

Job Title:	Homelessness & Housing Advice Officer/ Senior Homelessness & Housing Advice Officer
Service Area:	Housing
Grade:	7/8
Reporting Manager:	Homelessness & Housing Advice Manager
Direct reports:	None

Job summary:

To provide a housing advice and homelessness service to members of the public and other agencies, to include:

- Provision of housing advice and assistance to prevent or relieve homelessness and to provide appropriate options
- To fulfil the Council's statutory duty to provide advice and assistance under the Housing Act 1996 Parts VI and VII, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011.
- Strong working knowledge of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017
- Arrange temporary accommodation and support, as appropriate

Key responsibilities:

Responsible for investigating all means to prevent homelessness through Housing Advice and liaison with landlords, CAB, Debt Counsellors, SADA, Haven First, financial Institutions and supporting agencies.

Provide advice on a range of housing related problems including negotiation and liaison with mortgage lenders, landlords, solicitors, the courts, Social Services, Health Authority, Probation, DWP and other internal officers where appropriate to prevent homelessness.

Provide advice on all housing options including the privately rented sector and Common Housing Register.

Investigate and make decisions on the Council's legal responsibility towards homeless households, where an application has been received by the Council under the Housing Act 1996 Parts VI and VII, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011.

To fulfil the Council's statutory duty to provide advice and assistance under the Housing Act 1996 Parts VI and VII, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011.

To assist all households with advice to help them retain their existing accommodation or to help them secure alternative accommodation.

To arrange temporary accommodation for priority need households making bookings with our temporary accommodation provider and in nightly paid accommodation where unavoidable and necessary.

To prepare cases as required for review to be considered by the Reviewing Officer.

To attend court to give evidence in cases of possession, Fraud, County Court appeal or judicial review.

To promote and maintain contact with other statutory and voluntary organisations in promoting, developing and furthering initiatives to aid homeless people and to participate in homelessness & housing advice oriented work groups as may from time to time be required.

Offering advice and assistance to applicants to prevent homelessness, including advice & supports to 'bidders' using the Home 4 U choice based letting system,

To communicate with service-users using a variety of methods including interviewing in the office and at other addresses normally within the district on a regular basis to verify information provided by the service user, in line with the legislation, case law & council policy. This will also include lone working as part of our prevention programme.

Manage customer expectations in relation to the demand for social housing, providing appropriate evidence to support advice and alternative options provided.

Maintaining detailed working knowledge of homeless legislation and other relevant areas of law and keeping abreast of relevant case law.

Where necessary, conducts thorough investigations into homeless claims, having regard to the legislation, case law and council policy

Following completion of these investigations makes decisions on each case in line with established quality control mechanisms and notifies the applicant of the outcome in accordance with legislation and local procedures. In more complex cases liaise with the Homelessness and Housing Advice Manager prior to issuing a decision.

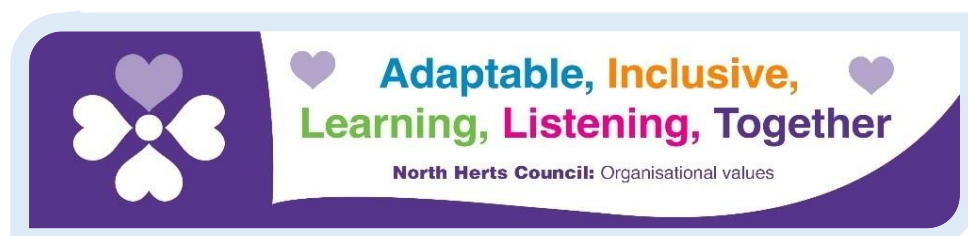
Provide assistance to applicants who do not qualify for rehousing under the Housing Act 1996.

Liaise closely with Registered Providers and landlords in cases where tenants are threatened with eviction.

Liaise with relevant council department's i.e Legal Services and Revenue & Benefits service.

To respond to general correspondence, complaints and enquiries from elected members, individuals and agencies relating to the work of the service area and to provide background information for Ombudsman/ MP enquiries as directed.

Prepare reports for the Homelessness and Housing Advice Manager/Strategic Housing Manager on cases for submission to the North Hertfordshire Housing Partnership Panel.



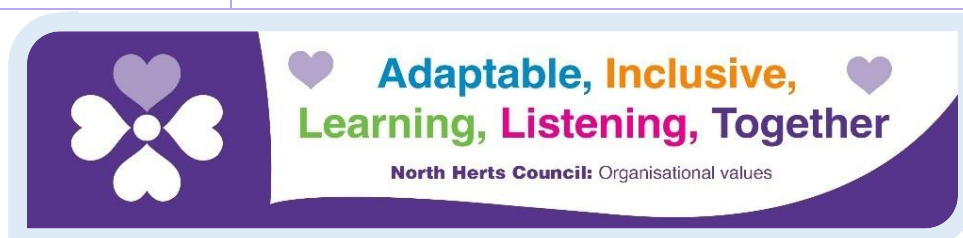
Work as part of a small team, insuring office cover is maintained, emergencies dealt with timely and teamwork and excellent communication are maintained.

Issue notifications, personal housing plans and outcomes of main duties in accordance with legislation and the code of guidance.

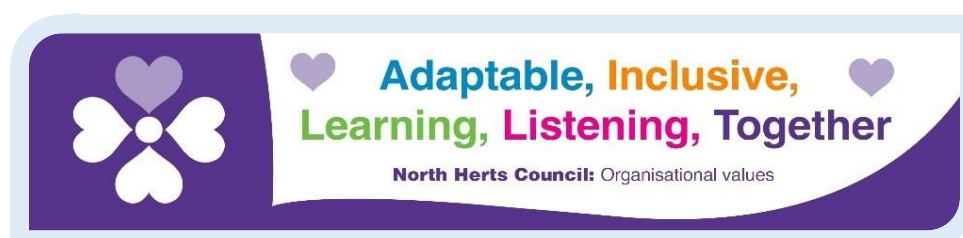
Please follow this link to read your general responsibilities:

[General responsibilities for employees | North Herts Council \(north-herts.gov.uk\)](http://north-herts.gov.uk)

Key Requirements:		Essential desirable
Qualifications:	Educated to A Level standard or equivalent	E
	Chartered Institute of Housing qualification (or part).	D
Job related experience & knowledge:	Experience of working in a housing or similar field such as private rented sector lettings or welfare benefits.	E
	Experience of providing housing advice, prevention homelessness and initial assessment applications under the Part VII 1996 Housing Act as amended	D
	Considerable experience of writing well structured, coherent and informative letters and reports.	E
	Significant experience of dealing with customers in difficult & stressful situations	E
	Understanding of wider framework of housing issues, especially issues relating to housing needs	D
	Conversant with Welfare benefits	D
	Working knowledge of housing legislation, particularly the Housing Act 1996 Parts VI and VII, the Homelessness Act 2002 the Localism Act 2011 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017	E
	Experience of partnership working	E
	Considerable experience of working in the housing sector	D
	Advanced theoretical, practical and procedural experience and knowledge of Part VII Housing Act 1996 as amended	D
	Comprehensive working knowledge and experience of administering general housing advice and the prevention of homelessness	D
	Good understanding of wider framework of housing issues, especially issues relating to housing needs	D
Proven ability to undertake statutory homelessness reviews on behalf of the Council	D	



	Experience of providing specialist technical support to team members, ensuring that decisions are made in accordance with relevant legislation and policy	D
	Excellent keyboard skills and use of Microsoft Windows and Microsoft Office suite of programmes	E
Skills & attributes required for the role:	Confident in conversing in fluent English which is sufficient to fulfil all aspects of the role	E
	Experience of working as part of a team with a supportive approach to colleagues	E
	Good level of computer skills and experience of using standard office systems e.g. Word, Excel etc.	E
	Ability to grasp complex legal issues relating to housing & homelessness issues	E
	Experience of dealing with stressful and urgent complex issues in a calm and orderly fashion	E
	Experience of remaining objective and impartial in emotionally charged crises and making difficult decisions	E
	Ability to approve payment of homelessness grants and loans on behalf of the Council within set parameters	E
	Flexible attitude to work with experience of adapting to a changing environment and deal with new situations in a positive and co-operative manner	E
	Experience of providing a high level quality service to customers both internal and external	E
	Experience to cope under pressure, prioritise own workload and use own initiative	E
	Experience of managing a high workload and meet deadlines	E
	Experience of dealing with sensitive and difficult issues in a professional and sympathetic manner	E
	Experience of effectively communicating in person and in writing to customers and colleagues	E
	Proven ability to share knowledge and experience with team members on an individual basis or via team training sessions	D
	Ability to identify problems and find innovative solutions	E
	Excellent administrative skills and ability to maintain accurate and clear records for day to day use and for statistical information.	E
	Ability to identify and assess the core issues in complicated and varied scenarios	E
	Proven ability to take responsibility for complex housing cases and specific work areas	D



Other:	Ability to occasionally work outside normal working hours Full driving licence, plus access to a vehicle for occasional business use	E
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Signed.....

Date.....

