# Job description

Post title: **Homelessness Assessment Manager**

Service area: Housing Needs and Strategy

Grade: PO4

Reports to: Head of Housing Needs

Your team: Inquiries and Decision officers

Number of supervisees: Up to 7 officers

## Our ambition

We're determined to make Islington more equal. To create a place where everyone, whatever their background, has the opportunity to reach their potential and enjoy a good quality of life.

We also have an ambitious goal – to be the best council in the country– with every employee clear about the part they play and inspired, focused and supported to give their very best.

We want to build an organisation where employees feel valued, inspired and empowered to help us achieve our goals and provide the best services possible to our residents.

## Our values and behaviours

‘Be Islington’ is about setting a clear challenge about what it means to be an Islington employee and sets the standard for every new recruit.

We ask our employees to ‘Be Islington’ – playing their part in working together for a more equal borough and to always be collaborative, be ambitious, be resourceful, and be empowering (‘CARE’).

## Our commitment to challenging inequality

We are committed to tackling inequality, racism and injustice and creating a more equal borough for all. In order to do this, we need to set the example by being a fair employer and creating a workplace environment which is free from discrimination, racism and inequality. Our approach needs to be proactive, consistently learning to create a more equal workplace and foster a culture which empowers all staff to challenge inequality.

Equality is at the heart of what we do. We want to celebrate and embrace our differences by:

* Ensuring our workforce is representative of the people we work on behalf of, our residents
* Creating equitable working environments and diverse teams
  + Understanding our residents in order to design and deliver services that help tackle inequality and improve life chances for our residents
  + Getting to know people and their differences
  + Interpreting issues and concerns from a cultural perspective and address situations or problems from the points-of-view of multiple cultures

## Key responsibilities

### Leadership

As a member of the council’s management team, to contribute proactively to the collective leadership for the council, working collaboratively with Members, senior officers, services across the council, partners and stakeholders to deliver the council’s objectives and priorities.

To drive positive cultural change, embodying and promoting the values and behaviours of the council and empowering staff to reach their full potential. Ensure that the performance and development framework is effective for all staff.

To manage a comprehensive and effective homelessness Inquiries and Decisions service (**I&D service**) which is provided by the Council, responsible for statutory decisions underpinned by the Housing Act. This pertains to the assessment all homeless persons under the relevant homelessness legislation and the provision of a formal decision letter (within the statutory timeframe) informing them of the council’s decision in relation to their application.

To ensure the provision of:

* prompt responses to solicitors’ and advocates requests
* an efficient main duty assessment of homeless applications for persons who present themselves to the Council seeking housing assistance.

To ensure the Housing Needs and Strategy service is seen as the best service in the country through the work you conduct on a daily basis

To place the residents at the heart of our services and to treat every resident as if we are providing a service to an important member of our family.

To promote the spirit of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the prevention of homelessness every day of your work.

As part of a rota, to contribute to decisions related to the provision of temporary accommodation (as necessary) and ensuring the provision of temporary accommodation is underpinned by robust decisions underpinned by the Housing Act.

To ensure legal matters related to judicial review challenges, provision of instructions are made in conjunction with the council’s legal department as means to minimise the likelihood of a financial loss or reputational damage to the council.

To lead on the resolution of complex homelessness queries, maximise customer satisfaction within the service and minimise any adverse impact on the council’s reputation.

To develop and maintain effective on-going working relationships and partnerships with other Council services and external agencies, including Registered Social Landlords, advocacy services and public bodies eg prisons, hospitals, probation services and health services that supports the Council’s objectives. This could be through meetings, training events, workshops, forums, and networking.

To ensure the effective implementation of mechanisms, protocols and Service Level Agreements with Social Services, Health and other agencies for effective liaison, for discharging statutory joint obligations and duties, and to ensure a seamless service for vulnerable clients.

To work in conjunction with the Homes and Communities service and other landlords to ensure efficient and effective and timely assessment of applications of tenants being evicted.

To participate and contribute to case conferences with internal council services (eg Adult Social Care, Childrens Services, MARAC, DSM, hospitals etc) and provide advice on matters related to homelessness.

To support Council initiatives and administer scheme for complex and vulnerable persons for eg. Rough sleepers, asylum seekers/refugees, victims/survivors of domestic abuse. LGBTQ+, care leavers etc.

## To contribute to the Council’s responses to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) enquiries and complaints and ensure agreed Council policies are adhered to. This includes provision of comprehensive responses to member enquiries that are responded to by the Housing Feedback service.

To ensure that policies and procedures comply with relevant legislation and are applied consistently and in an equitable way. This includes the maintenance of knowledge on new and relevant legislation and Code of Guidance related to homelessness.

To ensure responsibilities with regard to the safeguarding of adults and children at risk are met at all times and promotes the council’s safeguarding work.

To participate in the Council's out of hours’ service on a rota basis.

To assist in setting the Annual Service Plan and key objectives for the section and ensure that they are achieved, including the monitoring of performance so that standards are attained.

To be alert the possibility of housing fraud and work in conjunction with the council’s Housing Investigation team to prevent fraud.

To deputise for the Homelessness Service Manager as required in matters related to homelessness.

To ensure that the services which are provided are clear, accountable, responsive to customer/client needs and person centred. Verbal contact and written communication should be provided in plain English which takes account of any special requirements and conforms to Islington’s write first time and customer service standards.

To produce information in a clear and understandable format, including the use of other languages, as appropriate.

To keep clear, up to date, accurate and written and computerised records. Maintaining confidentiality and security of information in line GDPR.

To achieve agreed service outcomes and outputs, and personal targets, as agreed by the line manager.

To undertake training and constructively take part in meetings, supervision, seminars and other events designed to improve communication and assist with the effective development of the post and post holder.

To undertake other duties commensurate to the grade of the post.

### Resources and Financial management

To lead of the management of staff comprising Inquiries and Decisions officers including their coaching, mentoring and supervision via regular 1:1s and annual quality conversations.

To ensure robust outcomes-based performance management of staff that delivers a customer focussed service that puts oneself in the shoes of the customer.

To challenge and rectify poor performance in line with the council’s policies, striving for constant improvement.

To model positive leadership and behaviours, setting a good example to staff.

To achieve agreed service outcomes and outputs, and personal targets, as agreed by the line manager.

To undertake training and constructively take part in meetings, supervision, seminars and other events designed to improve communication and assist with the effective development of the post and post holder.

The post holder is expected to be committed to the Council’s CARE values, public service, equality and empowerment and to demonstrate this commitment in the way they carry out their duties.

Ensure all the services within the area(s) of responsibility are provided in accordance with the Council's commitment to high quality service provision to users.

### Compliance

To keep clear, up to date, accurate and written and computerised records. Maintaining confidentiality and security of information in line GDPR.

Carry out duties and responsibilities in accordance with the Council’s Health and Safety Policy and relevant legislation.

At all times carrying out responsibilities/duties within the framework of the Council's Dignity for all Policy. (Equal Opportunities Policy).

## Work style

A recognition that this is a frontline role within the Housing Needs service that will require regular interactions with vulnerable customers who will present with a range of complexities including health and social care needs. It is therefore critical that the postholder and those reporting to the postholder deliver services in a trauma informed way that places the customer at the heart of service delivery.

## Person specification

You should demonstrate on your application form how you meet the essential criteria. Please ensure that you address each of the criteria as this will be assessed to determine your suitability for the post.

Assessment Guide

A = Application

I = Interview

T = Test

### Essential criteria

#### Experience

| Essential criteria | Criteria description | Assessed by |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | Experience of working with vulnerable members of the public in a housing, health or social care field within a diverse inner-city environment in addition to a clear understanding of the complexity of needs presented by homeless applicants (singles and families) | A/I |
| 2 | Experience of managing a housing service delivering homelessness services in line with the Housing Act and managing a team of housing officers to deliver the homelessness service | A/I |
| 3 | Ability to reach decisions on complex homeless cases, in accordance with the homeless legislation, case law, code of guidance and council policies and practice | A/I |

#### Skills

| Essential criteria | Criteria description | Assessed by |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 4 | Advanced knowledge of the relevant legislation relating to homelessness and housing need, with particular reference to the Housing Act, Homelessness Code of Guidance, Homeless Reduction Act, Protection from Eviction Act, Domestic Abuse Act, Public Sector Quality Duty including the skills and ability to apply the aforementioned legislation within the context of homelessness | A/I |
| 5 | Ability to support with the management of budgets particularly in relation to the containment of costs associated with the provision of temporary accommodation | A/I |
| 6 | Advanced written communication skills required to draft responses, reports / briefings for a wide range of audiences including members and senior officers, stakeholders and customers | A/I |
| 7 | Advanced empathy and verbal communication skills required to provide an effective and sensitive service to customers in a pressurised setting | A/I |
| 8 | Ability to support with the management of projects and support with the achievement of the service and council’s strategic objectives | A/I |
| 9 | Working knowledge of the housing options available to people in housing need as well as a general understanding of welfare benefits | A/I |
| 10 | Ability to develop, maintain and work in partnership with internal departments across the council, health partners and the voluntary sector as a key representative of the council aiming at all times, to enhance the council’s reputation with its residents | A/I |
| 11 | Ability to assist in the formulation of policies and procedures to improve service delivery and provision | A/I |
| 12 | Ability to set, monitor and meet relevant performance and service standards | A/I |
| 13 | Ability to supervise, coach, mentor and encourage staff and encourage to facilitate their on-going personal development and ensure a high level of productivity and outcomes | A/I |
| 14 | Knowledge and ability to comply with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) | A/I |

## Special requirements of the post

(Insert any special requirements of the post. Delete if they do not apply.)

| Essential criteria | Criteria description | Assessed by |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 15 | This role will require you to obtain a Basic satisfactory clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service | A |
| 16 | Ability to adhere to the Council’s Equalities policies and CARE values (collaborative, ambitious, resourceful and empowering) | A/I |

## Our accreditations

Our accreditations include: the Healthy Workplace award, Timewise, London Living Wage Employer, Disability Confident Committed, The Mayor’s Good Work Standard, Stonewall Diversity Champion, and Time to Change.

