

Kent County Council

Job Description: *Personal Advisor (Housing Specialist)*

Directorate:	Children, Young People and Education
Unit/Section:	18+ Care Leaver Service, Specialist Children's Services
Grade:	KR8
Responsible to:	Accommodation Team Manager (18+)

Purpose of the Job:

The Personal Advisor (Housing Specialist) will support Personal Advisors and Care Leavers within the 18+ service, who require additional support to address their accommodation and independent living needs, with a focus on those at risk of homelessness.

The role will require the post holder to provide assistance, advice, encouragement and support to Care Leavers to ensure they actively participate and contribute to their Personal Housing Plans / Pathway Plans to enable them to move successfully into independent living. This role will focus on those Care Leavers at high risk of homelessness, due to inactivity, vulnerability or other factors. The Specialist Housing Personal Advisor will be expected to keep up-to-date with government guidance and regulations in relation to accommodation, as well as all involved processes and resources, to facilitate the delivery of expert advice on all areas of independent accommodation.

Main duties and responsibilities:

- Facilitate the delivery of bespoke Personal Housing Plans, outlining all of the possible solutions to the YPs accommodation needs and the best 'next steps' to the YP being able to achieve these, in line with their identified accommodation goals.
- To be actively engaged in challenging those YPs who hold erroneous views as to their eligibility for provisions of accommodation or unrealistic views as to what is available, in order to present them with the best chance of 'real' success in finding accommodation.
- Provide individual, regular and consistent support to Care Leavers who have recently left care, to meet the goals and objectives of the Care Leaver's Pathway Plan / Personal Housing Plan in respect of accommodation.
- Work with other colleagues in the 18+ service to ensure the provision of a seamless service to the Care Leaver in respect of their planned moves between provisions of accommodation.
- Support and encourage Care Leavers to play an active part in their local communities, liaising with community groups and individuals to aid transition into independent accommodation.
- Support and encourage YPs to understand the value of and link in with, appropriate EET provisions, so as to ensure that these YPs have adequate opportunity to be in the best possible financial position and therefore have the greatest level of stability in their accommodation in the future. Promotion of 'earn and learn' philosophy for those in education with housing needs.

- Liaise with other local authorities when a Care Leaver is residing outside of Kent to ensure Pathway Plans are updated and reviewed in line with Kent policy and procedures for Leaving Care services.
- Take a lead role for the North and West areas of the county in respect of working together in a multi-agency approach with the Local Housing Authorities, to develop close and effective working relationships to facilitate joint housing meetings using coordinated multi-agency, area-based response to the identified needs of Care Leavers and of the 18+ service, as per the Kent Joint Housing Protocol.
- To have a working knowledge of relevant homelessness legislation, including the Homelessness Reduction Act and its implication for Care Leavers and to have the knowledge enough to understand when and how to challenge in relation to this legislation in practice.
- To provide shared understanding of the above point to staff across the service for the purposes of upskilling and improving practice service-wide.
- Ensure that information systems and client records are effectively maintained in order to provide up-to-date and accurate information, upon which decisions affecting service delivery can be made.
- Have a good understanding of the financial entitlements available to Care Leavers via the KCC Local Offer and ensure support for the PAs to understand and make accurate and timely requests for these provisions including Setting Up Home Allowance, Rent in Advance and Deposit, so as to increase the YP's ability to access accommodation as swiftly, as their situation determines.
- To actively engage with Landlords, estate agents and other involved parties, to support the activities already underway within the KCC 18+ service and specifically, Housing Support Team, in respect of moving YPs from KCC Shared accommodation, into suitable, affordable PRS (Private Rented Sector) Accommodation.
- To support the Accommodation Team Manager in other relevant activities and actions as required.

Footnote: This job description is provided to assist the job holder to know what his/her 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: *Personal Advisor (Housing Specialist)*

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, housing or work in the voluntary sector
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-centered 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 Leavers from particular groups.• Experience in conducting Private Rented Sector accommodation searches using technology and in person
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High level of interpersonal and communication skills at all levels.• Proficient in administration• Ability to meet strict deadlines• Ability to plan and prioritise effectively• ICT literate with accurate record keeping skills• Ability to work sensitively within a variety of contexts and adapt the way you work as appropriate• Ability to challenge positively and respectfully, heartfelt or sensitive views, which may not be well received.
KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working knowledge of The Children Act 1989 and 2004, Children's (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and the Children's and Families Act 2014• Knowledge of The Homelessness Reduction Act (2017), the Housing Act (1996), The Localism Act (2011) and the Protection From Eviction Act (1977)• Knowledge of the Universal Credit/Housing Benefit process• Knowledge of accommodation processes for Care Leavers• Understanding of the needs of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people.• Awareness of Data Protection, GDPR and confidentiality issues• Awareness of and responsiveness to political issues including government guidance in relation to Covid-19

BEHAVIOURS AND KENT VALUES	<p>Kent Values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open - Acting with integrity, honesty and transparency; healthy attitude to risk; welcoming and expecting change and evolving technology; working in new ways; willing to learn; working as a whole-Council and treating people fairly and with respect. • Invite contribution and challenge - Working collaboratively and innovatively to find new solutions that put the interests and wellbeing of customers first; open to challenge and actively encouraging and expecting contribution. • Accountable - Self-sufficient, taking personal and professional responsibility for our actions, the pace at which we work, performance and the council's money.
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