# Job description

Post title: **Homelessness Prevention + Relief officer**

Service area: Housing Needs and Strategy

Grade: S02

Reports to: Homelessness Prevention + Relief Manager

Your team: Homelessness Prevention + Relief Team

Number of supervisees: 0

## 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

### Primary Job Function

To ensure an effective homeless prevention and relief service is provided to Islington’s residents in housing need working within the framework of the Housing Act, Homelessness Code of Guidance, Homeless Reduction Act, Protection from Eviction Act, Domestic Abuse Act and Public Sector Quality Duty to include:

* Undertaking an holistic housing assessment providing targeted intervention and ensure all customers have a positive experience and receive the right answer first time with consistent high quality.
* Where eligible, assess individuals and families for temporary accommodation
* Advice and support to access private rented accommodation options
* Facilitate mediation between landlords and tenants, parents relatives and family relationship breakdowns in order to prevent homelessness.
* Provision of guidance regarding welfare benefits, income maximisation, employment opportunities and onward referrals where appropriate.
* Ending prevention and relief duties for non-priority cases
* Ending relief and main housing duties for priority need cases including providing tenancy sustainment, nominations to suitable accommodation, final offers and reassessments of waiting list points.
* Completion of data input on Iworld to support the council’s HCLIC returns to central government.

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 prevention of homelessness every day of your work.

To operate to the highest professional customer care standards for the delivery of the homelessness service. This includes the provision of a responsive and empathetic service that places the customer at the heart of service delivery. All work undertaken should be through a trauma informed lens with the awareness that trauma and its affects can impact people differently.

Responsibility in delivering a co-ordinated approach to homelessness prevention and relief for families and vulnerable persons through developing and maintaining effective working relationships with other Council teams (within Housing Needs and Strategy), services and external agencies.

To ensure effective implementation an adherence to processes and protocols with Social Services, for effective liaison and for discharging statutory joint obligations and duties.

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

To make onward referrals to the relevant support agencies, public sector bodies and voluntary sector organisations ensuring the broadest range of housing options is available to customers.

To support the Homelessness Prevention + Relief Manager with the provision of detailed information in response to Councillor enquiries, complaints and Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) enquiries.

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 attendance at meetings, training events and workshops.

To maintain an excellent working knowledge of a range of housing options to be able to advise applicants on the housing options available to them.

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

To undertake periodic home visits as required as part of the enquiries before the utilisation of prevention funds.

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

### Resources

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

To achieve agreed service outcomes and outputs, and personal targets, as agreed by Homelessness Prevention + Relief 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.

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 make effective use of appropriate information technology systems to carry out duties in the most efficient and manner.

### Compliance

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 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.

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.

## 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 dealing with the public providing practical housing advice and tangible housing solutions in a statutory or voluntary sector agency | A/I |
| 3 | Experience of working in an empathetic and trauma informed way | A/I |

#### Skills

| Essential criteria | Criteria description | Assessed by |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 4 | 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 | 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 |
| 6 | Advanced empathy and verbal communication skills required to provide a sensitive service to vulnerable customers in a pressurised setting | A/I |
| 7 | Ability to meet set performance and service standards | A/I |
| 8 | Ability to support with the achievement of the service and council’s strategic objectives | A/I |
| 9 | Ability to develop, maintain and work in co-ordinated partnerships 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 |
| 10 | A keen awareness, understanding and commitment to the protection and safeguarding of children and young people. and or vulnerable adults | A/I |
| 11 | Knowledge and ability to comply with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) | A/I |

## Special requirements of the post

| Essential criteria | Criteria description | Assessed by |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 12 | This role will require you to obtain a Basic clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service | A |
| 13 | 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.

