and provide relevant management information.  To effectively manage, coach and support team members and ensure this approach is cascaded through management of their teams.  To organise staff selection in accordance with equalities legislation, good practice guidance and Council procedures.  To recognise the diversity of the workforce and ensure that equality of opportunity is promoted.  To ensure that the Council's employee communication system is fully implemented and maintained in order that all employees receive appropriate information, and that employee feedback is encouraged.  Identify training needs of the Team and ensure where possible these are met.  To manage a team of staff to ensure quality services are delivered to customers, including supervision coaching and support, planning personal development and ensuring a customer focussed approach in the team.  To implement effective performance management setting targets and standards in line with corporate performance management framework ensuring a high-level service is provided and statutory review timescales and targets are achieved and maintained.  Ensure compliance with all relevant statutory requirements, Government Guidance and Codes, Redbridge policies and procedures, management instructions, professional and performance standards and best housing and homelessness prevention practice and ensure that staff complies with these.  Take reasonable care for the safety and health of themselves and others who may be affected by their acts; as part of the management team lead in ensuring procedures and protocols are in place and followed as far as Redbridge's Health and Safety Policy and all guidance, instructions and risk assessments.  Attend training relevant to the post in order to ensure their health and safety responsibilities are met and ensure the development and implementation of effective health and safety plan for the team and broader Service Manager including training of all staff in relevant procedures.  To establish the necessary procedures to ensure that adequate information, instruction, training and supervision is provided for all staff reporting to this post.  Monitor team and wider service performance, meet statutory and local timescales and provide reports on performance and trends as requested.  To contribute to the overall development of the Housing Needs Service, leading aspects of development as directed by the Head of Service.  Make relevant decisions in respect of Part VI and Part VIl Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Housing Act 2002, the Localism Act 2011 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.  Make allocations decisions as delegated in the Housing Allocations Scheme.  Contribute to the development of and lead aspects of the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy.  The post holder must demonstrate personal and professional commitment and enthusiasm to promote the principle of equality in employment and service delivery. The post holder must be familiar with and promote the Equality and Diversity Policy.  The post holder must promote equality in the workplace and set the tone for the behaviour between colleagues.  Manage section budgets ensuring effective processes for authorising the commitment of resources, for example on providing accommodation, prevention options such as DHP, deposits and incentives.  In addition, since housing decisions can have significant financial impacts and cause both the commitment of resources and of long-term housing provision commitments. As below:   * to provide support for various housing options (for example provision of a rent incentive); homelessness decisions to accept or refuse a duty; * to commit legal costs in sustaining a suitability challenge regarding temporary accommodation * or to provide temporary accommodation.   Managers are responsible for ensuring officers understand the financial impacts of the decisions that they make.  Authorised to sign temporary accommodation contracts of large value - over £100,000. Annual temporary accommodation budgets are multi-million.  Manage and continuously develop the teams to provide a high quality, effective front-line service.  Responsible for the effective delivery of the full range of management functions including recruitment, induction, probation, supervision and appraisal, coaching, development and support, sickness absence, performance management, capability and conduct, monitoring and reporting, learning and development, health and safety, diversity and equalities considerations. Ensuring systems are in place within teams managed to demonstrate effective team management.  Ensure the efficient effective use of ICT personally and within teams managed. Ensuring systems are developed to meet need and identify efficiencies and new ways of working. |
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| **Corporate Accountabilities** | All employees of the Council should undertake and conduct their work with due regard to the corporate accountabilities (available on the Redbridge Council website). These include responsibilities for outcomes regarding Equality, Conduct & Behaviour, Health & Safety, Data Protection, Safeguarding and Customer Care. |
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| **Flexibility** | The key responsibilities and duties of the role are neither exclusive nor exhaustive. All workers are expected to operate flexibly to support delivery of services and from time to time will be required to undertake responsibilities outside the normal remit of role description as required by the line manager, which are broadly commensurate with the job level and scope of competence.  The postholder may be required to attend evening meetings |

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| **Person Specification** | | | A - I - T | Weighting | |
| **Knowledge & Experience** | | *Method of candidate assessment: A = Application form I = Interview T = Test. Weighting: 3 = Essential, 2= criterial* |
| **Statutory or Mandatory qualifications:** | * Professional Housing Qualification | | A | 3 | |
| * Membership of the CIH | | A | 2 | |
| **Educational Ability** | Educated to degree standard or equivalent. | | A | 3 | |
| **Key Subject or Content Areas (inc: Desirable Qualifications)** | * A comprehensive knowledge of the law relating to homelessness as covered by the 1996 Housing Act and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. | | AI | 3 | |
| * Knowledge of the Children's Act, and the Care Act as this social care legislation interacts with housing and homelessness issues. | | AI | 2 | |
| * Good knowledge of the Welfare Reform Act | | AI | 2 | |
| * A comprehensive knowledge of the housing allocations as covered by the Housing Act 1996 Part VI | | AI | 2 | |
| **Knowledge** | * Excellent current knowledge of housing issues, case-law, policy and best practice in the delivery of services. | | AIT | 3 | |
| * knowledge of how to deliver a first-class customer focused service. | | AI | 2 | |
| * A good knowledge and understanding of the government's welfare reform programme and its implications for the private rented sector and homelessness. | | AI | 2 | |
| * A comprehensive knowledge of all homelessness legislation, housing legislation, welfare benefit expertise and adult and social care knowledge | | AI | 3 | |
| * A comprehensive knowledge of housing allocations and the operation of part VI of the Housing Act 1996 | | AI | 3 | |
| * Knowledge of private sector housing, security of tenure, protection from eviction and housing standards. | | AI | 3 | |
| * A thorough knowledge of the range of services provided by the Council for households who are in housing need. | | AI | 2 | |
| * Knowledge of the financial implications of decisions and the importance of prioritising value for money. | | AI | 2 | |
| **Management** | * Ability to manage, motivate and develop workers and resources within the relevant area(s) of responsibility to deliver required service outcome, ensuring understanding of how personal objectives align with service and corporate objectives. | | AI | 3 | |
| * To facilitate co-operative working within the area of responsibility and across the organisation to develop and maintain good working relationships with internal and external customers and stakeholders. | | AI | 2 | |
| * To share and cascade relevant information as necessary to team. To ensure learning and development opportunities are and utilised to the benefit of the organisation, through appropriate planning and evaluation. | | AI | 2 | |
| * Manage activities and performance in line with the corporate policy and procedure. | | AI | 3 | |
| **Experience** | * Extensive experience of working with people who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, in housing need and/or living in unsatisfactory housing. | | AI | 3 | |
| * Experience of providing an excellent level of customer care and customer service in a comparable customer service environment. | | AI | 2 | |
| * Extensive experience of prioritising competing demands in a pressurised environment, recognising service priorities. | | AI | 3 | |
| * Extensive experience of achieving performance targets and meeting departmental objectives. | | AI | 3 | |
| * Experience of leading and managing staff and developing them to effectively deliver services to customers in a front-line environment. | | AI | 3 | |
| * Experience of budget management and applying effective financial controls | | AI | 3 | |
| **Skills & Abilities** | * Highly developed oral and written communication skills, with an ability to explain complex information clearly to a range of audiences. | | AIT | 3 | |
| * Ability to analyse complex issues and written material quickly, to think flexibly and creatively about problems to identify opportunities and solutions, | | AI | 3 | |
| * Able to effectively manage a significant and varied workload including large accommodation projects, demonstrating good planning, effective delegation with strong project and performance management techniques. | | AI | 3 | |
| * Able to identify the needs of customers and develop and adapt service approach, whilst mitigating organisational risks | | AI | 2 | |
| * Ability to develop and maintain effective partnerships with a wide range of people and organisations. | | AI | 3 | |
| * Excellent negotiating, influencing and liaison skills. | | AI | 2 | |
| * Demonstrate effective leadership, with the ability to motivate and develop staff. | | AI | 3 | |
| * Demonstrate effective planning for the service, delegating tasks effectively, setting clear standards of performance and service delivery. | | AI | 3 | |
| * Performance focussed and able to meet targets and support the team to deliver. | | AI | 3 | |
| * Ability to work effectively and even-handedly with people from diverse backgrounds and circumstances. | | AI | 2 | |
| * Ability to effectively use range of IT applications. | | AI | 2 | |
| * Able to effectively manage large budgets, accounting for the financial implications of decision and able to ensure team leaders and officers understand those implications. | | AI | 3 | |
| * Able to identify and respond sensitively to political considerations. | | AI | 2 | |
| **Special Condition of Service** | * To work outside normal working hours to respond to emergencies or attend meetings. | | AI | 2 | |
| * To comply with the urgent needs of the service the post-holder will be required to work a duty rota. | | A | 2 | |
| * Must 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. | | A | 2 | |
| * To comply with the Council's Health & Safety Policy. | | A | 2 | |
| **Corporate Behaviours** | The Council has a set of behaviours that all employees are expected to deliver in the performance of their role. The behaviour framework can be found on the Councils internet page, and these should be reflected in your application and the way you work. As part of an individual’s personal development Redbridge expects employees of all levels to be continuously developing these core behaviours. | | AI | 3 | |
| **Effective and Collaborative Team Working** | * To take responsibility for personal development and actively participate in all learning and development. | | AI | 2 | |
| * To participate in the ongoing development, implementation, and monitoring of service plans. | | AI | 2 | |
| * To support and contribute to value for money, service efficiency and improvement. | | AI | 2 | |
| **Safeguarding and Disclosure** | **DBS Disclosure Required?** Not required/Basic/Enhanced | |  |  | |