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 4 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	Experience of working in a front-line position providing housing advice to members of the public, with experience in homelessness prevention. Working with private landlords and letting agents to secure accommodation for people in housing need.	Experience of making legally robust homelessness section 184 decisions, in accordance with statutory guidance and appropriate professional resources. Experience of devising bespoke Personalised Housing Plans. Experience of contributing to a team's performance targets and meeting departmental objectives in order to relieve homelessness, through a variety of housing options". 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".	Application form and interview

CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL Grade 4 requirements	ESSENTIAL Grade 5 requirements	HOW IDENTIFIED
QUALIFICATIONS/ TRAINING	Educated to A Level (or equivalent) at grades A to C (or equivalent grading). **or** Have demonstrable experience of working within housing options and homelessness.	Hold or studying for a professional qualification in Housing (desirable). **or** have undertaken relevant training in areas including: • eligibility for housing for persons from abroad; • assessing vulnerability; • housing rights and security of tenure; • Public Sector Equality Duty	Application form and interview
KNOWLEDGE	Basic understanding of Housing legislation including the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, and the Homelessness Reduction Act. A good understanding of the welfare benefit system and welfare reform changes.	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. A sound understanding of affordability assessments, including assessing a reasonable expenditure using sources of objective evidence.	Application form and interview
PRACTICAL & INTELLECTUAL SKILLS	Excellent influencing and negotiation skills - for example, when working with landlords to prevent the eviction of tenants. Ability to write detailed and well-reasoned case notes based on the evaluation of enquiries made and evidence received. Ability to effectively manage and prioritise a caseload of applicants and use own initiative. Excellent communication skills. Verbal – includes being able to deliver difficult messages, e.g. to clearly explain what the Council	Ability to manage larger caseloads (including escalated cases with complex issues) in line with the Council's statutory duty with minimal supervision to prevent homelessness	Application form, interview and test

CRITERIA	ESSENTIAL Grade 4 requirements	ESSENTIAL Grade 5 requirements	HOW IDENTIFIED
	can and can't provide in terms of housing assistance Written – includes ability to write easy to understand homelessness decision letters. Information technology skills, including word and excel.		
DISPOSITION/ ATTITUDE	Ability to build collaborative relationships and working partnerships both in the Council and externally with partner organisations. Ability to work in a team and develop valuable and supportive relationships with colleagues. Organised and can work calmly and accurately under pressure.		Interview and test
SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS	Ability to work outside normal office hours. 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. Basic DBS check.	Support the Housing Options Manager in raising awareness of the Council's Housing Service e.g. Able to confidently hold and conduct Housing Option Surgeries with external organisations.	Application form and interview