

Northumberland County Council
JOB DESCRIPTION

Post Title:	Private Sector Housing Officer	Director/Service/Sector: Adult Services & Housing		Office Use
Band:	6	Workplace: County Hall		JE ref: 2279
Responsible to:	Senior – Private Sector initiatives Officer	Date: December 2022	Manager Level:	HRMS ref:
Job Purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To carry out investigations into empty privately owned properties, and negotiate with their owners to bring them back into use• To use appropriate enforcement action in order to bring empty properties back into use.• To implement and run a scheme of landlord and property accreditation in order to bring privately owned properties up to standard, , so as to maximise the usage of the existing housing stock.• Respond to requests for assistance regarding a range of private sector housing issues including complaints regarding disrepair and allegations of harassment and illegal eviction from members of the public, other council departments and external organisations• To be actively involved with the planning, consultation and implementation of projects, including selective licensing schemes•				
Resources	Staff	Mentoring junior staff & trainees as appropriate .Supervision of project staff and external contractors when required.		
	Finance	Day to day responsibility for budget to fund work related to empty homes, accreditation scheme and selective licensing in order to improve housing conditions in the private rented sector Make decisions which have a financial implication in relation to empty homes schemes EDMO'S, Selective licensing and other private sector projects. Responsibility for costings in relation to property improvements and budgeting for renovations of empty properties.		
	Physical	Design, maintain and operate corporate information systems.		
	Clients	Elected Members, external and internal partners and providers, homeowners, local residents and Senior Managers and staff throughout the Council.		
Duties and key result areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To assist with the development and review of the Council's Scheme of Landlord Accreditation.2. To develop and maintain the Council's relationship with Private Sector landlords, for example through Landlord Forum meetings, including the implementation of the Council's Scheme of Landlord Accreditation and the inspection of properties using the Housing, Health & Safety Rating System.3. To have an active role in the planning and implementation of schemes such as selective licensing, including the monitoring of the scheme once finalised.4. Provide advice and support to private landlords to ensure compliance with licence conditions and assess landlords' suitability for licensing purposes, including 'fit and proper person' requirements.5. Ability to assess housing conditions using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS)6. An awareness of the legislation, regulations and codes of practice relevant to taking enforcement action in relation to improving housing conditions7. Experience in the production of formal letters, statutory notices, schedules of work, technical reports and plans.8. To be aware of Housing Conditions in the Private Rented Sector, specifically, the enforcement element of Private Sector Housing functions in relation to Parts 1, 3 and 4 of the Housing Act 2004 and associated legislation.9. A track record of dealing with cases, taking appropriate enforcement action and have the skills to be able to advise and support less experienced officers.10. Manage a caseload of requests for assistance in relation to complaints regarding housing conditions or poor landlord management practices.11. Assist in obtaining and preparing evidence in accordance with the relevant legislation				

12. Delivering actions from the Private Sector Housing strategy including inspecting and prioritising empty properties and providing advice and assistance to owners to bring properties back into use.
- Promote partnership working with other Council officers from Legal, Planning, Public Protection and Council Tax, etc to identify problematic long-term empty properties and take the necessary action, including Empty Dwelling Management Orders and enforced sale where appropriate, to bring these properties back into use.
9. Work with a multiagency approach, in order to problem solve and tackle a range of complexities relating to housing and tenancy related issues.
13. Promoting monitoring and the reporting of progress to targets, using an electronic database to record the information.
 14. Establish, develop and maintain partnerships with other Council departments and external organisations to ensure a collective approach to successfully deal with the issues affecting the private rented sector
 15. Ensuring that customer satisfaction surveys are used to measure the outcomes of the service and the results analysed.
 16. Developing options to increase the numbers of decent homes in the private sector, with a particular emphasis on those occupied by vulnerable people.
 17. Liaising with the Public Protection team and the Homelessness & housing Options Team to ensure appropriate access to the private sector is available, to address housing need and prevent homelessness.
 18. To assist with the preparation of project submissions in relation to private sector initiatives.
 19. To represent the service on regeneration projects that includes a housing element.
 20. Engaging with tenants and residents through a variety of means, including attendance at residents' groups.
 21. To provide general advice concerning queries in relation to private tenancies.
 22. Resolve landlord and tenant complaints and disputes in accordance with agreed procedures.
 23. To act as a first point of contact for illegal eviction and harassment cases within the private rented sector and carry out an initial investigation making referrals to relevant parties where necessary.
 24. Undertake investigations into complaints and provide advice and assistance as required
 25. Deal with complex cases, tenancy related disputes, property standards and management issues and other related cases.

The duties and responsibilities highlighted in this Job Description are indicative and may vary over time. Post holders are expected to undertake other duties and responsibilities relevant to the nature, level and extent of the post and the grade has been established on this basis.

Work Arrangements

Physical requirements:	Ability to drive. Some programmable outdoor site work.
Transport requirements:	The work involves the need to travel to locations across the County for property inspections and to attend meetings, both on site and at Council offices.
Working patterns:	Will be required to occasionally work outside of normal working hours and to attend evening meetings, consultations and community events.
Working conditions:	Working from an office/home, working outdoors across Northumberland County inspecting private rented properties, problematic empty homes, meeting with residents, community groups, councillors where they are based. Visiting tenanted properties to carry out inspections as part of the selective licensing scheme and Homes for Ukraine property inspections. Working at community events/consultations and landlord forums.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Post Title: Private Sector Housing Officer	Director/Service/Sector: Adult Services & Housing	Ref: 2279
Essential	Desirable	Assess by
Knowledge and Qualifications		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good standard of education to NVQ Level 3 or equivalent • Understands the diverse functions of a large complex public organisation • An active appreciation of the procedural and practical issues facing the service • Understands the relationship between costs, quality, customer care and performance and actively monitors progress within the department • Actively undertaking ongoing continuous professional and personal development • A sound knowledge of the private rented sector, legislation and topical issues. • Knowledge of tenancy related issues and legislation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively studying for an NVQ Level 4 or equivalent in a relevant discipline • Housing related qualification 	
Experience		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competence in using Microsoft Office, Oracle applications, word processing, spreadsheets and database systems. • Thorough knowledge and experience in a relevant context and service • An active desire to provide effective customer centred services • Thorough knowledge and experience in a relevant context and service. • An active desire to provide effective customer centred services. • Relevant experience of working with the HHSRS and property inspections • Experience dealing with projects/schemes • Experience working with complex cases, partnership working and problem solving. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent experience of bringing empty homes back into use • Recent experience of working with private landlords. • Recent experience of selective licensing schemes • Housing enforcement/environmental health experience • 	
Skills and competencies		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective IT skills and ability to understand and develop the use of ITC to achieve work objectives • Confident and competent in expressing own views and an active participant in internal and external meetings • Effective negotiation skills • Carry out investigations • High level of both written and verbal communication skills. • Ability to train others • Ability to organise own workload and that of others • Ability to work creatively and independently to achieve better outcomes. • Ability to work as part of a multi-agency team and promote partnership working. • Confident and competent in expressing own views and an active participant in internal and external meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates a sound understanding of equal opportunities and diversity issues in relation to employment and service delivery • 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer focused and able to deliver within tight timescales. • Dependable, reliable and keeps good time. • Models and encourages high standards of honesty, integrity, openness and respect for others. • Understanding of solution focussed practice • Helps managers create a positive work culture in which diverse, individual contributions and perspectives are valued. • Proactive and achievement oriented. • Works with little direct supervision. • Represents the council in a positive view when meeting members of the public. • Able to act as a intermediary in order to resolve landlord. Tenant disputes • Numerate and skilled at analysing/reasoning with complex business related statistics • Applies a methodical approach to problem solving • Adopts a collaborative approach to work. 		
Physical, mental and emotional demands		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normally works from a seated position with some need to walk, bend or carry items • Able to deal with complex cases • Need to maintain general awareness with lengthy periods of enhanced concentration • Regular contact with public/clients in dispute with the County Council • Be able to work under pressure 		
Motivation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer focused and able to deliver within tight timescales • Dependable, reliable and keeps good time • Models and encourages high standards of honesty, integrity, openness and respect for others • Helps managers create a positive work culture in which diverse, individual contributions and perspectives are valued • Proactive and achievement orientated • Works with little direct supervision 		
Other		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A positive, flexible approach to work 		

Key to assessment methods; (a) application form, (i) interview, (r) references, (t) ability tests (q) personality questionnaire (g) assessed group work, (p) presentation, (o) others e.g. case studies/visits