Job Description and Particulars of Appointment

- Job Title: Homelessness Prevention Officer
- Post Number: P26653
- Grade and SCP: Grade 9 SCP23 (£35,570) to SCP25 (£37,563)
- Directorate: Communities and Customer

Where your role fits at Shropshire Council

At Shropshire our priority is to be a 'best value' authority that delivers, enables, and influences for Shropshire and its residents by:

- Being financially stable and sustainable
- Having clear priorities and purpose
- Supporting and enabling our workforce to excel

Recognising the challenge across local government today. This starts with our Improvement Plan to address immediate challenges, while ensuring a focus on the future and how the Council will need to look, feel, and operate to best serve the needs of the county and its residents, and being aware of changes in national policy.

Our Shropshire values: PROUD

- Partnerships
- Respect
- Opportunities
- Understanding
- can Do

Aim to unify the workforce, support transformation, improve trust, and build a modern, sustainable Council.

As a member of the Homeless Prevention Team within Housing Services, you will support the achievement of these key priorities, making a real difference to the lives of people in Shropshire.

The Housing Options Team work in partnership with support agencies and housing providers to give advice and assistance to help people explore their housing options, and to help people who face losing their home or who are homeless.

The Housing Options Team ensures that the Local Authority's obligations under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) are fulfilled and maximises opportunities for preventing homelessness.

Overview of your role

- The purpose of this position is to provide a customer focussed service to meet the housing needs of customers who are threatened with homelessness (or who maybe homeless).
- The key purpose is to engage with those presenting as threatened with homelessness to prevent them losing their home wherever possible. This will mean getting to the cause of the reasons the accommodation may no longer be available and to find solutions that can maintain accommodation or if that is not possible to find alternative accommodation before the person loses their home.
- Engagement with families, landlords as well as other partner organisations to find solutions quickly and ensure these can be sustained to prevent homelessness.
- To carry out homelessness assessments in accordance with Homelessness legislation.
- Maintaining a high level of specialist knowledge in relation to rough sleepers and homelessness.

Who will your manager be and what will you be responsible for?

You will be:

- reporting to the Homelessness Prevention and Welfare Support Manager, who is in turn responsible for your health and safety, training and development.
- expected to lead and/or contribute to a range of projects and build relations with both internal and external partners in order achieve specified outcomes but will not have direct authority over those involved.
- Responsible for preparing responses in line with Shropshire Council's corporate processes and national/regulatory/statutory processes (e.g. complaints, MP enquiries, Information Governance requests, customer enquiries, etc.). These responses should be in line with the quality and timescale expectations set out within Shropshire Council's published procedures and/or case allocation emails and discussions.
- Responsible for completing within expected timescales all mandatory corporate and role specific training. Training requirements will be detailed in your corporate induction and Performance Development Review (PDR). Courses are accessed via the council Learning Management System via the Intranet.

What will you be doing?

- Undertaking homelessness assessments of those reporting to the council as at risk of being homeless, working with them to identify the most appropriate housing solution for their needs.
- Providing housing advice to clients on a full range of housing options and in particular supporting clients in maintaining current accommodation where they are at risk of homelessness.
- Determining whether the council has a prevention duty to assist clients as risk of homelessness and where this is established setting out a Personal Housing Plan of actions required. Regularly reviewing these plans.
- Discharging of duties recognising successful outcomes to prevent homelessness and those that could not be successfully prevented.
- Engaging with family and friends who have excluded/threatened to exclude the person reporting as at risk of homelessness. Looking to repair fractured relationships, offering
- mediation to resolve disputes, or delaying exclusion to find time to explore alternative housing.
- Assisting clients with day-to-day tenancy issues, payment of rent, claiming relevant benefits, support planning to help sustain their tenancy or other accommodation.
- Engaging with landlords to prevent homelessness, offering agreements between the landlord and their tenants to ensure tenancy agreements are maintained, rent is being paid and no anti-social behaviour or other breaches of agreements.
- Attending Court to support clients facing eviction procedures.
- Offering support to those who have a relationship breakdown to manage the separation, offer support and advice to those suffering domestic abuse, so they are safe and can protect their current occupation or advise on options to remove themselves from an abusive situation.
- To provide practical support and information to clients to find alternative accommodation where appropriate, e.g. assisting clients in placing bids through Homepoint, liaising with council registered providers, assisting in looking for private lets and liaising with private sector landlords.
- Working with clients to agree and set goals and actions.
- To receive and deal with enquiries from members of the public, tenants, contractors, visitors and council staff in a professional and efficient manner with due regard to customer care standards.
- Establish and build links with other colleagues, teams, partner organisations and third sector agencies to provide holistic advice and support to those threatened with homelessness.
- To undertake out of hours cover for the service on a rota basis.

- Maintaining an accurate and timely record of all activities using the council housing database.

The above duties are an illustrative outline and are not an exhaustive list. You will be expected to become involved in a range of work to enable the service to respond effectively to the changing requirements of the Council and changes affecting the workforce.

What we expect of you

You will:

- adopt a customer focused approach when delivering your service, ensuring engagement with service users and maintenance of an appropriate personal profile,
- act as an advocate for your service and work collaboratively with colleagues across the whole Council to meet the needs of the people of Shropshire,
- meet individual, service and personal development targets agreed through the Performance Development Review Process, learn from experience and are committed to continuous improvement individually and as an employee of the Council,
- work with colleagues to meet your team's key performance indicators, support a culture of team working and ensure the team functions successfully in support of the Council's corporate and service objectives.
- meet the behaviours and competencies adopted by the Council in the way in which they achieve their objectives and carry out their work.
- A priority for the Council is the protection of vulnerable people, ensuring they are able to live as independently as possible. The post-holder will promote and engage with Council's responsibility to safeguard the welfare of children, young people and adults, and protect their right to be safe from harm.

What are your conditions of Service

The conditions of service are those laid down by Shropshire Council, which have been adopted and amended as necessary from those laid down by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services.

This is a hybrid role, requiring the post holder to attend The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ, for 1 day a week, alongside home working arrangements. The role may also require you to visit other sites, and on occasion, to attend the office for ad hoc meetings or training.

The postholder will be required to work flexibly across Council locations within the County, services or work settings where reasonably required to meet organisational needs. This may include temporary cover to provide service continuity arising from absence, vacancies, service pressures, a pandemic, epidemic, major incident and/or emergency (not an exhaustive list). Any alternative duties will be appropriate to the employee's skills, competencies and experience.

Your post is subject to the following:

- The post is permanent for 37 hours per week
- Normal office hours are 8.45am – 5pm Monday to Thursday, and 8.45 – 4pm on Friday with a minimum lunch break of 30 minutes. The 37 hours must be worked between those normal office hours. The nature of the job may require staff to be available beyond normal closure time when dealing with a customer in crisis. Occasional evening and weekend work will be required i.e. the team work a rota to provide emergency cover.
- The post is subject to the Council's annualised hours scheme as implemented within the specific work area.

This post carries eligibility to join the Local Government Pension Scheme. Information about this will be sent with any formal offer of appointment.

Annual leave entitlement is a pro rata flat rate scheme of 207 hours (28 days) annual leave plus bank holidays, with five days extra awarded to those staff with five years local government service giving an entitlement of 244 hours (33 days). Two days of an employee's allowance (pro rota for part time staff) must be taken at Christmas for any potential Christmas closures. Employees who work in a building/service which is required to open over the Christmas period, the two days leave (pro rota) can be carried over into your next leave year but must be used by the end of March.

The appointment is subject to one months' notice in writing on either side.

The appointment is subject to six months' satisfactory probationary service during which time the notice period will be one week on either side.

Smoking, including vaping, is not allowed in Council buildings, in Council vehicles or in any Council place of work.

It is a condition of your appointment that you provide a suitable vehicle for the performance of your duties and that this is readily available for use during normal working hours. You are entitled to claim for reimbursement of the costs of travel on council business at the rate of 55 pence per mile.

What pre-employment checks will we undertake?

The appointment is subject to receipt of the following pre-employment checks;

1. Satisfactory employment references,
2. Medical report,
3. Evidence of the qualifications required for the post/listed on your application form.