



Private Accommodation Sustainment Officer

Salary: Band 7 - £32,061 - £36,363 p.a.

Hours per week: 37

Location: Civic Offices, Portsmouth

Contract type: Permanent

The Service:

Portsmouth City Council's Housing Needs, Advice & Support Service works directly with customers to help resolve housing issues and prevent homelessness in the city. It is a busy front-line service dealing directly with customers, many of whom are vulnerable and/or facing homelessness. The service assesses and advises customers on the Housing Needs, Advice & Support available to them. It also provides support services to vulnerable people and rough sleepers, which includes temporary accommodation where necessary, and works collaboratively with both housing and support providers across the city to help people move into a long term, settled home.

What is the role?

The purpose of the role is to help our customers who are, or have been at risk of, homelessness to attain and/or sustain long term, settled housing. This will include working with customers who need short-term tenancy support to ensure the sustainability of their current or new accommodation. The Private Accommodation Sustainment Officer will support customers with claiming welfare benefits, maximisation of their income, managing their household budget and work alongside partner agencies, when needed, to achieve positive outcomes. They will ensure the customer understands the terms of their tenancy agreement, give advice on setting up rent payments and to mediate with landlords to agree affordable arrangements for arrears based on the household's individual circumstances. The role will require developing a professional working relationship with local landlords to negotiate tenancy arrangements on behalf of customers including rent deposits and rents as appropriate.

The role will help clients to prevent homelessness wherever possible. Activities will range from negotiating with landlords, support with income management, signposting to services and helping customers to identify and apply for sources of financial support they may be eligible for. Based within the Housing Needs, Advice and Support Service, the role will work closely with the Housing Assessment & Advice Team and those services commissioned by Housing Needs, Advice & Support to deliver accommodation-based support to homeless people.

The role will support a range of customers who need help to, secure accommodation in the private rental sector. This may be temporary housing whilst decisions are made about the council's duty, but the aim for every customer is to help them to secure a long term, settled home. The role will work alongside customers, landlords, partner agencies and the council to understand the help and support required to achieve sustainability of accommodation. The role will need to develop positive working relationships with landlords and customers, of the Private Sector Accommodation Team.

Once customers have secured and moved into their home, your role will be to support them to establish their tenancy and help them to resolve any problems that occur during the setting up period. Depending upon the specific arrangement, this could include:

- Supporting customers to make benefit applications or reporting changes.
- Ensuring landlords who are part of the Private Rented Scheme comply with current and future legislation changes.
- Support the customer with tenancy management issues such as reporting repairs.
- Supporting customers to pay their rent and household bills as required.

Ways of working:

The Housing, Neighbourhood, and Building Services Directorate use 'systems thinking' as its approach to business improvement, which informs our understanding of the role of leaders and managers. The core role of any manager within the directorate is to understand and act on the system of work to drive improvement.

This will include:

- Ensuring all staff have clarity of understanding about the purpose of the service from the customer's point of view.
- Ensuring we understand customer demand
- Use of robust measures of performance to make visible the customer experience.
- Understanding the flow of work in the service to ensure we keep teams, and individuals, focussed on what is valuable to the customer; and,
- Acting on the system in response to obstacles experienced by customers and staff.

Who is the person?

- Ideally has previous experience of working with customers in a challenging front-line service and be comfortable visiting customers in their home.
- Ideally has worked with vulnerable customers, supporting them to sustain successful tenancies
- Has up-to-date and detailed knowledge of the current issues in homelessness at a local and national level
- Has current knowledge and experience of the welfare benefits system
- Has an awareness of the diversity within Portsmouth's private housing market, and the options for accommodation.
- Is self-motivated, with the autonomy to make decisions and implement improvements where necessary.
- Understands the customers' needs and translate them into finding the right sustainable housing solution.
- Has excellent people skills with the ability to resolve conflict.
- Has a sympathetic, friendly, and empathetic manner to be able to understand the situations of our customers.
- Has excellent written and verbal communication skills
- Has strong negotiation, mediating, and relationship building skills
- Is emotionally resilient and able to deal with the impact of being exposed to customer's difficult circumstances.
- Is able to remain professionally detached and focused even if the message you deliver involves saying no in difficult circumstances.
- Is competent in the use of IT systems with a good working knowledge of Microsoft Packages (to include Word, Outlook, and Excel) and databases.

You will need to demonstrate that you have the Right to Work in the UK. No post will be offered without it.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

Portsmouth City Council is the Data Controller of any personal information you provide when applying for a job. It will only be used in connection with the recruitment process and will not be kept for longer than necessary. For more detailed information you can access the Data Protection Privacy Notice on our [careers portal](#).