Recruitment Information Pack

Job Title	Housing Options Officer
Reference No	510.11
Location	West Lothian Civic Centre
Hours	36 hours
Salary	£35,851 - £38,779
Status	Permanent

Thank you for your interest in this post, if you have any questions in relation to the recruitment process or if you are disabled and require any adjustment to the recruitment process please contact our recruitment team on 01506 28 22 22 or email recruitment@westlothian.gov.uk

Privacy Notice – HR Services - Recruitment

Information held about you.

West Lothian Council will hold the following personal information:

- Full name
- Home address
- Email address
- Employment history
- Training/qualifications
- Registration with professional bodies
- Equal opportunities monitoring information (gender, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, religion and disability)
- Criminal convictions (if applicable)
- Pre-employment checks (health screening, references and PVG check if applicable)

Who is processing my information?

All personal information is held and processed by West Lothian Council in accordance with data protection law.

How will we use information we hold about you?

Personal information held by West Lothian Council will be used in the following ways:

- To assess the suitability of applicants for the job they have applied for
- Equal opportunities monitoring information will be used to monitor the councils compliance with equality legislation
- To populate the HR Payroll system for successful candidates (see privacy notices on performance of contract of employment for further details)

Who we will share your information with?

We will not share your information with any external bodies.

How long do we keep your records?

If your application is successful we will keep your information for a period of 6 years after you leave employment with the council. Information stored on the Myjobscotland website will be retained for 7 years from the date of your application.

If your application is unsuccessful, all information will be kept for a period of 6 months, following which it will be securely destroyed. Information stored on the Myjobscotland webstie will be retained for 5 years from the date of your application.

Your rights

You have a number of rights under data protection law, including the right to request your information and to request that the information be amended or, in some circumstances, erased if incorrect.

To request your records, you will need to put your request in writing to HR Services, West Lothian Civic Centre, Howden South Road, Livingston, West Lothian, EH54 6FF

Email – hrsupport@westlothian.gov.uk

You also have a right to make a complaint about our handling of your personal information to the Information Commissioner's Office.

Further information

If you have any questions or concerns about how your information is used, please contact Data Protection Officer, West Lothian Council, West Lothian Civic Centre, Howden South Road, Livingston, West Lothian, EH54 6FF or email DataProtectionOfficer@westlothian.gov.uk

More information about data protection and how it applies to you is available from the Information Commissioner's Office.

About Housing, Customer and Building Services

The vision of the service is “to improve lives and properties by designing and maintaining communities, homes and buildings”.

Housing Operations

Housing Operations manages the council’s housing stock and tenancies to ensure that the housing stock is used efficiently and effectively. The aim is to improve the quality of life for tenants, assist individual households and plays an important role in promoting sustainable communities. The council has just over 13,000 council houses. The Safer Neighbourhood Team is part of the Community Safety Unit, a unit dedicated to preventing anti-social behaviour and crime and reducing risks to ensure a safer community.

Building Services

Building Services is the council’s in-house building contractor, carrying out responsive repairs, maintenance and refurbishment of council properties.

Housing Needs

The Housing Need Service takes a proactive, housing options approach to preventing homelessness. When homelessness does happen, the objective of the service is to ensure the provision of appropriate emergency or temporary accommodation and re-housing into settled accommodation as soon as possible.

Housing Strategy and Development

The Housing Strategy and Development team undertake the strategic planning and development of housing in West Lothian. The team promote the development of new affordable housing and the improvement of the condition of existing housing.

Customer and Community Services

Customer and Community Services provide the frontline delivery of council services to all communities in West Lothian. The services include, Customer Information Services, Library Services, Registration, Community Centres and the Customer Service Centre. The service provides community resources and facilities to support the community through the facilitation of training, learning and development opportunities.

Performance and Change

The Performance and Change team provides a full range of management support activities and functions including the following services; service development, assessment and review, housing research and analysis, performance management, income management, governance and compliance, systems development and administration, and tenant participation, supporting the service to ensure that it achieves identified outcomes and targets.

Council Strategies

Housing Customer and Building Services has responsibility for the development and implementation of the Community Safety Strategic Assessment, Local Housing Strategy, and Customer Services Strategy.

Equality and Diversity

Equality is relevant to us all. Addressing discrimination and promoting equality are everyone's core business.

We want a West Lothian in which all people and communities have a say in their future and an equal opportunity for health, safety, education, fulfilling work, and a high quality of life. West Lothian Council has published equality outcomes, equality information on our workforce and our progress on mainstreaming equality. This reflects our commitment to promoting equality and eliminating discrimination as well as fulfilling our statutory duties under legislation.

The council recognises and values the diverse range of talents, skills, experience and perspectives that exist within society and believes that those qualities and attributes should also be reflected within the composition of its workforce, its employment practices and in the planning and delivery of its services.

Central to the council's Equality and Diversity agenda, is the prevention of discrimination, victimisation and harassment against service users and employees on any grounds, but particularly in relation to the following protected characteristics:

- age;
- disability;
- sex (gender)
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sexual orientation

In addition, prevention of discrimination, victimisation and harassment in relation to gender identity, gender expression, non-binary identities, language, social origin, employment status, political belief, trade union membership or activity, or responsibility for dependants is key to ensuring we have a diverse and inclusive workforce that reflects the communities we serve.

West Lothian Council is a Stonewall Diversity Champion and is committed to advancing LGBT equality and this is reflective in all our policies which are inclusive of all protected characteristics

How to apply

Our preferred method of receiving applications is on line. In the interests of equality we do not accept C.Vs.

All applications must be received by the closing date stated on the advert and any late applications will not be accepted. Where there have been a high number of applications for a post, we may decide to close the post earlyWe do not keep copies of application forms on file for any future similar vacancies and therefore you will need to complete a separate application form for each post that you apply for. However, when applying on line the system will remember your core details.

If you apply for a post on line we will contact you using the email address you have provided. If you do not have an email address you can sign up for a free account through internet providers such as Yahoo, Hotmail or Googlemail.

The information you provide in your application is used to determine whether or not you should be shortlisted for interview. It is therefore in your interest to complete the form fully and carefully. Your application form should contain sufficient information to demonstrate that you have the skills and experience required for the post.

What happens next?

Following consideration of your application you will be notified as to whether or not you have been selected for interview.

If you are selected for interview you will receive an email from us confirming this and asking you to log in to the Myjobscotland website and select a suitable interview time. If you are not selected for interview you will receive an email confirming this.

Successful Candidate

The successful candidate will receive a conditional offer of employment, pending completion of the following checks, as appropriate.

- Pre-employment health check
- References
- PVG
- Eligibility to work in the UK

A formal offer of employment will be issued only when all checks have been satisfactorily completed.

If you have any questions please email recruitment@westlothian.gov.uk

Terms and Conditions of Employment for Craft

Conditions of Service	Conditions of Service are those of the Building and Civil Engineering operatives, Engineering Craftsmen, Electricians and Plumbers Scheme of Pay and Conditions of Service as adopted and amended by West Lothian Council
Hours of Work	Hours of work are 36 hours a week.
Pay	Employees are paid by bank transfer on the last Thursday of the month. Where appropriate you will receive an annual increment on the 1st April each year, until you reach the top of the grade.
Annual Leave	Depending on length of service you will be entitled to either 26 (187.2 hours) or 31 (223.2 hours) days annual leave, after 5 years continuous service, this will be pro-rated for part time employees. The leave year is 1st January to 31st December.
Public Holidays	There are 7 paid public holidays. Part time employees are given a pro-rated entitlement to reflect their particular working arrangements.
Sickness Absence	Your entitlement to sickness allowance will be in accordance with the Scheme of Sickness Allowance set out within the Building and Civil Engineering operatives, Engineering Craftsmen, Electricians and Plumbers Scheme of Pay and Conditions of Service.
Pension	You are legally required to make provision for your pension. Employees with permanent contracts, or temporary contracts for 3 months or more, will automatically become members of the Local Government Pension Fund, unless they apply to opt out. Pension contributions are based on your salary. The scheme is currently a final salary pension scheme.
Performance Review and Personal Development	All employees are entitled to annual review with their manager, to identify any development needs and set objectives for the coming year.

Employee Benefits	The council has negotiated discounts for employees with over 90 local businesses and over 1,000 businesses nationally. Childcare vouchers are offered (for those already in the scheme) and employees can take advantage of 20% off membership and free joining fees with West Lothian Leisure. To promote the council's commitment to having a healthy workforce, counselling and physiotherapy are also offered to employees.
Pool Cars	The council provides access to pool cars for employees who need to drive as part of their job.
Trade Union	The council supports collective bargaining and you have the right to join a trade union and take part in its activities and are encouraged to do so.
Health and Safety	The council is committed to ensuring a healthy and safe working environment for all employees. Health and safety responsibilities are set out in the Occupational Health and Safety Supplementary Policy and Safety Arrangements booklet for your workplace.

Terms and Conditions of Employment for Employees

Conditions of Service	Conditions of Service are those of the Scottish Joint Council for Local Government employees as adopted and amended by West Lothian Council
Hours of Work	Hours of work for a full time post are 36 hours per week. The standard working hours are Monday – Thursday 8.30 – 5.00, Friday 8.30 – 4.00. School based staff are employed on sessional contracts of either 38, 39 or 40 weeks.
Pay	Employees are paid by bank transfer on the last Thursday of the month. Where appropriate you will receive an annual increment on the 1st April each year, until you reach the top of the grade.
Annual Leave	Depending on length of service you will be entitled to either 25(180 hours) or 30 (216 hours) days annual leave, this will be pro-rated for part time employees. The leave year is 1st January to 31st December. School based sessional staff will receive additional pay, depending on their length of service, to reflect their annual leave entitlement.
Public Holidays	There are 7 paid public holidays. Part time employees will be given a pro -rated entitlement to reflect their particular working arrangements.
Sickness Absence	Your entitlement to sickness allowance will be in accordance with the Scheme of Sickness Absence set out within the National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service for Scottish Local Government employees.
Pension	You are legally required to make provision for your pension. Employees with permanent contracts, or temporary contracts for 3 months or more, will automatically become members of the Local Government Pension Fund, unless they apply to opt out. Pension contributions are based on your salary.

Appraisal Development and Review	All employees are entitled to an annual review with their manager, to identify any development needs and set objectives for the coming year.
Employee Benefits	The council has negotiated discounts for employees with over 90 local businesses and over 1,000 businesses nationally. Childcare vouchers are offered (for those already in the scheme) and employees can take advantage of 20% off membership and free joining fees with West Lothian Leisure. To promote the council's commitment to having a healthy workforce, counselling and physiotherapy are also offered to employees.
Pool Cars	The council provides access to pool cars for employees who need to drive as part of their job. You must have a valid driving licence.
Trade Union	The council supports collective bargaining and you have the right to join a trade union and take part in its activities and are encouraged to do so.
Health and Safety	The council is committed to ensuring a healthy and safe working environment for all employees. Health and safety responsibilities are set out in the Occupational Health and Safety Supplementary Policy and Safety Arrangements booklet for your workplace.

West Lothian Council

Job Description

Job Title	Housing Options Officer
Reports to:	Housing Access Operations Manager
Location:	West Lothian Civic Centre

Purpose of the job

The post holder will work as part of the Housing Access Team, delivering a housing options service in order to meet the needs of individuals or families identified in housing needs including those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness by providing a comprehensive range of housing options & assessment services to meet the statutory homeless and support needs of individuals and families.

Housing Options officers are responsible for assisting those who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, working with partners to undertake an intervention with the aim of preventing homelessness & sustaining safe accommodation. In order to achieve this, the post holder will be expected to deliver a programme of advice & support activities for customers whilst ensuring that individuals/households housing needs are identified and appropriate action is taken.

The post holder is responsible for the statutory assessment of homelessness, this includes the management of homeless presentations to the council in accordance with agreed procedures and operational practices, ensuring that homeless individuals and families housing needs are identified and met. This involves working on a case management basis, in close partnership with other housing need teams and council services.

The post holder will promote a person centred approach through assessment to build capacity for individuals and families to where possible prevent homelessness and achieve sustainable outcomes. Officers are required to undertake home visits and office interviews throughout West Lothian.

Job Scope

To work as part of a multi-disciplinary team of front-line housing option officers, with the aim of preventing homeless & where required undertaking statutory homeless assessment.

Meeting the needs of a wide range of service users through the provision of a range short and longer term, practical housing option interventions, whilst meeting and maintaining a range of quality standards as defined by regulatory services, internal partners, stakeholders and external organisations

Work as part of rota, delivering virtual and face to face appointments with our customers, and managing caseloads and communication on all live homeless applications. You will do this by utilising technology and systems, delivering your appointments, advice and case management through a combination of solo work, joint working arrangements, and you will provide legally sound, knowledgeable and locally relevant advice and assistance to individuals or families requiring emergency housing assistance

Housing Need delivers a front-line service to customers and service users who often by the very nature of their circumstances are vulnerable. It is therefore vital that the post holder have a positive flexible approach and be able to demonstrate excellent interpersonal skills in communication and practical skills to provide homeless prevention & assessment services to families / individuals in housing need.

You will work as part of a high energy, and performance driven team, ensuring all functions are delivered to a high standard, are compliant with legislation and codes of guidance, and form part of our service wide prevention first approach to managing homelessness. This involves our allocation, accommodation, support and strategic teams, as well as wider services such as social policy, health, prisons and justice services, as well as advocacy organisations such as Shelter and CLEO.

Qualifications, Skills, Knowledge

<u>Essential</u>

Be qualified to SVQ/ HNC level 3 in housing or equivalent i.e. Social Work, Community Education, Social Care, or be willing to work towards, or recent relevant experience of working in homelessness or related services.

Have extensive working knowledge of relevant legislation e.g. Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, Homelessness Bill, Children's (Scotland) Act 1995, Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007, Care Commission Housing Support registration requirements.

Shelter Home Point Level 2 Qualification

Significant experience of working in housing or homeless prevention/assessment or similar environment.

Have experience of assessing need, identifying and procuring appropriate support

Proficient in the use of a range of IT, with working knowledge of MS Office applications and a range of other technology solutions to enable a virtual customer service delivery, case management and communication relating to the post.

Ability to undertake lone working, this will require working with clients in their own home/tenancy/community setting.

Desirable

An ability to work with customers with challenging behaviour and higher support needs

A committed and proven team worker

A High standard of personal presentation and confident manner, and the ability to make sound judgements and decision making on your own initiative

Experience of working with vulnerable groups, carers and those in crisis

Proactive, solution focussed and able to achieve full compliance with processes and guidance

Current Driving Licence

Other Special Factors

The Housing Options officer is required to work in a flexible and collaborative manner, demonstrating empathy, compassion and specialist knowledge, which is reflective and necessary in a responsive, needs led service.

Other Essential Information

This post is considered Regulated Work with children and/or protected adults under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scotland Act 2007. From 28 February 2011 preferred candidates will be required to join the PVG Scheme or undergo a PVG Scheme update check prior to a formal offer of employment being made by West Lothian Council.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Person Specifications must not contain any unjustifiable requirements that may exclude any person from applying for the job e.g. stating that the person must be energetic, if this is not a demonstrable skill required of the job; or requires to have a number of years' experience.

Post Title:	Housing Options Officer	Grade: 5
Service:	HCBS	
Area:	Housing Need	

Requirements (E = Essential; D = Desirable)	E	D
Essential		
• Be qualified to SVQ/ HNC level 3 in housing or equivalent i.e. Social Work, Community Education, Social Care, or be willing to work towards, or recent relevant experience of working in homelessness or related services.	X	
• Have extensive working knowledge of relevant legislation e.g. Housing (Scotland) Act 2001, Homelessness Bill, Children's (Scotland) Act 1995, Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007, Care Commission Housing Support registration requirements.	X	
• Shelter Home Point Level 2 Qualification		
• Significant experience of working in housing or homeless prevention/assessment or similar environment.	X	
• Have experience of assessing need, identifying and procuring appropriate support	X	
• Proficient in the use of a range of IT, with working knowledge of MS Office applications and a range of other technology solutions to enable a virtual customer service delivery, case management and communication relating to the post.	X	
• Ability to undertake lone working, this will require working with clients in their own home/tenancy/community setting.	X	

	X	
Desirable • An ability to work with customers with challenging behaviour and higher support needs • A committed and proven team worker • A High standard of personal presentation and confident manner, and the ability to make sound judgements and decision making on your own initiative • Experience of working with vulnerable groups, carers and those in crisis • Proactive, solution focussed and able to achieve full compliance with processes and guidance • Current Driving Licence	X X X X X X	
Other Essential Information: • This post is considered Regulated Work with children and/or protected adults under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scotland Act 2007. From 28 February 2011 preferred candidates will be required to join the PVG Scheme or undergo a PVG Scheme update check prior to a formal offer of employment being made by West Lothian Council. • The Housing Options officer is required to work in a flexible and collaborative manner, demonstrating empathy, compassion and specialist knowledge, which is reflective and necessary in a responsive, needs led service.		