



City of Westminster

Head of Service – Housing Solutions & Homelessness

Housing Solutions and Homelessness Service

What we value at Westminster	<p>Westminster City Council believes in creating a Fairer Westminster, putting residents first. We will put residents at the heart of our decisions, and campaign for a government that is on their side.</p> <p>We work together to adapt to the changing needs of our communities – resulting in a dynamic atmosphere where ambition, diversity and creativity are celebrated.</p>
Our culture	<p>At Westminster we have a culture of openness, transparency, and integrity – where everyone has the opportunity to thrive and develop to be the very best.</p> <p>The Westminster Way is the council’s commitment to our staff and is underpinned by three pillars:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal development: Everyone has talent. We want everyone to thrive at Westminster and so we take the time to nurture talent – coaching and mentoring our people to be the absolute best.• Value our people and diversity: Everyone is valued. We embrace our differences, to bring new perspectives to the future challenges of our city.• The Westminster Way of working: Everyone is a leader. At Westminster we encourage everyone to develop themselves to have a growth mindset and an outward looking approach to provide the best service to our residents, businesses and visitors. We champion modern and agile working and an open and transparent outlook to the way we work. <p>In order to do the absolute best for our communities, we believe that our workforce should be representative of the people we work on behalf of, our residents. That is why at Westminster we celebrate and embrace our differences.</p> <p>We are passionate about creating a workplace where all can thrive, and where every single person has the opportunity to develop, grow and to be valued for their contribution.</p>
What do we expect this role to achieve?	<p>Westminster City Council’s vision is to build a Fairer Westminster – a city that supports and celebrates its communities through social justice, effective leadership and high-quality services. Delivering Fairer Housing is a core pillar of this ambition and central to addressing inequality across the city.</p> <p>The Housing Needs service plays a critical role in delivering this vision. It is responsible for assessing and meeting housing need,</p>

	<p>discharging the Council’s statutory homelessness duties, improving temporary accommodation provision, and ensuring access to safe and sustainable housing solutions. Demand is at unprecedented levels, with increasing complexity of need. In response, the Council is redesigning its homelessness services and has developed a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.</p> <p>The Housing Solutions and Homelessness Service supports those in housing need by preventing homelessness wherever possible, providing advice and assistance and fulfilling the Council’s statutory duties under housing and homelessness legislation.</p> <p>This is a critical role where you will drive service improvement and be responsible the operational delivery and strategic alignment of our statutory homelessness functions, including prevention opportunities, our legislative compliance and wider service enquires and complaints. You will work collaboratively with the Delivery Leads, other Heads of Services and senior leaders and partners, to ensure safe, compliant and cost-effective preventative housing solutions for service-users.</p> <p>You will lead by example in modelling and embedding the Council’s values and behaviours to help build a sustainable and highly effective service and develop our reputation as a successful Council delivering for its communities.</p> <p>The postholder will promote high performance, innovation and partnership working across the service, using strategic minded approaches to improve housing outcome and prevent homelessness.</p> <p>Within the wider Housing Solutions and Homelessness Service, we apply a service user centred approach and best practice to everything that we do, striving to embed organisational learning into every layer of the department, using data, evaluation, and feedback from service users to continuously improve.</p>
<p>Portfolio/responsibilities of this role</p>	<p>As a Head of Service role reporting into the Chief Officer for Housing Solutions and Homelessness, you are a strong and strategic people leader fostering an inclusive environment that prioritises resident satisfaction and community well-being.</p> <p>You will oversee the Allocations and Advice and Housing Register teams, including their Delivery Leads.</p> <p>This is a critical leadership role where you will drive service improvement and be responsible for working in collaboration with senior leaders and residents to develop, evolve and improve the way Housing teams work together to achieve shared outcomes. You will be a critical friend to those you support and create appropriate constructive challenge to drive delivery. You will link together the operational service with the Council’s strategic direction.</p> <p>You will lead existing strategic and operational partnerships and develop new opportunities both within the Council and with external</p>

partners, to establish a coordinated and integrated approach to the management of the service. This will include with community partners and voluntary organisations, looking for opportunity to benefit the Council and diversify our connections.

You will foster a strong culture of standards, performance, and accountability, developing a team that is proactive and ambitious. Your vision and passion for creating the absolute best Housing Services will inspire and engage our teams, forging a deep sense of commitment to our vision and values. Within the Housing service, we are determined to apply resident centred best practice to everything that we do, striving to embed organisational learning into every layer of the department, using data, evaluation, and feedback from residents to continuously improve.

You will lead by example in modelling and embedding the Council's values and behaviours to help build a sustainable and highly effective service and develop our reputation as a successful Council delivering excellent value for its residents.

You will leverage your management expertise to support your team and the wider service in setting up for success, working collaboratively with other departments to resolve cross-cutting issues. As a Head of Service, you will provide support, guidance, and advice, while building strong relationships across the organisation and exemplifying the collaborative behaviours of a leader. You will work with other senior leaders across the Housing service to engage with residents on proposals that may impact on their home, their wider living environment and their quality of life.

Key responsibilities:

Leadership and Strategy:

- Be the lead for a demand-led, front-facing team, including interviewing and assessing clients' needs for assistance under homelessness duties and delivering a complex statutory operational service.
- Ensure legislative expertise within service delivery and lead improvement aligned with legal services, ombudsman's and statutory bodies around compliance knowledge and expertise.
- Lead high performing teams within a culture of high-quality customer care alongside professionally managed, controlled and reported business activities.
- Lead the reshaping and maximisation of prevention and relief duty outcomes, through alignment with our early help and PRS offer and legally compliant decision making.
- Ensure compliance with corporate complaints processes and enquires, ensuring we can take a data and evidence led approach to improving service and customer experience.
- As a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT) to actively develop, implement and contribute to the strategic direction and overall performance of the service, aligning

with organisational goals and enhancing the resident experience.

- Support the Council in its responsibility for the development and delivery of the Council's associated strategies, policies and fiduciary duties.
- Contribute to the development of directorate-wide strategic and financial plans and other key strategies under review.

Service Excellence:

- Provide a customer focused perspective to strategic planning and business development and ensure continuous improvement in these plans for the operations areas.
- Driving community-based models and prevention across the service, leading by example, and ensuring this is central to our approach across the Council.
- Ensure high-quality service delivery that meets the diverse needs of residents.
- Monitor performance metrics to identify areas for improvement and implement change to support high performing business activities.

Team Development:

- Conduct regular performance evaluations and facilitate training opportunities.
- Lead, motivate, coach, mentor and support teams and individuals, enabling a culture of learning and professional growth and accountability which embodies the "Westminster Way".
- Promote equality, diversity, and inclusion in the delivery of services and in our people management and development approaches, supporting Westminster to become an even more inclusive employer.

Collaboration:

- Collaborate with colleagues across the Housing services and the whole Council to provide joined up, clear and effective resident centred services.
- Collaborate with the Housing Solutions and Homelessness Senior Management Team to feed up learning from the service area and ensure best practice is implemented.
- Represent the organisation in community forums and develop effective partnerships with multi-agencies, government departments, user groups and voluntary sector groups, leading the development of existing relationships to maximise opportunities as they arise.
- Play a strategic role for safeguarding, ensuring that effective arrangements are in place through strategic forums and operational services. To develop and promote close working relationships with health and other key partners to deliver integrated models of service delivery.

Policy and Compliance:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure there are comprehensive policies and procedures which are implemented and updated as required relating to Housing within the organisation. • Stay informed on best practice and emerging trends within Housing and related areas which may impact on the service, such as Adult Social Care, Public Health and Children’s Services. • Oversee the operation of an effective risk management framework and ensuring operations within the risk and compliance parameters, including accurate and timely reporting. <p>Budget Responsibilities: TBC</p>
Band/Salary range.	Band 5, Level 1
Work style	<p>Agile This is an agile role that combines community-based, office and remote working. The balance of these will vary according to the needs of residents, the team, and the wider service.</p> <p>The postholder will primarily be office-based.</p> <p>The service as a front-line primary function is to be a visible, proactive presence in the communities we serve - building trust, offering early support, and connecting residents with the help they need before crises escalate.</p> <p>This way of working is at the heart of the Team’s role and is complemented by some time spent in the office and, where appropriate, working from home.</p> <p>This flexible approach ensures the Team stays responsive and efficient but must always be balanced against the core commitment to being rooted in the community.</p> <p>What this looks like</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the community: Involves outreach, drop-ins, home visits and pop-up advice sessions, and co-location within resident-accessible centres and hubs to build trust, overcome digital exclusion and allow early preventative holistic help. • In the office: regular team time, peer learning, collaboration across teams within the housing department and knowledge sharing. • Remotely: quiet space for focused admin, reflection and online training.
Your manager & team	<p>Directorate: Housing Needs</p> <p>Division: Housing Solutions & Homelessness</p> <p>Reports into: Chief Officer, Housing & Homelessness</p> <p>Reports: 1-3 Reports</p>

<p>Experience</p>	<p>Leadership Experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An expert and leader in the field of homelessness legislation and customer experience, with experience at a senior and strategic level preferably within a local authority, voluntary sector organisation and/or government office homelessness service. This is to include a proven track record in delivery and improvement of services. • Proven track record of managing and developing diverse teams, with evidence of success and improvement within operational delivery. • Experience leading complex change initiatives within an organisation to improve services or processes. • Excellent knowledge and understanding of local government, key partners and stakeholders, their roles and interests, and the operational and political context in which services are provided to people at risk of homelessness or housing solutions. <p>Strategic Planning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in developing and implementing strategic plans that improve service delivery and resident satisfaction. <p>Collaboration and Partnerships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience collaborating with various internal and external stakeholders including government agencies, community organisations, and residents. • Demonstrated experience within a complex political and service environment with senior managers, and a wide range of other bodies, such a partner organisations, communities, public agencies and statutory bodies. <p>Budget Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience in managing budgets and financial resources effectively to ensure sustainability and growth. <p>Data-Driven Decision Making:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarity with performance metrics and the ability to analyse data to inform decision-making and service improvement. <p>Crisis Management:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience managing complex issues and crises in housing or community settings. • Experience of responding to Councillors, Members or the public, with empathy and clear reasoning that is legally sound. <p>Policy Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrated experience within a complex political and service environment with elected Members and senior managers, and a wide range of other bodies, such as partner

	<p>organisations, communities, public agencies and statutory bodies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of homelessness and housing policies and regulations, and advocacy efforts related to homelessness and resident rights. • An excellent understanding of equality and diversity and issues surrounding disadvantage and discrimination, and the ability to advise and support local authorities to provide excellent customer care to all sections of their community.
<p>Skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear and comprehensive understanding of statutory responsibilities, consumer standards and health and safety for social housing in line with the requirements of the Social Housing Regulator. • Exceptional leadership skills to manage complex, multi-disciplinary teams, drive high standards and deliver resident-centric services. • Ability to lead and work as part of multidisciplinary project teams to enable the one team approach and delivery of transformational projects. • Ability to translate complex legislation into local policy and practice. • Ability to analyse financial and performance information, understand the business context and extract key facts to deliver improvement and opportunities. • Evidence of successful resources management in a multi-disciplinary environment, as well as a successful track record in managing large budgets, business planning, quality and performance management. • Knowledge of the issues facing local government and those relevant to service/functional responsibilities, together with the legal, financial and political context of public sector management and the statutory responsibilities of the post. • Resident driven – understands the resident needs that will support delivery of the business strategy and implements these where appropriate. • Innovative thinker with creative solutions to complex problems • Ability to translate strategic objectives into operational plans. • Ability to deploy advanced interpersonal skills to inspire, motivate, coach and develop team members to high levels of performance. • Advanced relationship and stakeholder management skills. • Advanced skills in written and verbal communication to influence and engage others effectively. • Knowledge of various homelessness legislation as well as the Council's Allocations policy and legislation relating to the safeguarding of vulnerable households. <p>Qualifications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Degree level education or qualified by experience to equivalent level
<p>Corporate standards</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources / Financial management

	<p>We expect you to manage delegated budgets, funding and resources in line with our processes and our Westminster Way. We would welcome your ideas on the development of outcome-based commissioning models and/or income generation opportunities to help the council receive value for money.</p> <p>Values and behaviours</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our values and behaviours are at the heart of everything we do. We expect you to work in this Westminster Way empowering, engaging and encouraging your teammates to deliver our corporate vision. • Compliance We expect you to ensure legal, regulatory and policy compliance in area of your specialism, identifying opportunities, risks, and escalate/report where appropriate. • Equality and diversity We value equality and diversity as a city council, and we want you to support and promote this in your day-to-day work.
<p>Additional leadership values and behaviours for managers</p>	<p>People and Service Management</p> <p>Managing excellent, cost-effective service delivery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving forward performance - setting high standards, encouraging improvement and supporting the team to achieve. • Having regular team meetings and one to one conversation about performance, including difficult ones when necessary. • Developing our people and our partners - giving people the scope to do well, taking time to understand their strengths and motivations, stretching them, and coaching them to achieve. • Managing budgets responsibly – planning, monitoring, and adapting budgets to respond to changing priorities. Delivering the Medium-Term Plan. • Working within the democratic framework - understanding the democratic process and its role in public organisations, anticipating Member needs, and responding to their feedback. <p>Leadership and Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inspiring the team to deliver the corporate vision, embrace change and develop opportunities. • Delivering the corporate vision – developing and communicating a direction for my service which keeps us focused on delivering the priorities of the corporate vision and makes it central to everything we do. • Leading change - being realistic, transparent, and clear on the challenges. Communicating the reasons for change and ensuring understanding. Inspiring people to get involved, to question, and to take change forward. • Making complex decisions – tackling issues proactively and finding solutions, being accountable for the decisions that have been made.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engaging staff, communities, and customers - winning strong support through effective and regular communication, collaboration, and feedback.• Being commercial – creating opportunities to generate growth, income and maximise commercial potential.
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