

ROLE PROFILE

Role Title:	Housing Options Advisor
Department:	Housing Services
Role Purpose:	<p>Work as part of a team to provide a housing options and advice service leading to customers that are able to make informed decisions about their housing needs and have access to comprehensive advice and assistance. Provide a range of routes to access suitable and sustainable housing, working in partnership with Private sector landlords and letting agencies to support and sustain tenancies and to prevent homelessness.</p> <p>To work alongside the Newcastle Housing advisors and the Council's Private Sector Officers to deliver practical and innovative solutions to prevent homelessness within the private rented sector</p> <p>The officer needs to provide support, advice and mediation to tenants and landlords and be the first point of contact for tenants and landlords. To support and help manage the homeless prevention schemes and work in partnership with Housing Benefit departments</p> <p>To work with Private landlords to increase the supply of good quality and suitable private rented accommodation to prevent homelessness</p> <p>To administer the Homes Direct Choice Based Lettings Scheme and provide comprehensive housing options advice and assistance to customers.</p> <p>To fulfil the statutory obligations in respect of access to housing on behalf of Newcastle Under Lyme Council.</p>
Reporting to:	Senior Housing Advisor
Responsible for:	None
Disclosure level:	Standard DBS
Role Level:	<u>Frontline Worker</u>

Key Role Responsibilities	<p>Work with private landlords to encourage them to take homeless referrals, applicants in housing need and tenants claiming housing benefit. Foster good working relationships with private landlords and be a first point of contact should the tenants experience problems, liaise with Housing Benefit departments and any other relevant agencies to provide additional resource and mediation services</p> <p>Work with private landlords to encourage them to contact Newcastle Housing Advice or other relevant housing advice services prior to serving a notice on tenants to enable mediation to take place if appropriate and if landlords are looking to sell the property that statutory services have maximum notice to help source alternative accommodation for customers</p> <p>To develop and share a comprehensive network of contacts with the private sector, identify and develop suitable schemes within the private sector housing to facilitate the prevention of homelessness.</p>
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Carry out pre-tenancy checks on properties to ensure they are suitable for referrals Provide Landlords with expert advice and guidance on aspects of lettings and property standards, to increase the supply of good quality private rent accommodation.

Negotiate and mediate with Landlords on matters including rent levels, improve housing conditions and resolve disputes between landlords and tenants tenancy matters in order to sustain tenancies, and refer customers for support where appropriate.

Identify if support services of any type are needed to maintain a tenancy and work to ensure these are put in place, e.g., mediation, resettlement, tenancy support, and money advice with appropriate agencies Work with Housing Benefit departments to ensure the maximum use of DHP to prevent homelessness

Ensuring customers receive a high quality service.

To present a positive and professional image of Midland Heart to customers and partners.

Ensure Midland Heart standards, policies and procedures are followed at all times.

Provide general advice to customers in relation to their housing options.

Be included in reception rota for face to face contact with customers.

Respond to enquiries in relation to housing options.

Verify and prepare adverts for properties on Homes Direct

Prepare and verify shortlists in accordance with the relevant Housing allocation Policy. Collect and verify all relevant documents to provide a suitable nomination.

Feedback to local authorities and landlords the outcome of nominations.

Assist customers to apply for Homes Direct and other social landlord housing registers.

When vulnerable applicants are identified ensure measures are taken to support them.

Administer and undertake reviews of the Homes Direct housing register.

Support the collection of performance information and statistical data as required.

Maintain and update information in property shops.

Regularly liaise with partner private registered providers and other private landlords and agencies to develop links to support the housing options service. Attend meetings and participate in relevant forums, including the landlords forum to positively promote and market the services delivered by Newcastle Housing Advice.

	<p>Ensure manual and computer records are up to date and provide performance information and collate statistical data as required.</p> <p>Maintain a detailed knowledge and understanding of relevant allocations policies to ensure accurate and up to date information and advice is given.</p> <p>Any other reasonable duties in relation to providing a comprehensive housing options and advice service</p> <p>Assist with investigating and responding to customer complaints.</p> <p>The post holder will be expected to promote and comply with the Midland Heart Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety, Data Protection and other relevant options.</p>
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Education, Qualifications and Training	GCSE English, Math's, ICT and at least 2 other subjects at level 'C' or equivalent or ability to demonstrate suitable work experience necessary for delivering the role.
Knowledge and Experience	<p>Knowledge of The Private housing sector.</p> <p>Knowledge of Homeless legislation.</p> <p>A demonstrable track record of effective communication with a range of internal and external customers both individually and collectively.</p> <p>An ability to engage hard to reach groups to achieve specific aims.</p> <p>Understands the barriers customers might face in accessing housing.</p> <p>Ability to deal with complex situations logically, with clear thinking and perseverance whilst under pressure.</p> <p>Aware of the help and support that is available to customers to access different housing options.</p> <p>An understanding of the range of housing options that are available to customers, housing law and different tenures, including Social housing and the Private sector.</p>
Role Specific Skills & Behaviours	<p>Effective record keeping and time management skills couples with knowledge and competence in use of IT systems.</p> <p>Strong verbal and written communication skills.</p> <p>Ability to influence internal and external colleagues to deliver a shared objective.</p> <p>Able to meet set deadlines.</p> <p>Able to work to Midland Heart's values.</p> <p>Able to travel to customer's homes and other premises/ offices.</p> <p>Understanding of and commitment to the principles of equality and diversity.</p>