

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	Custody Housing Advice Worker (HAWk)
Directorate:	South Region and Criminal Justice
Location:	HMP Belmarsh with flexibility to work across other London Prisons if required
Reporting to:	Team Leader for designated cluster within the MOJ funded London Housing Advice and Interventions Service
Responsible for:	N/A

PURPOSE OF THE JOB

To assess clients' housing needs and take action to prevent homelessness by;

Supporting clients to retain existing accommodation or to relinquish tenancies to avoid accruing rent arrears and debt.

To support clients who will be homeless on release to access appropriate accommodation

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- To monitor and manage case load through the CAS (Customer Approved System).
- To respond to new referrals from the referring responsible officer, through the CAS within 1 working day of receiving a referral.
- To ensure comprehensive assessments are completed within 5 working days of referral, for the purpose of establishing housing status, housing need and providing initial advice.
- To agree an action plan and activity to be undertaken with the referring Responsible officer within 5 working days of receiving the referral and record the plan on the CAS.
- To record all activity undertaken and outcome on the CAS and liaise regularly with the referring Responsible Officer.
- To work in a target driven environment and be responsible for the following activity for clients referred through the CAS who are in the adult male prison estate;
- To refer all clients who are referred through the CAS and identified as homeless or at risk of homelessness to the appropriate local authority at the point of assessment, in line with Section 10, Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 by completing a duty to refer (DTR) and where appropriate support clients to access interim accommodation via their local authority.
- Addressing all tenancy issues with clients who are referred through the CAS.

- To take appropriate action to preserve existing tenancies. This will include communicating with social and private Landlords and other agencies. Providing support to address rent issues including accessing the housing element of universal credit or housing benefit as appropriate, utilising the support of other agencies including Job Centre plus Advisors.
- To support clients, where appropriate, to close tenancies to avoid the buildup of debt and arrears.
- Explore housing history, support needs and risk, identifying any entitlements to benefits and accommodation options that may be available to an individual on release, to address their housing situation, making referrals and supporting access to a variety of housing options including supported, semi-independent, specialist housing and Rehab and other housing pathways and action a plan to access appropriate options.
- Identify any agencies that have an ongoing relationship with the client regarding their housing, and look to work in partnership where possible and appropriate, for example where a client is a known rough sleeper, contact outreach services and CHAIN.
- Identify any clients referred to the service through initial assessments, who meet the criteria for priority need with vulnerability and support an application where appropriate to the Local Authority for assessment for emergency accommodation.
- To support clients with bidding processes for social housing and applications for bond schemes where available.
- Identify clients who may be suitable for independent living in private rented sector (PRS) accommodation and work with SHP PRS team to access PRS.
- To Identify and refer clients eligible for support from the St Mungo's HARP connect team.
- To identify and refer clients eligible for the residential element of the service as vacancies become available.
- Work in partnership and support the Homelessness prevention task force (HPT) to reduce the risk of clients leaving custody with nowhere to live
- To provide pre tenancy training to clients (in groups or one to one) when required and appropriate, to improve independent living skills
- To provide service to late referrals received (less than two weeks before release) ensuring that any cases requiring ongoing support post release to achieve outcomes, are referred to community teams within 3 days of release.
- Completing quality housing referrals, providing evidence, including quality Risk information as appropriate (within GDPR).
- Contributing to effective partnership working with Probation, Prisons, Local Authorities, SHP and others to enable suitable support plans and/or personal housing plans to be produced.
- Consider existing risk assessments including engagement with MAPPA when making housing referrals so that clients are able to access safe accommodation that reduces risk and promotes recovery.
- Provide advice on the rules and requirements around disclosure, tailoring any advice to a client's specific situation. Where appropriate, help the individual to construct a 'self-disclosure statement'.
- Making and following up on housing referrals in advance of release and confirm outcomes to be recorded on the CAS for monitoring purposes pre and post release for all clients referred.
- Ensuring that all activity is done with the client in a supportive, inclusive and empowering way using

trauma informed approaches, and that the client is kept updated and informed of actions, progress, outcomes and next steps required

- Work with the Team Leader to recruit and support the use of prisoner peer advisors or St Mungo's volunteers across delivery where appropriate.
- Carry out a range of administrative responsibilities regularly to ensure the smooth running of the service, including accurate and timely recording of statistical data, outputs and outcomes including regular and timely recording onto the CAS.
- To fully co-operate with HMPPS security requirements policy and procedures.
- To identify high risk cases to the Team Leader and Responsible officer and work alongside them.

GENERAL

- Adhere to St Mungo's Policies and Procedures at all times.
- Cover for other members of the team and directorate as necessary.
- Being proactive in reviewing and evaluating own performance and identifying and acting upon areas for improvement and development.
- Undertaking, as required, any other duties compatible with the level and nature of the post and/or reasonably required by more senior members of staff.
- Attend and participate in divisional and team meetings and other meetings as required.
- To complete training as required
- To complete reporting and recording as required including timesheets and leave requests
- To take part in supervision monthly and yearly appraisals with the Team Leader.

This job description covers the current range of duties and will be reviewed from time to time. It is St Mungo's aim to reach agreement on changes, but if agreement is not possible, St Mungo's reserves the right to change this job description.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Custody Housing Advice Worker (HAWk)

Although we are keeping direct experience/knowledge requirements to a minimum, we do need you to use the application form or covering letter to demonstrate your capabilities, in relation to each point listed under essential requirements in the person specification. Where relevant use your answers to illustrate how your competences have helped you achieve positive results.

ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS

Experience

1. Some experience of working with ex-offenders and people who are homeless/at risk of becoming homeless

Skills, Knowledge and Abilities

2. Ability to work as part of a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency team within the prison environment and to maintain effective relationships with external agencies.
3. Understanding/working knowledge of housing issues faced by clients in custody.
4. Understanding/working knowledge resettlement and tenancy rescue support.
5. Knowledge of, or willingness to learn prison-based and MOJ-based secure IT systems. (eg: Refer and Monitor).

The below criteria will be tested at different stages of the recruitment process, and throughout induction and training if you are successful

- Ability to cope with clients with multiple needs, who may display challenging behavior.
- Ability to work flexibly in a changing and often challenging environment.
- Ability to work to agreed deadlines and targets.
- Ability to carry out administrative tasks.
- Computer literate with good knowledge of Microsoft Office.

The following are required of all roles with St Mungo's. However, you do not need to address these in your application.

- An understanding of and commitment to Diversity & Equality.
- Willingness and ability to work shifts including evenings, weekends, bank holidays including Christmas Eve/Day and New Year's Eve/Day.
- Willingness to work flexibly in response to changing organisational requirements.

In the selection testing/interview process, we will be assessing candidates against the following competencies:

COMPETENCY	PRIMARY INDICATORS
Improving and Innovating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is open to new ideas, improvement and change. • Handles situations and problems with innovation and creativity. • Shows commercial and financial awareness.
Interacting and Influencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes responsibility and demonstrates values-driven leadership. • Shows self-awareness. • Works well with other people. • Collaborates and networks effectively internally and externally. • Shows sound communication and influencing skills.
Understanding and Doing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to find and analyse relevant written and numerical information and use it to make sound judgements. • Able to think strategically. • Demonstrates the necessary technical skills and aptitudes at the level that are required for the role. • Has good writing skills at the level required for the job. • Plans, organises and manages time well. • Demonstrates compliance and accountability.
Involving and Including	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds client/stakeholder involvement into all activities. • Is client and customer focused. • Aware of own level of cultural competence and proactively seeks to develop. • Actively promotes equality, diversity and inclusion among colleagues and clients.
Managing and Empowering (for managers only)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds a high performing team. • Provides staff with clear direction and support. • Motivates, supports, enables and promotes the wellbeing of their team. • Manages the operational aspects of their function efficiently. • Implements plans, strategies and services effectively. • Actively contributes to service growth.