

Sevenoaks District Council

# Homelessness Prevention Manager Candidate Pack



## Homelessness Prevention Manager

**Salary - £45,489 - £48,466**

Our innovative Housing team relishes working in the community to develop the services we provide in the district to enhance the service for our customers and we strive to develop new affordable housing opportunities.

As Homelessness Prevention Manager you will have the opportunity to shape all areas of the Housing service including: Housing Advice, Homelessness services, Housing Support and Homelessness Prevention (HERO), Housing Register and Housing Projects. You will ensure the service remains focused on the customer and you will provide strategic guidance and legislative leadership to the team.

Excellent communication skills are essential as you will be working collaboratively with our Partners and colleagues at all levels in addition to responding to complex customer queries.

With your inspirational leadership and enthusiastic approach, you will motivate the team to work together to deliver the Council's statutory duties for homelessness and customer focused housing services.

Key elements of the role include:

- Specialist working knowledge of housing & homelessness and the current legislation linked to this (specifically the Housing Reduction Acts Part VI and Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 to review and advise on homeless and housing decisions).
- Experience of developing housing and homelessness projects and funding bids
- Financial and budget management awareness
- Understanding of political sensitivity and proactively working with elected Members

Please note this role requires a DBS check.

This role will be based at our Council Offices, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks Kent TN13 1HG. We currently operate a hybrid working model for the majority of our roles where your working time will be divided between the office (2-3 days) and home working (2-3 days).

## Do you want to know more about the role?

Please contact Sarah Robson, Deputy Chief Executive & Chief Officer People and Places, on 01732 227129 for an informal discussion about the role.

Or for details on the Council and the benefits of working for us, please see our Candidate Pack.

## Do you want to ensure you have the best chance of being shortlisted?

Read the Job Description and Personal Specification attached to the role and ensure that your supporting statement explains how you meet the essential requirements as your application will be judged against these criteria.

**Closing date: Wednesday 16 March 2022**

**Interviews: week commencing Monday 21 March 2022**



Sevenoaks District Council is a unique place to work. It's a place where positive and passionate people deliver some of the very best services in local government. We are honoured to be recognised as one of the most efficient, well managed Councils in the country, an achievement we work hard to maintain.

There are very few Councils that still collect all the rubbish and recycling every week using their own team of people. We are exceptionally proud that the people who work here care deeply about what they do, that they are creative, embrace risk and work hard to deliver exceptional services to our customers and to improve the Sevenoaks District. It's our team of people that makes Sevenoaks District Council unique.

We've worked hard to develop a no 'blame culture' among the people that work here. It's a place where staff take responsibility for the work they do and are empowered to take the decisions that help them to do their job effectively. We encourage new ideas and innovation and provide people with the support and training they need to become the very best at what they do.

Our mantra of 'the customer is anyone who isn't me' helps to grow strong and positive working relationships across our Council services, and ensures our residents, businesses and partners receive the very highest quality of service each time they contact us.

Recruiting the right people to our team is incredibly important to us and instrumental to our success. We value personal qualities as much as we do the skills and knowledge to do the job. We want people who can embrace our culture, that have ambition and determination and have the ability to shape our future.

## Our vision

We're committed to delivering excellent services. This means we are ambitious for our staff, our customers and our Council. Together we work to shape the District for future generations to make it a great place to live, work and enjoy.

## Our mission

To work smarter with an empowering culture, a focus on wellbeing and a dynamic and innovative approach.

The Sevenoaks District provides a great range of housing options whether you are looking to rent or buy.

Many of our staff live outside of the District. With excellent links by road and rail it makes Sevenoaks District Council an employer that is accessible from most parts of Kent and further afield.

The Council is fortunate to have its own car park which, increasingly rarely, is free to all staff to use. The Council also supports car sharing and is a member of the cycle to work scheme.

Much of the District is surrounded by beautiful countryside, but our towns and villages have excellent transport links, good schools and a vibrant local economies.

Amongst the national chain stores are thriving local businesses, there are great places to eat and drink and a wonderful range of attractions for days out with friends and family.

The Sevenoaks District has three leisure centres, a range of local sports clubs and its own theatre. So if you have an interest in sport, film, comedy and stage there is something for you.

## Transport

Sevenoaks mainline train station is a short walk from the Council offices and regular trains take approximately 30 minutes into central London.

The M25, M20 and A21 are all within a short drive of the Council offices.

Gatwick airport is just over a 30 minute drive and Heathrow airport is just over an hour's drive away.

## Sevenoaks town

The Council's offices are based a short stroll away from the heart of Sevenoaks town. Sevenoaks is a busy town centre with a wide variety of shops, restaurants and cafes. There is a regular weekly market, as well as a choice of supermarkets, a theatre and a cinema.

The town also has the advantage of the wonderful Knole Park, including its deer, just a few minutes walk from the door of the offices for those that like to get away from it all during their lunch break.



**S**

Strong sense of pride in our district

**E**

Enthusiastic and committed

**V**

Valuing others, valuing each other

**E**

Empowered to achieve

**N**

No blame culture

**O**

Open to new ideas; dedicated to developing talent

**A**

Ambitious with our community

**K**

Keep learning; keep improving

**S**

Sharing services; working closely with others

## Annual Leave

You will be given 30 days annual leave plus any Bank Holidays. An extra five days leave is accrued after five years Continuous Local Government Service as at 1 April. Bank Holidays are pro rata (for part time staff) based on the amount of hours you work. You will be eligible to buy additional leave or have an increased salary by selling annual leave.

## Pension

We are part of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS). There is a 50/50 section which enables a member to pay half rate contributions for half the benefits. The LGPS is a contributory scheme that requires contributions from both employer and employee. The rate Sevenoaks as the employer currently pays is 18.7%. Your contribution rate of 8.5% - 9.9% would be based on your salary.

## Health and wellbeing benefits

### Free and confidential employee assistance programme

Confidential and expert advice in many areas, including family, legal, financial and consumer issues.

### Regular onsite health check appointments available

We regularly offer mini health checks with our onsite Occupational Health Advisor, who offer checks on blood pressure, 'Know your numbers', body mass index, weight, risk of diabetes, stress management tips and 'Take a Walk' tips.

We also offer onsite free flu vaccinations and discounted osteopathy treatments.

### Eye care

We offer eye care vouchers on request every two years to staff who use computers for a significant part of their work.

## Financial benefits

### Free staff car parking

Onsite staff car park, free of charge to everyone.

### Cycle to work scheme

You can get a new bike for a significantly reduced cost by saving on tax and National Insurance (and paying for it monthly through your salary).





## Season ticket loan

We offer season ticket loans up to a maximum of £5,000, repayable over 12 months.

## Car loan

You can apply for a loan up to a maximum of £10,000 to purchase a car, repayable over a maximum of five years at a low rate of interest.

## Professional fees

Staff in roles where ongoing membership of a recognised professional body, (where this membership is gained through a qualification), is an essential requirement in the person specification for their job can claim the cost of one membership fee per year.

## Recognition, Learning and Development

We believe all our employees have the potential to grow, both in their work role and personally, and endeavor to provide opportunities for this growth. We work within recognised good practice guidelines, including Investors in People, to ensure both the quality and quantity of training and development is relevant and “fit for purpose”.

## The Talent in Me (TiM)

TiM is open to everyone and there are more than 60 courses available to choose from. Courses are ‘bite-sized’. Each one takes one to two hours to complete and are delivered by our own in-house service experts or external providers.

## E Learning

We offer e-learning courses that enable you to train at your desktop, working at your own pace wherever and whenever you want.

## Coaching

We offer a tailored coaching programme with a number of professionally trained internal volunteer coaches, designed specifically to support staff performance and development and our culture, with a focus on specific skills and goals.

## Apprenticeships

Any member of staff can apply to undertake an apprenticeship. There are now over 200 new apprenticeship standards with more in development.



## Family friendly polices

### Maternity leave

All pregnant employees are entitled to up to 52 weeks' maternity leave regardless of length of service. Staff who have worked for us for more than 12 months by the time their baby is born receive enhanced maternity pay of the first six weeks paid at 90% of the weekly salary.

### Paid paternity leave

Fathers to be or employees who will share the responsibility with a partner for bringing up a child, may have the right to Statutory Paternity Leave and Pay. Employees who have worked for us for more than 12 months by the time their baby is born receive enhanced paternity pay of two weeks full pay.

### Flexible working

We are proud to offer a range of flexible working arrangements to all of our staff. We are happy to consider reduced hours, job shares, home working and more, ensuring the needs of the organisation continue to be met.

## Other staff benefits

We participate in the Kaarp Benefits Scheme, a voluntary benefit scheme for local authority employees. The Benefits change regularly but include:

- Activities - discounted theme park entry and/or hotel rooms
- Finance - special deals, insurance and personal finance
- Health - money off many sports and fitness centres and golf courses
- Motoring - discount car club, reduced breakdown cover, car servicing/MOTs and money off driving lessons
- Shopping - many deals and offers
- Travel - A travel club, discounts on holiday insurance, hotels and airport parking
- Local discounts – these include many offers and discounts for restaurants, hotel rooms, hairdressers, dry cleaners and more.

## Staff Benefits



**Title of post:** Homelessness Prevention Manager

**Department:** People and Places

**Band:** G

**Reports to:** Head of Housing

## Purpose of the job

- To lead the management, development, performance and continuous improvement of Housing Advice and Options; Homelessness Services, including Prevention; Housing Register, Temporary Accommodation and Housing Support.
- To provide accurate, timely and relevant advice to the Chief Officer – People and Places, Head of Housing and Strategic Management Team as appropriate on those aspects of the agenda for which the post holder has lead responsibility, including legislative changes and best practice/ innovative approaches to improved service delivery.
- To fulfil the Council's legal obligations, as the Local Housing Authority, to provide professional housing and homelessness advice services to meet duties in: Part VI & VII Housing Act 1996 (as amended); Homelessness Reduction Act 2017; Welfare Reform, Safeguarding and the Children's Act for residents, colleagues, partners and Members.
- To develop and implement effective strategies and plans to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping in the district.
- To manage and develop the Council's housing initiatives including landlord and tenant incentive and sustainment schemes, HERO and homelessness prevention projects.
- To create innovative affordable housing opportunities, for those on low income, through effective partnership working with private landlords, housing association, developers and property/land owners.

## Key activities

- Support the Chief Officer – People and Places, Head of Housing and Strategic Management Team to deliver the Housing Strategy vision and preferred direction of travel for the district, and to provide clear and visible leadership to the department when doing so.
- Accountable for the effective planning, organising, delivery and continuous improvement and efficiency of the department, its resources and allocated budgets, through delivery, efficiency and improvement plans as required. Services

must be driven by quality and customer focus and be determined by the needs of the people and different communities of the district.

- Develop and promote strong partnerships with local residents, local businesses and voluntary and community sectors for the benefit of the district, to improve the quality of life of local people and to support the regeneration of the district, the Council and the effective delivery of services
- Manage the overall performance of the Housing Advice Service including officers responsible for housing advice, HERO/homelessness prevention, Housing Register, Temporary Accommodation and landlord/tenant incentive schemes. Work with Team Leaders to ensure all staff deliver service objectives and priorities and are up to date with legislative changes and training.
- Manage Team Leaders and support the team to respond sensitively to urgent customer enquiries from vulnerable people threatened with homelessness. Support the team to develop their knowledge on health and vulnerability such as mental health, substance misuse and young people.
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of housing legislation including the Housing Act, Homelessness Reduction Act, Codes of Guidance, case law, safeguarding and other best practice. Share this knowledge and lead on key housing decisions including appeals and reviews, the allocation of emergency housing, homeless applications and discharging Prevention/Relief Duties, in line with legislation.
- Responsible for financial information and budgets for housing services including reconciling expenditure, sourcing additional income to develop new services and maintaining accurate financial records, in line with the Council's financial procedures.
- In the event of a County Court case, Judicial Review or Ombudsman Enquiry take a leading housing role in the preparation of papers with Legal Services, all relevant documentation provided for the case, in line with this Council's statutory Housing Duty.
- Write strategic reports to respond to: service requests for information and statistical data; keep corporate housing policies up to date; and brief the Portfolio Holder responsible for Housing, Members and the Head of Housing as required.
- Work with the Council's Property Team and other partners to develop creative affordable housing opportunities to maximise housing options for people on low income.



- Ensure positive internal and external communications on services, performance and initiatives, seeking and giving feedback to customers, partners and other stakeholders where necessary.
- Represent the Council professionally at internal and external meetings, across Kent as part of the Kent Housing Group partnership. Develop your knowledge to: identify opportunities for innovation; deliver innovative housing and customer support projects.
- Work in close partnership with West Kent Housing Association and other housing associations to oversee the delivery of the District's social housing allocation and tenant services. This includes the Social Housing Register, Housing Allocations Policy, Service Level Agreements, vulnerability assessments for homeless people in priority need and working on homelessness reduction priorities.
- Develop and maintain effective partnerships and referral pathways, including housing associations, statutory agencies and voluntary sector organisations, to meet the housing, welfare, care, support and financial needs of vulnerable customers.
- Ensure the team complies with the Council's Health and Safety requirements to minimise risks and protect the safety of staff and customers including safeguarding referrals; accident reporting, vulnerability and wellbeing assessments and lone working procedures.
- Manage essential housing functions for the Council's Emergency Planning and Business Continuity priorities through the co-ordination of a 24/7 out of hours service for housing advice and homelessness, and in the event of a major incident.
- Oversee the management of accurate housing case management systems across the team, ensuring all personal and service information is securely stored in relation to GDPR Data Protection, Safeguarding, Equalities and Confidentiality policies.
- Manage key housing actions and outcomes to contribute to the West Kent Homelessness Strategy, the District Council's Housing Strategy, Community Plan, Health Inequalities Action Plan and the corporate strategic objectives.
- Produce a team plan to support the annual Service Plan.
- Support and develop effective partnership working with relevant district, sub-regional, regional and national bodies.

- Work with and support Cabinet Members, Scrutiny Members and all Elected Members in their wards.
- Deputise for the Head of Housing as required.
- Contribute to transformational change across the Council and to ensure that organisational development initiatives, policies and plans are implemented and properly embedded.
- To participate in any relevant training for the duties of this post and to achieve the key objectives of the service and Council.
- To participate fully in the Council's staff appraisal scheme for this post and the team.
- To comply with the Council's Equal Opportunity and Safeguarding Policies.
- This post requires an enhanced DBS check and a full driving licence with car for business use.
- To embrace the values and behaviours of the Council.
- To work out of hours as necessary to deliver the services required by the Council for example during the evenings or weekends.
- To provide rota cover for the Council's Out of Hours service.
- To work outside normal working hours to respond to emergencies or attend committee meetings.
- To undertake any other duties as required which are commensurate with the level and nature of the post.

## Location

This post is based at the Council Offices, Argyle Road, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 1HG

## Personal skills

### Essential

- Able to deliver customer focused services.
- Evidence of political sensitivity and understanding of the needs and motivation of elected members.
- Proven track record of leadership and team building skills.
- Excellent oral and written communication and presentation skills.
- Able to lead and motivate staff and manage performance of teams.
- Able to work under pressure and have good time management skills.
- Report writing and presentation skills at a strategic level.

- A positive and proactive approach to working with the vulnerable people and partners

## Knowledge

### Essential

- Extensive specialist working knowledge of housing and homelessness services and current housing/homelessness legislation
- Knowledge of financial and budget management
- Excellent IT skills including Microsoft software packages
- Knowledge of housing case management systems
- An extensive understanding of the Homelessness Reduction Act, Housing Act and other relevant legislation such as Safeguarding and Children's Act
- Significant experience in collating statistical housing and homelessness data

## Experience

### Essential

- Extensive knowledge and experience of dealing with areas of specific responsibility in Local Government.
- Experience of advising members and senior officers.
- Evidence of successful development of strategies and policies in areas of specific responsibility that deliver high quality, customer outcomes.
- Experience of setting and delivering departmental priorities and track record of sound financial management.
- Evidence of management skills and development and motivation of staff.
- Extensive experience of working with Part VI and Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and reviewing key decisions at a senior management level
- Experience in developing housing and homelessness projects and funding bids.
- Experience in creating strong partnerships and innovative ways of working with others.

## Qualifications

### Essential

- Educated to degree level or equivalent with significant post-qualification experience or clear evidence of leading a similar function at a senior level within an organisation.
- Evidence of continuing development of management and professional skills

- Trained to deliver the 2017 Homelessness Reduction Act duties
- Fluent in English and at least 3 GCSE's including Maths and English at Grade C or above
- Computer literacy with ability to use Microsoft packages

## Desirable

- CIH Qualification
- Management qualification

## Other

### Essential

- Proactively support the Council's values and culture.
- Commitment to the principles and practices of ensuring excellence in service delivery and its impact on the local community.
- Willing to undergo an enhanced DBS check.
- Willingness to provide an out of hours service on a rota basis and flexible approach to working.
- Willingness to undertake any relevant training for post and to keep up to date with current housing legislation.
- Full current driving licence and a car available for business use.

