

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council

Person Specification



POST TITLE: Housing Options Adviser

GRADE: 4 - 5

SERVICE: Housing Services

This is a career graded post and candidates will be assessed against both the essential criteria requirements for both Grade 4 and Grade 5.

Candidates will only be considered as appointable to the Grade 5 position if they fulfil the essential criteria requirements, as detailed below, for both Grade 4 and Grade 5.

Candidates who are only able to demonstrate that they meet the Grade 4 requirements, will have the opportunity to progress to a Grade 5 through training and develop in post and upon being able to demonstrate they meet the Grade 5 requirements.

CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL Grade 4 requirements	ESSENTIAL Grade 5 requirements	HOW IDENTIFIED
EXPERIENCE	<p>Experience of working in a front-line position providing comprehensive housing advice to members of the public, with a focus on homelessness prevention.</p> <p>Working with private landlords and letting agents to secure accommodation for people in housing need.</p>	<p>Experience of making legally robust homelessness section 184 decisions, in accordance with statutory guidance and appropriate professional resources.</p> <p>Experience of devising bespoke Personalised Housing Plans.</p> <p>Experience of contributing to a team's performance targets and meeting departmental objectives in order to relieve homelessness, through a variety of housing options".</p> <p>Experience of being a team lead in specific areas such as domestic abuse or mental health and able to mentor and/or coach more junior Housing Options Advisors".</p>	<p>Application form and interview</p>

CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL Grade 4 requirements	ESSENTIAL Grade 5 requirements	HOW IDENTIFIED
QUALIFICATIONS/ TRAINING	<p>Educated to A Level (or equivalent) at grades A to C (or equivalent grading).</p> <p>or</p> <p>Have demonstrable experience of working within housing options and homelessness.</p>	<p>Hold or studying for a professional qualification in Housing (desirable).</p> <p>or</p> <p>have undertaken relevant training in areas including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - eligibility for housing for persons from abroad; - assessing vulnerability; - housing rights and security of tenure; -Public Sector Equality Duty 	Application form and interview
KNOWLEDGE	<p>Appropriate understanding of Housing legislation including the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, and the Homelessness Reduction Act.</p> <p>A good understanding of the welfare benefit system and welfare reform changes.</p>	<p>Having a thorough understanding of and a confidence to give sound housing advice and the ability to apply relevant caselaw to cases in order to prevent homelessness.</p> <p>A sound understanding of affordability assessments, including assessing a reasonable expenditure using sources of objective evidence.</p>	Application form and interview
PRACTICAL & INTELLECTUAL SKILLS	<p>Excellent influencing and negotiation skills - for example, when working with landlords to prevent the eviction of tenants.</p> <p>Ability to write detailed and well-reasoned case notes based on the evaluation of enquiries made and evidence received.</p> <p>Ability to effectively manage and prioritise a caseload of applicants and use own initiative.</p> <p>Excellent communication skills. Verbal – includes being able to deliver difficult messages, e.g. to</p>	<p>Ability manage larger caseloads (including escalated cases with complex issues) in line with the Council's statutory duty with minimal supervision to prevent homelessness</p>	Application form, interview and test

CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL Grade 4 requirements	ESSENTIAL Grade 5 requirements	HOW IDENTIFIED
	<p>clearly explain what the Council can and can't provide in terms of housing assistance Written – includes ability to write easy to understand homelessness decision letters.</p> <p>Information technology skills, including word and excel.</p>		
DISPOSITION/ ATTITUDE	<p>Ability to build collaborative relationships and working partnerships both in the Council and externally with partner organisations.</p> <p>Ability to work in a team and develop valuable and supportive relationships with colleagues.</p> <p>Organised and can work calmly and accurately under pressure.</p>		Interview and test
SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS	<p>Ability to work outside normal office hours.</p> <p>To assist in the operation of Council's Emergency Plan, including working at rest centres outside of the normal working day in the event of a crisis.</p>	<p>Support the Housing Options Manager in raising awareness of the Council's Housing Service e.g.</p> <p>- By being able to confidently hold and conduct Housing Option Surgeries with external organisations.</p>	Application form and interview