Northumberland County Council

Job Description

Housing Adviser

Reference: CS033
Date: April 2026

Job Family: Community Services/Tenant Management and Support
Level: 2
Band: 6
Career Track: Technical, professional and supervisory

Job Purpose

The Triage Officer is the first point of contact for members of the public accessing the service. They manage and respond to all enquiries in a timely and professional manner, carrying out initial enquiries and fact-finding to establish whether an individual may be eligible to make a homelessness application. Undertake comprehensive housing needs and homelessness assessments to identify risks, vulnerabilities and support requirements, determining appropriate prevention interventions and housing pathways.

Service Purpose

The Homelessness and Housing Options service is a County wide service offering advice and assistance to individuals who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The Homelessness and Housing Options Service provides the statutory function on behalf of the council. The main focus of the service is to try and prevent people becoming homeless initially or supporting people to secure alternative accommodation.

The service puts residents first and provides a customer focussed service that can be accessed at different points throughout the county.

Duties and Responsibilities

Customer Access, Triage and Early Intervention

- Act as the first point of contact for all new housing and homelessness enquiries (telephone, email and face-to-face), undertaking initial triage assessments and identifying homelessness risk at first contact.
- Provide early intervention and prevention support to households at risk of homelessness, including those not yet within 56 days, and advise on appropriate next steps.

Assessment, Casework and Evidence Gathering

- Undertake casework, investigations and evidence gathering to assess and verify homelessness claims, ensuring decisions and recommendations are supported by accurate information and documentation.
- Work independently with homeless or threatened households, including complex and high-risk clients with multiple needs, undertaking comprehensive housing needs assessments to identify appropriate prevention interventions, housing pathways and support solutions.
- Exercise professional judgement when assessing complex and sensitive customer circumstances, determining appropriate actions, interventions and escalation routes in accordance with housing legislation, policy and service procedures.
- Maintain accurate, legally compliant and audit-ready case records, ensuring all contact, actions, decisions and progress are recorded in accordance with service standards and information governance requirements.

Housing Advice and Options

- Provide verbal and written housing advice to customers, landlords and partners on homelessness, tenancy rights, harassment, illegal eviction, disrepair, welfare benefits, money management, relationship breakdown and domestic abuse.

- Assess eligibility for housing options, support schemes and prevention initiatives, providing tailored advice and practical assistance designed to prevent homelessness and sustain accommodation.

- Advise customers on housing options including private rented accommodation, deposit bond and rent-in-advance schemes, social housing, supported housing, lodgings and mediation opportunities.

- Manage customer expectations through negotiation and explanation of housing legislation, allocation policies and available housing pathways, assisting customers to access services that support sustainable accommodation outcomes.

Collaboration, Prevention and Service Support

- Liaise with landlords, lenders, family members and partner agencies to obtain information, coordinate interventions and support the prevention and relief of homelessness, including monitoring Personal Housing Plans and customer progress.

- Work with partner agencies and support providers to safeguard vulnerable households, identify emerging risks and implement preventative actions that reduce homelessness and promote sustainable housing outcomes.

- Assist with the management of temporary accommodation and contribute to service delivery through participation in out-of-hours rotas, meetings and service improvement activities.

Legislative, Regulatory and Customer Service Standards

- Identify, assess and accurately record breaches of housing legislation, including the Renters Rights Act 2025, ensuring compliance with statutory requirements, local policy and customer service standards.

- Apply housing legislation, statutory guidance and local policy to casework, ensuring decisions, recommendations and referrals are evidence-based, proportionate, defensible and compliant with FOIA, GDPR and audit requirements.

Person Specification

Professional and Technical Requirements

Qualifications

- Level 4 qualification in any subject

Knowledge, Skills and Experience

- In-depth knowledge of housing policy and legislation, including the Council's Common Allocation Policy, the Renters Rights Act 2025, homelessness legislation, prevention duties, and choice-based lettings.
- Experience of working within a housing or related service, with a strong understanding of homelessness services, housing allocations, and tenancy sustainment.
- Sound understanding of tenancy and welfare law, enabling the provision of accurate general advice to tenants and landlords, including welfare benefits guidance.
- Recent experience using Civica (Abritas) Homelessness and Housing Register modules, with the ability to maintain accurate and up-to-date case and client records.

- Effective problem-solving, negotiation, and interviewing skills, with the ability to assess complex housing situations and reach practical, lawful outcomes, involving prolonged periods of mental attention

- Experience of independently assessing housing need, homelessness risk and customer vulnerability, determining appropriate support pathways and preventative interventions.
- Ability to interpret and apply housing legislation, policy and guidance to complex customer situations and identify practical, lawful solutions.

- Clear understanding of equality, diversity, and inclusion, demonstrating a non-judgmental, empathetic approach when supporting people in stressful housing circumstances, understanding that these conversations regularly place significant emotional demand on the jobholder

Core Competency Requirements

- **Communication**: Tailors communication to audience and context. Uses listening and questioning techniques to clarify complex issues and support team understanding.
- **Collaboration**: Coordinates with colleagues and partners to deliver shared goals and improve service outcomes.
- **Service Delivery**: Identifies and resolves service issues, improves processes, and ensures policy alignment. Promotes efficiency and avoids waste through practical improvements.
- **Decision-Making**: Uses evidence and judgement to resolve issues and improve delivery.
- **Digital & Data Literacy**: Interprets data to improve services. Applies knowledge of digital risks and ethical data use. Uses basic analytical techniques to support decision making.
- **Adaptability**: Adjusts approach responsively to evolving needs and priorities. Identifies opportunities for continuous improvement and supports others through change.
- **Problem-Solving**: Analyses problems and applies knowledge to develop practical solutions and suggest improvements.
- **Community & Customer Focus**: Engages with service users and customers to improve delivery, ensure accessibility, and reflect diverse needs.
- **Leadership**: Supervises day-to-day activity and supports team development. Coordinates tasks and resources to meet the needs of the service.

Strengths

- **Emotionally intelligent -** You draw insight from your own emotions and those of others to show empathy.

- **Analytical** – You seek and analyse information to inform your decisions, based on the best available evidence.

- **Decisive -** You use your judgement. You take a considered approach to situations and tasks when making decisions.

- **Organiser** - You make plans and are well prepared. You seek to maximise time and productivity.

- **Service focussed** - You look for ways to serve customers putting their needs at the heart of everything you do.

Desirable