

Role profile

Job Title:	Service Improvement & Review Officer
Department:	Housing Demand
Directorate:	Housing & Environment

Grade:	Career grade structure 11-12
Post no.:	
Location:	Perceval House

Role reports to:	Improvement and Reviews Manager
Direct reports:	Improvement and Reviews Manager
Indirect reports:	Head of Housing Solutions

Job description

Recruitment practices to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and/or vulnerable adults apply to this post in addition to the requirement to obtain a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Purpose of role:

The Council's Improvement and Review Team independently reassesses housing and homelessness decisions to ensure fairness, transparency and full legal compliance. We are looking for an experienced and highly skilled officer to lead on independent statutory reviews of homelessness and housing allocation decisions under Parts VI and VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).

In this senior role, you will investigate cases thoroughly, gather evidence and issue legally robust decisions that can withstand legal, media and political scrutiny. You will work closely with applicants, representatives, partner agencies and internal teams to deliver a professional, efficient and customer-focused Review service. You will also support the Council's legal defence in appeals and Judicial Review challenges, representing the authority in court where required.

The role contributes directly to improving service quality by providing performance insights, leading service-improvement initiatives, supporting customer engagement, and managing the use of temporary accommodation during reviews. You will also share specialist expertise across the service through training and best-practice guidance.

Above all, you will ensure the Council meets its statutory duties and delivers fair, defensible and high-quality review decisions.

This is a career-graded role, with the grade determined by the range and complexity of functions carried out. Senior managers will decide how many officers are required at each level. The role profile outlines all tasks undertaken by the team; individual postholders may be responsible for some, but not necessarily all, of these duties.

Key accountabilities:

- Conduct statutory homelessness and housing register reviews in accordance with Parts VI and VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), the Homelessness (Review Procedure etc.) Regulations 2018 and associated legislation.
- Maintain expert and up-to-date knowledge of relevant legislation, statutory guidance and case law, ensuring all decisions are legally sound and compliant.
- Analyse case files, evaluate evidence and determine whether original decisions should be upheld or overturned based on lawfulness, guidance and policy.
- Produce high-quality, legally robust review decision letters that meet statutory, regulatory and best-practice standards.
- Ensure all statutory decisions can withstand legal, political, audit and media scrutiny.
- Manage a complex caseload, ensuring completion of reviews within statutory timescales or negotiating extensions when appropriate.
- Maintain accurate, detailed and compliant records, ensuring all written and digital information is properly stored for audit and reporting.
- Record, acknowledge and process all review requests in line with statutory requirements.
- Provide clear advice to customers on the review process in writing, by phone and in person.
- Manage communications from applicants, representatives, internal teams and external agencies within required deadlines.
- Minimise use of temporary accommodation during the review and appeals process, making lawful decisions on accommodation requests during s202 reviews and s204 appeals.
- Attend case conferences relating to reviews, complex cases and vulnerable customers.
- Prepare and submit s204 appeal documentation and liaise with Legal Services for advice on case merit.
- Support Legal Services with County Court appeals, High Court judicial reviews and other legal challenges relating to review decisions.
- Review and approve witness statements and other legal documents, attending court and giving evidence where required.
- Consider and respond to judicial review pre-action protocol letters and letters before action in connection with review cases.
- Provide constructive feedback to frontline officers and managers where first-instance decisions cannot be upheld, promoting continuous improvement.
- Produce statistical and qualitative performance reports, including monitoring outcomes and trends in review decisions.
- Maintain accurate statistical records to support performance monitoring, audit and service planning.
- Contribute to the development and implementation of service improvement strategies under the direction of the Improvement and Reviews Manager.
- Promote high standards of customer care, value for money, equality and diversity across all aspects of service delivery.

- Deliver training sessions on legislation, procedure and case law updates, including preparation of training materials.
- Support the administration and development of staff training plans for the service.
- Provide written and verbal guidance to officers to support high-quality, lawful decision-making.
- Build and maintain effective working relationships with internal teams, external agencies, voluntary organisations, landlords and other councils.
- Support customer engagement activity including satisfaction surveys, focus groups and analysis of customer feedback.
- Engage proactively with stakeholders and respond to suggestions for service improvement.
- Undertake home or site visits where required to gather information for review investigations.
- Participate in occasional out-of-hours working or evening meetings as required by the service.
- Carry out any other duties consistent with the grade and purpose of the role to support the smooth operation of the service.

In addition to the above, the role will undertake the following duties on Grade 12

- Make decisions on designated review cases without requiring authorisation from the Improvement and Reviews Manager.
- Lead on the most complex, sensitive or high-risk review cases as directed.
- Provide guidance and support to Grade 11 Improvement and Review Officers, particularly on complex or legally sensitive cases.
- Coordinate the induction and onboarding of new review officers, working closely with the Improvement and Reviews Manager.
- Deputise for the Improvement and Reviews Manager at meetings and service activities when required.
- Produce and update service information, guidance and publicity materials.
- Champion service development initiatives, encouraging engagement and contribution from colleagues.
- Share best practice and support continuous improvement in decision-making standards across the team.

Key performance indicators:

- Deliver statutory reviews in accordance with Parts VI and VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).
- Ensure full compliance with all statutory, regulatory, and audit requirements associated with the role.
- Effectively manage and control the use of costly temporary accommodation throughout the review and court appeal process.
- Meet corporate standards and response times for handling telephone calls, emails, and written correspondence.

- Work collaboratively within the team to achieve service plan targets and deliver high-quality, customer-focused services.
- Achieve all statutory and locally defined performance indicators.

Key relationships (internal and external):

- Internal: All Ealing Council Departments
- External: Tenants and leaseholders, members of the public, other councils, councillors. Members of Parliament, the Court, Police etc.

Authority level:

Core Authority Level (All Grades)

- Make independent statutory decisions under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).
- Recommend the booking or extension of temporary accommodation pending s202 reviews, s204 appeals and Judicial Review proceedings.
- Cancel temporary accommodation bookings where appropriate.
- Provide review feedback to original decision makers and their managers.
- Draft responses to grounds of appeal, Judicial Review and other legal challenge under the guidance of a senior officer.

Additional Authority at Grade 12

- Allocate work to team members, while not holding responsibility for formal performance appraisals.
- Authorise their own review decisions and those of other Grade 11 Review Officers on behalf of the Improvement and Reviews Manager.
- Approve or cancel temporary accommodation bookings related to review and appeal cases.
- Approve witness statements and issue instructions to Legal Services on behalf of the Improvement and Reviews Manager.
- Undertake case management oversight and contribute to audit activity on behalf of the Improvement and Reviews Manager.
- May represent the Improvement and Review Manager at management meetings when delegated.

Additional Requirement:

- Any other duties appropriate to the post and grade

Person specification

Community and partnership working are essential for all roles as are a commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and ensuring Health and Safety at Work for everyone working at Ealing Council.

Candidates are requested to address all criteria marked with ** within their application and provide specific examples demonstrating how they meet each criterion. Examples should clearly evidence relevant skills, knowledge, qualifications, and experience.

Essential knowledge, skills and abilities:

1. ** Strong commitment to customer care and equality, with the ability to work sensitively and objectively with vulnerable or challenging customers.
2. ** Ability to manage and prioritise own workload, work independently within legal frameworks, and meet statutory deadlines.
3. ** Strong knowledge and experience of the Housing Act 1996 (Parts VI and VII) and related statutory decision-making.
4. Ability to maintain up-to-date understanding of legislation, case law, and statutory guidance through research, training, and ongoing learning.
5. ** Competence in using IT systems, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and housing database systems.
6. ** Excellent written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to produce clear statutory review decision letters and explain decisions to customers and professionals.
7. Ability to gather information effectively through interviews, home or site visits, and liaison with representatives and agencies.
8. Understanding of the Housing Register, Allocations Scheme, and the legal framework governing housing applications and allocations.
9. ** Excellent organisational skills, including the ability to manage large volumes of information and work within statutory timeframes.
10. Strong understanding of what constitutes high-quality public service.

In addition to the above, the role requires the following knowledge, skills and abilities at Grade 12

11. Ability to develop and deliver staff training, including supporting and coaching colleagues.
12. Ability to champion service improvements and secure engagement from colleagues.
13. Able to deputise for the Service Improvement and Reviews Manager when required.

Essential qualification(s) and experience:

1. ** At least 5 GCSE qualifications or equivalent including English and Maths, grade A*-C/9-4 or NVQ level 2 or 3 Housing Practice or equivalent work experience.

Values and behaviours

Improved life for residents	Trustworthy	Collaborative	Innovative	Accountable
• Is passionate about making Ealing a better place • Can see and appreciate things from a resident point of view • Understands what people want and need • Encourages change to tackle underlying causes or issues	• Does what they say they will do on time • Is open and honest • Treats all people fairly	• Ambitious and confident in leading partnerships • Offers to share knowledge and ideas • Challenges constructively and respectfully listens to feedback • Overcomes barriers to develop our outcomes for residents	• Tries out ways to do things better, faster and for less cost • Brings in ideas from outside to improve performance • Takes calculated risks to improve outcomes • Learns from mistakes and failures	• Encourages all stakeholders to participate in decision making • Makes things happen • Acts on feedback to improve performance • Works to high standards