

## Job Description

<b>POST TITLE:</b>	Private Sector Housing Officer
<b>DIRECTORATE:</b>	Neighbourhoods & Housing
<b>SERVICE:</b>	Private Sector Housing
<b>GRADE:</b>	SO1 – PO3
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Within London Borough of Hackney
<b>RESPONSIBLE TO:</b>	Principal Private Sector Housing Officer
<b>RESPONSIBLE FOR:</b>	N/A

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### PURPOSE OF THE JOB:

To provide a service to Hackney's Private Housing Sector that makes a real difference to residents' lives by ensuring that conditions and management in private residential accommodation are of a satisfactory standard.

To assess housing conditions and management in private sector housing, give advice and take action as necessary, including enforcement action or grant assistance to ensure that living conditions and management standards are brought up to satisfactory standards.

To assess and process applications for Disabled Facilities and Minor Adaptations Grants and where necessary monitor adaptation works to enable disabled residents to remain living independently in their homes.

To process applications for property licences, including inspection of housing conditions and assessment of management standards.

Take enforcement action in respect of licensing requirements, non-compliance with housing conditions, housing management and other related defects.

### MAIN AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY:

The post-holder will have responsibility and accountability for the following:

## **GRADES SO1-SO2**

### **Housing Conditions**

- Undertake the investigation of service requests and programmed inspections under the provisions of the Housing Act 2004, Environmental Protection Act 1990 and other relevant legislation.
- Carry out inspections, with a high level of competency, of a wide variety of homes in the Private Rented Sector.
- Assess housing conditions under Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004 (Housing Health and Safety Rating System) and take the most appropriate course of action in each case to achieve compliance.
- Draft schedules of works, notices and orders for enforcement under the provisions of Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004 and other relevant legislation in accordance with the Council's scheme of delegation.

### **Property Licensing**

- Raise awareness and provide advice and guidance on compliance with the Council's property licensing schemes and statutory obligations under Parts 1 to 4 of the Housing Act 2004 and other relevant legislation in accordance with the Council's scheme of delegation.
- Be fully conversant with the powers, duties and obligations conferred by the relevant legislation.
- Investigate the licensing status of premises.
- Process applications for property licences, including inspection of housing conditions and assessment of management standards. Draft all appropriate documentation and make recommendations for approval or refusal of licenses.
- Prepare detailed reports or briefing documents containing detailed analysis of issues, proposals for implementation and recommendations for action.
- Carry out complex inspections, with a high level of competency, of a wide variety of licensable homes in the Private Rented Sector including Houses in Multiple Occupation.
- In licensed properties monitor and assess compliance with licensing conditions.

### **Enforcement**

- Correspond with landlords and managing agents to achieve compliance with all relevant legislation.
- Undertake enforcement action in respect of private sector housing using powers under all relevant legislation as delegated under the Council's scheme of delegation.
- Prepare justifications for, and issue, Simple Cautions where appropriate.
- Issue Financial Penalty Notices in accordance with the Council's adopted statement of principles and defend appeals relating thereto.
- Prepare applications to the first tier tribunal for Rent Repayment Orders and attend tribunals as required.

- Prepare prosecution cases in accordance with the enforcement policy, PACE, RIPA, other relevant legislation and within the service's time limits.
- Attend Court hearings as a witness for the prosecution.
- Attend tribunal hearings in relation to appeals against action taken under all relevant legislation as delegated under the Council's scheme of delegation.

### **Housing Grants Policy**

- Through the Council's grants policy deliver a range of financial support to vulnerable residents, including Disabled Facilities Grants, to enable them to remain living independently in safe and healthy homes that are suitable for their needs.
- Scrutinize schedules of works, tenders and estimates to assess fulfilment of requirements and assure value for money.
- Liaise with colleagues in other parts of the Council and in partner organisations giving advice on specific PSH grants matters.

### **SERVICE DELIVERY:**

- Keep abreast of appropriate legal and technical developments in the field of housing.
- Demonstrate a 'can do' approach to getting things done, ensuring a prompt and efficient delivery of service.
- Demonstrate a positive attitude to team working within Private Sector Housing and with all stakeholders.
- Provide consistently high quality customer care and value for money in service delivery.
- Keep abreast of and follow all relevant Council procedures in relation to the work of Private Sector Housing.
- Respond to all day-to-day correspondence and customer contact in line with adopted service standards.
- Provide managers with accurate information for responses to Freedom of Information Act requests and enquiries for the Mayor, Councillors, MPs and senior managers.
- Ensure comprehensive casework records are maintained in the service's IT database and other record keeping systems.
- Effectively carry out casework and projects in any relevant work area under the direction of the relevant Team Manager.
- Deliver consistently high standard of work in respect of a high level and demanding caseload.
- Provide innovative and pro-active solutions to improve service delivery and respond to problems ensuring the delivery of excellent service to service users.
- Promote high standards of quality and transparency in the local delivery of the PSH service plan.
- Cover the work of other officers as necessary in times of leave, sickness or other absenteeism.

### **GENERAL REQUIREMENTS OF THE ROLE:**

- To contribute to the assessment of own training needs and undertake training as required to meet the needs of the team.
- To be fully conversant with the powers, duties and obligations conferred by the warranted legislation and to undertake the necessary action as and where applicable.
- To participate fully in the work of the team and to undertake project work.
- To comply with the written procedures and management requirements for the service.
- To develop relevant IT skills and to record information accurately in the team's property database and other IT software systems and to keep records up to date, after appropriate training.
- Ass appropriate, to develop awareness of and utilise the requirements of appropriate legislation (including the Police and Criminal Evidence Act and the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act), especially in regard to cautioning suspects, taking witness statements and conducting interviews.

#### **OTHER DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Use own initiative in day-to-day casework and bring any areas of concern or failings the Team Manager's attention.
- Demonstrate a wholehearted commitment to the organisation's values and culture.
- When required, provide flexibility across the service to cover peaks and troughs of work demand.
- Have a clear understanding of client needs including equal opportunities, diversity issues and customer care.
- From time to time, as part of a team, work outside standard office hours for the purpose of targeted enforcement activity.
- Undergo any relevant training courses as required by the Team Manager.
- Undertake such additional duties or responsibilities consistent with the role and grade.

#### **ADDITIONAL DUTIES RELEVANT TO GRADE PO1 IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE**

- Routinely undertake more complex cases as allocated by the Team Manager and progress to completion.
- Undertake joint visits and offer advice to other team members on technical matters and procedures.
- Assist in providing training of other team members.

#### **ADDITIONAL DUTIES RELEVANT TO GRADE PO2 IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE**

- Take a lead role in developing new work procedures.
- Draft complex work in default schedules and reports required in connection with appeals against notices an orders.

- Acquire and apply specialist knowledge of a specific, significant and complex area of service delivery brief staff and deliver training in respect of that specialty.

#### **ADDITIONAL DUTIES RELEVANT TO GRADE PO3 IN ADDITION TO THE ABOVE**

- Take a lead role in compliance with PACE and RIPA requirements,
- Take on responsibility for undertaking complex criminal investigations, prosecutions, appeals or public inquiries.
- Take on responsibility for organising, delivering and evaluating training for staff in a technical area.
- Undertake projects, including in a co-ordinating or organising role. This may involve supervising less experienced members of the team.
- Take responsibility for keeping up to date with developments in this area and for providing training and guidance to colleagues.
- Represent the service at multi-disciplinary forums and at meetings with external agencies as required.
- Contribute to the development, maintenance and monitoring of systems, registers, records and databases for the efficient storage and retrieval of data,
- Provide draft responses to the Team Manager for Freedom of Information Act requests and enquiries for the Mayor, Councillors, MPs and senior managers and ensure these are provided within agreed timescales.
- Provide mentoring and support for staff in specific areas or work or for specific cases.

***NB: All employees are expected to adhere to the Council's Diversity & Equality and Health and Safety Policies.***

## Person Specification

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### QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING:

- Degree or Diploma in Environmental Health (or equivalent housing related qualification)
- A recognized HHSRS assessors training course

### EXPERIENCE:

#### SO1 grade

- Experience of inspection, enforcement and/or grant work in private sector housing at entry level or relevant and appropriate transferrable skills

#### Additional for SO2 grade

- Experience of inspection and enforcement and/or grant work in private sector housing in a local authority context

#### Additional for PO1 grade

- Broad experience of inspection, enforcement and grant work in Private Sector Housing in a local authority context

#### Additional for PO2 grade

- Experience of making presentations and briefings to management, other colleagues within the Council and/or external stakeholders

#### **Additional for PO3 grade**

- Experience of project management, researching topics and in the preparation and writing of reports
- Experience of delivering training sessions to staff, other colleagues in the Council and/or external stakeholders

### **JOB RELATED KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS:**

#### **SO1 grade**

- Practical and theoretical knowledge at entry level sufficient to carry out the duties of Private Sector Housing Officer with ability and willingness to develop it
- Ability to work as part of a team, according to the flexible demands and objectives of the Service
- Ability to communicate clearly in writing
- Ability to deal with enquiries and complaints
- Ability to follow detailed work procedures
- Ability to use Windows-based IT systems and database packages- maintaining and retrieving data and to use the Internet.

#### **Additional for SO2 grade**

- Sound practical and theoretical knowledge sufficient to carry out the duties of Private Sector Housing Officer.

#### **Additional for PO1 grade**

- Sound practical and theoretical knowledge sufficient to carry out the duties of Private Sector Housing Officer.
- Able to prioritise own activities, to be well organised and motivated and to work to performance standards, targets and deadlines.
- Able to give professional advice and opinions, explaining statutory requirements, and giving and seeking information.
- Ability to investigate and research breaches of legislation, including the preparation of statutory notices, reports and letters etc.
- Ability to prepare evidence and reports for enforcement action such as formal cautions, civil penalties, prosecutions etc.

#### **Additional for PO2 grade**

- Ability to make presentations and briefings to management, other colleagues within the Council and/or external stakeholders.

**Additional for PO3 grade**

- Ability and willingness to take on complex projects
- Ability to deal with complex and politically sensitive issues

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