

Kent County Council

Job Description: *Senior Accommodation Officer*

Directorate:	Children, Young People and Education
Unit/Section:	18+ Care Leaver Service, Integrated Children's Services
Grade:	KR9
Responsible to:	18+ Accommodation Team Manager

Purpose of the Job:

The Senior Accommodation Officer will hold a small case load of KSH Hosts principally those host that are part of our step across to KSH project and are part of our Ofsted Registered Service. They will provide professional leadership and management support across the Kent Supported Homes service as a whole to include the direct supervision of the Accommodation Officers and under the direction to the Accommodation Team Manager, the post holder will help implement and run the Step Across to KSH project. Ensure and support effective communication of service developments with Personal Advisers/ Social Workers and Team Managers to ensure support is appropriately coordinated and communication is effective to support service users working towards their independence and wellbeing goals. The role will also require the post holder to support Care Leavers and 16/17-year-old Children in Care (where appropriate) who require additional support to maintain their accommodation due to their behaviours and vulnerabilities, to ensure placement stability.

Main duties and responsibilities:

- Manage a caseload of Kent Supported Homes Hosts including KSH Host that are part of the Step Across to KSH and those working with 16-17 that are part of the Ofsted Registered part of the service.
- Lead on the implementation of the 'Step Across to Kent Supported Homes Scheme', which focusses on reducing the numbers of young people living within residential care by providing safe, suitable accommodation and support within a family setting.
- Support integrated working with Social Workers, Personal Advisers and a range of Hosts to identify the required outcomes that the Hosts must meet, in-line with the service user's Pathway Plan (where appropriate). Build and maintain community links and optimise independence and wellbeing and support accommodation move-on plans. Provide mediation and be an agent of negotiation between a range of providers and Social Workers/Personal Advisers and the service users.
- Support a range of Hosts and senior managers when responding to emergency planning issues and ensuring there are business continuity arrangements in place at all times
- Work closely with accommodation providers to monitor, review and improve service delivery and ensure quality and outcome improvements are made where required in line with The Supported Accommodation Regulations 2023. Support with ongoing development of the service and remain flexible to service and service user needs.

- Contribute to the service's reviews and help promote good practices across the service.
- Support the Personal Adviser or Social Worker for each young person to ensure the correct housing related benefits or other payments are in place for any applicable provision of accommodation. Work with the Host, Personal Adviser, Social Worker, Accommodation Finance Officer/Benefits Adviser as required, to ensure that any issues in respect of DWP, KCC are addressed in a timely manner.
- Where behavioural issues are identified, additionally support Service Users in any accommodation provisions that require it to sustain placement stability.
- Travel countywide and out of county, when required to attend to the needs of a range of Hosts, young people, or to otherwise act as a representative of the KCC 18+ Care Leavers Service.
- Support the 18+ Accommodation Team Manager by providing supervision and oversight on the work of other Accommodation Officers and Training and Recruitment Officers as required. Deputise for the Team Manager when required.
- Support with the practise development of Accommodation Officers and Recruitment and Training Officers to drive continual professional development.
- Support the Accommodation Finance Officer with driving progress towards full compliance of Hosts with the requirements of their roles including tasks such as Gas Safety Certification, DBS processes and Monthly Report submission.
- Work with the Housing Pathways Officers to develop pathways into suitable accommodation via local housing panels, for those young adults leaving their supported lodgings at the age of 21 years (or sooner if they have achieved independence).
- Support the recruitment of new hosts into the service to increase capacity.

Footnote: This job description is provided to assist the job holder to know what their main duties are. It may be amended from time to time without change to the level of responsibility appropriate to the grade of post.

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Person Specification: *Senior Accommodation Officer*

The following outlines the criteria for this post. Applicants who have a disability and who meet the criteria will be shortlisted.

Applicants should describe in their application how they meet these criteria.

	CRITERIA
QUALIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level 3 Diploma in a relevant subject, for example, education, training, guidance, counselling, youth and community work, health or social service work or work in the voluntary sector • A Full UK Driving Licence – The Council is committed to making reasonable adjustments so whilst this job requires the jobholder to drive your application will still be considered if you are unable to drive due to a disability.
EXPERIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of working in health or social care • Experience of multi-agency working • Experience of developing young person-centred plans and strategies in relation to behaviours and transition to adulthood and independence Experience of face-to-face work with Care Leavers in a formal or informal setting. • Experience of working with Care Leavers from a diverse range of backgrounds or specialist knowledge of the needs of Care Leaver from particular groups. • Experience of delivering Supervision and assessing needs for professional development within this framework. • Experience of providing support to workers in an accommodation setting.
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good negotiation skills and high level of interpersonal and communication skills at all levels. • Excellent administration skills. • Ability to meet strict deadlines and support others to achieve the same. • Ability to plan and prioritise effectively. • ICT literate with accurate record keeping skills. • Identify issues which may need resolving via improved process or policy and recommend improvements to work practices when identified. • Ability to work sensitively within a variety of contexts and adapt the way you work as appropriate. • Innovative and creative problem solving and resource allocation in line with structural and systemic processes and boundaries. • Ability to write and complete Assessments and reports. • Demonstrable ability to set boundaries in and expectations of behaviours and support delivery for service users and the professionals supporting them. • Ability for application of regulatory frameworks and legislation to own practise and that of others.

KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working knowledge of The Children Act 1989 and 2004, Children's (Leaving Care) Act 2000, the Children's and Families Act 2014 and The Supported Accommodation Regulations 2023. • Knowledge of the Benefit systems/processes. • Knowledge of accommodation processes for Care Leavers. • Knowledge of the regulatory frameworks and quality standards for accommodation based services. • Understanding of the needs of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people, and the associated processes. • Awareness of Data Protection, GDPR and confidentiality issues • Awareness of and responsiveness to political issues.
KENT VALUES AND CULTURAL ATTRIBUTES	<p>Kent Values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are brave. We do the right thing, we accept and offer challenge • We are curious to innovate and improve • We are compassionate, understanding and respectful to all • We are strong together by sharing knowledge • We are all responsible for the difference we make <p>Our values enable us to build a culture that is:</p> <p>Flexible/agile - willing to take (calculated) risks and want people that are flexible and agile</p> <p>Curious - constantly learning and evolving</p> <p>Compassionate and Inclusive - compassionate, understanding and respectful to all</p> <p>Working Together - building and delivering for the best interests of Kent</p> <p>Empowering - Our people take accountability for their decisions and actions</p> <p>Externally Focused - Residents, families and communities at the heart of decision making</p>