

		JOB DESCRIPTION		Form JD1
JOB TITLE: Housing Options Worker		POST NUMBER:		
REPORTS TO (Job Title):		Housing Options Manager		
DEPARTMENT: Health, Housing and Adult Social Care		GRADE: 7		
JE REF:	2735 A04336	PANEL DATE:	12/12/17	
1.	<p>MAIN PURPOSE OF JOB</p> <p>To provide comprehensive advice in accordance with Housing Act 1996, Homeless Act 2002, Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and Code of Guidance to prevent homelessness by enabling people to remain in their own homes or to find alternative accommodation.</p> <p>To be involved in developing new initiatives and resources to assist in preventing homelessness</p> <p>To work in partnership with other agencies to promote the prevention of homelessness</p> <p>To assess customers and provide services in accordance with the Council's statutory duties to homeless people as set out in Parts 6 and 7 of the Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Act 2002 and Homeless Reduction Act 2017</p>			
2.	CORE RESPONSIBILITIES, TASKS & DUTIES:			
	i	To home visit customers who are identified as potentially homeless to check their circumstances, ensure that all advice given is relevant, to refer to supporting services and specialist advice agencies, carry out appropriate investigations with reference to current legislation and guidance		
	ii	<p>To offer comprehensive advice covering the full range of housing options and services offered by Health, Housing and Adult Social Care and other agencies to enable customers to find other solutions to their housing problems and to prevent homelessness including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlord and tenant disputes • Finding private rented accommodation • House purchase and shared / low cost ownership • Allocation of homes through North Yorkshire Homechoice / other social rented 		

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial and debt problems and welfare benefits • Relationship breakdowns and domestic violence • Access to supported housing • Access to appropriate short term support during period of prevention / relief of homelessness under Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and as set out in personal housing plans • Access to appropriate long term support • Administration of Spend to Save moneys • Family mediation and negotiation • Home improvement, adaptations and energy efficiency options • Administer bond guarantee scheme, rent in advance and spend to save monies
	iii	To make appropriate referrals to specialist agencies – ensuring this is done accurately, speedily, securely via Single Access Point (housing) or other specialist services. To follow up referrals where appropriate
	iv	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assist in the discharge of the councils statutory duty to homeless people (prevention, relief and full duty) by the most appropriate following a Housing Assessment and personal housing plans including: • Taking action to ensure that a persons current home continues to be available to them • Offering advice to ensure customers receive appropriate help to stay in their current accommodation • Ensuring that up to date information is available to others working to prevent homelessness • Assisting people to secure alternative accommodation if prevention is not possible • Mortgage rescue scheme • Where appropriate ensure that the Councils statutory duties to homeless people as set out in Parts 6 and 7 of the Housing Act 1996 are properly discharged
	v	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work closely with staff in other sections, departments and agencies to ensure that a holistic approach is taken to each customers case. That advice tailored to meet specific groups is provided <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Care leavers ○ People released from prison or youth detention centres ○ Former members of the regular armed forces ○ Victims of domestic abuse ○ People leaving hospital ○ People suffering mental illness

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Any other group identified by the Local Authority as being at particular risk of homelessness (rough sleepers)
	vi	To participate or to convene as appropriate case conferences or meetings to enable the best solution to be found for a particular customer
	vii	To keep detailed notes on all cases and referrals and to maintain and update manual or computerised record systems, ensuring that colleagues have the information they need on individual customers and that monitoring and performance is available
	viii	To contribute to or make detailed reports as required and to be responsible for correspondence, writing leaflets, developing promotional and educational tools
	ix	<p>To undertake work to help prevent homelessness in areas which may include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with public bodies regarding referrals (Homeless Reduction Act 2017) • Building up links with private landlords in the area, attending landlord forum • Initiating schemes to assist homeless people to find accommodation • Publicising services and encouraging people to take them up • Taking part in working groups • Giving talks to groups and schools • Providing training for internal departments and external agencies
	x	To actively contribute to the development and improvement of services to customers ensuring the highest standards are maintained and that changing needs are met
	xi	To provide accurate records and statistics in line with internal and external requirements
	xii	To deliver, attend and participate in training as required
3.	SUPERVISION / MANAGEMENT OF PEOPLE No: not responsible for direct line management of other staff. Reporting : Housing Options Manager Indirect: assist with on the job training, support of new recruits, students, volunteers, colleagues and other professionals. Informal co-working	
4.	CREATIVITY & INNOVATION The service is a responsive service but all aspects are guided by legislation, new caselaw, processes, policies, and good practice mean that new work processes are integrated into policy to reflect the current working environment. When making unfamiliar decisions there	

	<p>are generally other staff on duty who can support / act as reference points when issues / problems arise.</p> <p>Ability to work as team member and on own initiative, contribute to duty rota system. Part of a larger team involved in developing and improving services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamental that post holder is able to adapt method of working to suit a wide range of vulnerable customers. While the customer group displays a variety of issues there are numerous procedures and risk assessments in place and training available to prepare staff to deal with incidents and problems as a matter of course. • Staff should be able to deal with potentially violent or aggressive individuals, to be able to break down barriers where customers are reluctant to engage, using a variety of techniques to impart or extract information and agree solutions and actions. In addition customers may be suffering stress, emotional and / or have learning difficulties, literacy problems and need to communicate using a variety of techniques. • To break down barriers to enable customers to heed the advice given and act upon it • To be able to think on feet regarding numerous situations i.e. to de-escalate a situation which could become volatile. Need to be creative in approach, handling of difficult situation and agitated customers. Relevant training and procedures are in place to guide / prepare staff. • Design and deliver training to internal / external organisations. • Presentations and advice sessions to customer groups (eg parents groups) • Liaison with landlords – individually or in group forums
<p>5.</p>	<p>CONTACTS & RELATIONSHIPS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer group is varied including families, young people, people with mental health problems, people with substance abuse issues, care leavers and looked after children. Significant part of work is directly with customers – providing advice and carrying out statutory assessment • Internal – Contact is fundamentally in relation to an individual customer to gather or pass on information in order to give appropriate advice or a statutory decision under Housing Act 1996 and Homeless Reduction Act 2017. Information will be passed onto internal departments in cases of Safeguarding. Main contacts are Housing Registrations Team, Housing Benefit, Housing Management Officers, Temporary Accommodation and Resettlement Services, Social Workers, Children’s Services and Youth Offending Team • External agency contact - Contact is fundamentally in relation to an individual customer to gather or pass on information, arrange meetings or appointments, discuss solutions to housing issues,

	<p>health issues, emotional support issues. Contacts include Homeless Agencies, Housing Associations, advice and mediation services, Probation Service, Community Rehabilitation Company, NY Police, PCT, DWP, solicitors and advice agencies, other Local Authorities-.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact may also be in multi-agency meetings , training or networking sessions 				
<p>6.</p>	<p>DECISIONS – discretion & consequences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be responsible for the general advice given and referrals made to a customer in a time of crisis in relation to housing options and loss of accommodation. To advise on legal matters - in particular Housing Act 1996, Homeless Reduction Act 2017, Landlord and Tenant law, mortgage repossession, eviction and benefit advice. • To be responsible for processing and verifying North Yorkshire Home Choice (sub regional allocations policy and system) and having authorisation to give customers priority banding for social housing • Award prevention fund monies or mortgage rescue monies • Statutory homeless: to make legal decisions on behalf of City of York Council in accordance with Housing Act 1996, Homelessness Act 2002, Homeless Reduction Act 2017 and relevant Code of Guidance and caselaw. Any homeless decisions should be made in accordance with legislation, caselaw and guidance but cannot be a ‘blanket policy’ as each case must be assessed on its individual merits • Accurate recording, case work and submission of government statistics • To authorise temporary accommodation and to issue of relevant notices discharging the Councils duty to accommodate • Contacting Social Services and/or other services as necessary if feel people are at risk ie children or adults.- in line with Safeguarding policies. This is a statutory responsibility and follows strict guidelines. • Liaising with multitude of various specialist agencies to initiate and ensure comprehensive service to customers. • Providing information affecting decisions at ASB meetings, MAPPA and MARAC meetings, Case Conferences (child protection) including submitting factual reports about past and present tenancies/ incidents and making up to date assessments. • Responsible for health and safety of self, colleagues and building 				
<p>7.</p>	<p>RESOURCES – financial & equipment <i>(Not budget, and not including desktop equipment.)</i></p> <table border="0"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;"><u>Description</u></th> <th style="text-align: right;"><u>Value</u></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Administration of Spend to Save budget (currently in excess of £30K)</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Value</u>	Administration of Spend to Save budget (currently in excess of £30K)	
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<p>8.</p>	<p>WORK ENVIRONMENT – work demands, physical demands, working conditions & work context</p> <p>Work demands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets – completion of homeless assessments within statutory timeframe (Homeless Reduction Act 2017) reduction of homeless acceptances and subsequent increase in homeless prevention (national HClic statistics). Budget – prevention monies and temporary accommodation costs. • Need ability to work unsupervised and at own initiative. • Need to take responsibility of legal decisions. • Proactive and Reactive role meaning that daily and hourly demands for work which is not planned into the day. • Difficult to provide support to customers when there are limited housing options and / or have received negative decisions from other departments i.e. excluded form housing register, recently evicted. <p>Physical demands:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to work under pressure in busy office environment. Isolated work in interview rooms. Significant computer work. Mobility to carryout home visits <p>Working conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office environment, Customer Services Centre, in West Offices– interview rooms and front desk, home visits and other venues (eg hospital, prison) . Attendance at external meetings, presentations in public venues (schools, community halls) and visits to other agencies. <p>Work context:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with customers who are under a high level of stress and / or high risk factors – history of offending, arson, violence and aggression, mental health problems, learning difficulties, drug and alcohol issues, history of domestic violence or abuse, sex offenders, and risk of post holder being subject to abuse (primarily verbal but with threat of physical) is high as there are numerous occasions when staff re involved / witness to volatile explosive situation <p>DBS check required</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>KNOWLEDGE & SKILLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of housing legislation, especially homeless legislation, landlord and tenant law and welfare benefits and debt work

- Relevant advice work in statutory / voluntary sector
- High standards of written and oral communication
- Good interpersonal skills and ability to adapt in changing situations
- Ability to interpret and explain complex legislation
- Team working
- Achieving targets and deadlines
- Computer literate including knowledge / experience of specialist systems
- Ability and willingness to promote philosophy and work of service

This post requires a basic DBS check for children and adults

Ability to converse and provide advice and guidance to members of the public, in spoken English, to Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) - level C1 - Effective operational proficiency or advanced - Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously, almost effortlessly. Only a conceptually difficult subject can hinder a natural, smooth flow of language.

10. Position of Job in Organisation Structure

