



JOB DESCRIPTION

Directorate:	Housing & Communities
Job title:	Housing Enforcement Officer
Location:	The Guildhall, Northampton
Grade:	7
Salary:	£34,474 – £39,590
Section:	Private Sector Housing
Reports to:	Housing Enforcement Manager

JOB PURPOSE

To improve housing conditions in West Northamptonshire’s private sector – and effect a positive and sustained step change in the behaviour of landlords and letting agents – through advice, licensing, risk-based interventions and intelligence-led enforcement action.

To provide an efficient, high quality advice, information and enforcement service for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) in order to ensure that all HMOs are well managed, safe and habitable and that all licensable HMOs are licensed.

To make optimum use of civil penalties, rent repayment orders and licensing fees to support West Northamptonshire’s intelligence-led approach to housing enforcement and maximise the Housing Enforcement Team’s impact in tackling criminal, rogue and irresponsible landlords.

KEY RESULT AREAS

To improve housing conditions in West Northamptonshire’s private sector, effect a positive and sustained step change in the behaviour of landlords and letting agents, ensure that all houses in multiple occupation are safe, well managed and comply with the law, and make optimum use of civil penalties, rent repayment orders and licensing fees to maximise the Housing Enforcement Team’s impact in tackling criminal, rogue and irresponsible landlords.

In doing this, the Housing Enforcement Officer will:

1. Develop and maintain close working relations with a wide range of other services and organisations in order to facilitate the flow of information, encourage joint working and co-operation, achieve the prompt resolution of complex problems and ensure that, even when an input is required from a number of teams, service delivery is always well co-ordinated and the service user is kept fully informed of developments.
2. Actively encourage members of the public and other stakeholders to provide the Housing Enforcement Team with information about the way in which properties are being managed, used or maintained, in order to help the Council to identify, investigate and prosecute offences under the Housing Act 2004 and other legislation.
3. Work collaboratively and proactively with the Tenancy Relations Officer and the Housing Options and Advice Team to ensure the delivery of efficient, joined-up services that tackle harassment and unlawful eviction, prevent homelessness, deal effectively with disrepair and improve the management and standard of private rented housing.
4. Arrange, negotiate and secure appropriate access to land and premises – obtaining warrants of entry when needed – in order to gather intelligence and determine what action the Council will take in relation to the investigation and prosecution of offences.
5. Undertake a range of activities (including property inspections, HHSRS assessments, the drafting of schedules of work and the preparation and serving of notices, interviewing people under caution, executing warrants of entry and carrying out works in default) and prepare cases for prosecution or the imposition of civil penalties.
6. Work collaboratively with the Housing Enforcement Manager to ensure that all notices are written, served and enforced in a correct and timely manner, and the process for carrying out works in default operates in a way that ensures the nuisance and disrepair are properly addressed and the Council is able to recover the full cost of the works.
7. Respond promptly, within agreed timescales, to complaints about serious disrepair and housing-related nuisance in the private sector and, through investigation, evaluate risks and hazards and determine the nature, cause, urgency and remedy of the problems.
8. Ensure that an accurate record is kept of all inspections, telephone calls, interviews and follow-up, and that regular checks are made to ensure the integrity of data in order to assist monitoring, decision-making and case management.
9. Make effective use of advice, risk based interventions and enforcement action to improve housing conditions, eliminate health and safety hazards and ensure that homes in the private sector (including houses in multiple occupation) are safe and habitable.
10. Ensure that all service requests are dealt with appropriately in accordance with the Council's policies, procedures and service standards, and that all follow-up action is closely monitored and progressed in an appropriate and timely manner.
11. Work proactively with Planning, Revenues & Benefits, Housing Options & Advice, the Anti Social Behaviour Team, Trading Standards, the Police, Immigration, the Northamptonshire Fire & Rescue Service and other services to identify and target those

HMOs that should be licenced but are not, and those non-licensable HMOs that need an urgent inspection because it is suspected that they are severely overcrowded, in a very poor state of repair and/or pose a very high risk to the occupants and their visitors.

12. Work collaboratively with the owners and managers of licensable HMOs to ensure that their properties are licensed, well managed, maintained in a good condition, meet the amenity standards and comply with the HMO Management Regulations.
13. Contribute to the development, implementation and co-ordination of new working practices and initiatives that tackle overcrowding, reduce the number of licensable HMOs operating without a licence and improve private sector housing conditions.
14. Meet regularly with the Housing Enforcement Manager to review casework, in order to ensure a consistently high standard of work and customer care, an equitable distribution of the workload, and the effective monitoring of performance and outputs.
15. Maintain a good understanding of the Council's policies and procedures for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults, and alert Children's Services and/or Adult Social Care where it is suspected that a child or vulnerable adult might be being abused, neglected or harmed.
16. Make full and effective use of the Council's broad range of powers in relation to private sector housing – including prosecution, civil penalties and Interim & Final Management Orders – and, when needed, attend Court and Tribunals to provide evidence in support of the prosecution of offenders and the imposition of civil penalties.
17. Provide the Social Lettings Agency with the technical advice, training and support that it needs in order to ensure that all of the private rented accommodation that is let and/or managed through the Social Lettings Agency complies with the law.
18. Maintain professional competence and keep abreast of developments in relation to private sector housing enforcement (including the introduction of civil penalties and rent repayment orders) and the relevant legislation through research and reading, attendance of courses and briefings, and the use of established networks.
19. Actively consider new and innovative ways of doing things, recognising and promoting the positive benefits of change as a means of improving services and achieving goals.
20. Work in a safe manner and contribute positively to the creation of a safe and healthy working environment, strictly in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures.
21. Create and maintain accurate records (using manual and computer systems) on all aspects of the service to ensure compliance with agreed reporting arrangements and provide management with the information it requires to monitor performance and service standards in accordance with Council policy and current legislation.
22. Enter all of the information and data onto the M3 computer system in an accurate and timely manner, ensuring that all assigned reports have a clear audit trail of decision making, together with an electronic record of all correspondence.
23. Ensure that Management is provided with early alerts in the event of poor or failing performance, or a suspicion of fraud, corruption or impropriety.
24. Perform any other duties (appropriate to the grading of the post) that are required by the Housing Enforcement Team or the Private Sector Housing Manager in order to ensure the delivery of a successful, high quality Housing Enforcement Service.

Job descriptions will be subject to review and possible change on an annual basis subject to corporate and service plan priorities.

PEOPLE AND RESOURCES

The Housing Enforcement Officer is not responsible for the management of any budgets or the supervision, management and direction of any employees.

Other people both external and internal

- (i) The Postholder will act on behalf of the Council (as an ambassador and/or negotiator, as appropriate) in relation to:
- Other local authorities and public bodies including governmental organisations
 - Organisations representing private landlords and rental agents
 - Organisations representing private sector tenants
 - Organisations representing carers and people with disabilities
 - Charities, social landlords, supported housing providers and other non-governmental organisations
 - Other key stakeholder groups – including local advice and support providers, private tenants, private landlords, property owners, leaseholders etc.
- (ii) The Postholder will work with Councillors, managers and employees of the Council to meet the Council's aims and objectives.

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITIES

- To ensure that the services delivered by the Council are designed to meet the needs of West Northamptonshire's diverse customer base and are delivered to the highest possible standards.
- To make a positive corporate contribution, including contributing to or leading on corporate projects and initiatives which may cross cut service boundaries
- To positively work with partners in the best interests of West Northamptonshire.

DATA PROTECTION ACT / FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Working with manual and computerised systems, the Postholder will need to be fully aware, at all times, of their responsibilities under the Data Protection Act 1998 for the security, accuracy and relevance of personal data held on such systems, and to be conversant with the implications of the Freedom of Information Act. The Postholder will also be required to be fully aware of, and comply with, the Council's Data Quality procedures to ensure that all management information is accurate and fit for purpose.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

KNOWLEDGE	E?	D?	Application Form	References	Interview	Other
Qualified Housing Enforcement Officer, with a relevant Degree	E		Y		Y	Y
In-depth knowledge of the Housing Acts, the Housing Health & Safety Rating System and local authorities' regulatory and enforcement powers in relation to HMOs and private sector housing conditions, and their practical application	E		Y		Y	
Detailed knowledge of the regulatory framework relating to HMO licensing	E		Y		Y	
Good understanding of the cause and remedy of defects in relation to drainage and other public health and housing defects	E		Y		Y	
Knowledge and understanding of information technology and systems, and their application to improve service delivery	E		Y		Y	
Experience of working in a team responsible for the enforcement of standards in private sector housing, and using risk based inspection programmes	E		Y	Y	Y	
Experience of using environmental health and housing legislation to enforce and raise standards in HMOs and private sector housing	E		Y	Y	Y	
Proven experience of developing and sustaining effective working relationships, and working successfully in partnership with other services and organisations	E		Y	Y	Y	
Knowledge and understanding of information technology and systems, and their application to improve service delivery	E		Y		Y	
Experience of using a variety of IT applications, including wordprocessing, spreadsheets and housing databases	E		Y		Y	
Experience of developing new ways of working	E		Y		Y	
Experience of operating an HMO Licensing Scheme	D		Y	Y	Y	
An understanding of equality and diversity	E		Y		Y	
An understanding of the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998	E		Y		Y	
An understanding of the importance of ensuring accurate data entry	E		Y	Y	Y	

SKILLS	E?	D?	Application Form	References	Interview	Other
Literate and numerate	E		Y		Y	Y
Excellent interpersonal skills and the ability to communicate clearly and effectively with a variety of audiences, including Members, Senior Officers, landlords and letting agents, members of the public and the Council's partners	E		Y	Y	Y	
Effective team player with a proven ability to develop positive relationships with colleagues, managers and other services and organisations	E		Y	Y	Y	Y
Excellent negotiating and advocacy skills, and the drive and commitment to achieve positive outcomes for residents and service users	E		Y		Y	
Adept problem-solver with excellent analytical, creative and innovative skills	E		Y		Y	
Ability to work well under pressure and to make clear, consistent decisions	E		Y		Y	
Ability to work on own initiative, prioritise work and meet tight deadlines	E		Y		Y	
Ability to look critically at existing practices, evaluate options and recommend better ways of doing things	E		Y	Y	Y	
Ability to interpret and explain complex legislation and guidance	E		Y	Y	Y	
Ability to analyse, manage and interpret information and data, and to use it to inform decision making and improve services	E		Y		Y	
ATTRIBUTES	E?	D?	Application Form	References	Interview	Other
Ability to think and act strategically	E		Y	Y	Y	
Full driving licence and access to own transport for work purposes	E		Y		Y	Y

REVIEW AND SIGNATURES

This document will be reviewed from time to time to ensure that it continues to reflect our vision, values and priorities.

Prepared by:	Chris Stopford
Job title:	Private Sector Housing Manager
Date:	May 2021

Name of job holder:	
Job holder's signature:	
Date:	