

Job profile

Housing officer



Housing organisations vary enormously but they all have at least one thing in common - they need to manage the homes they own and they need people to do it for them.

The job title may vary – housing officer, patch officer, neighbourhood officer, tenancy management officer, tenancy services officer – but whatever the name, people doing these jobs are likely to be doing broadly similar things.

Housing management services might be organised in different ways:


- Some organisations have generic housing officers who do everything – this gives you a lot of variety and it gives housing organisations more flexibility. But it can be hard to juggle things if everything is seen as a 'high priority'
- Some have specialist teams to deal with things like anti-social behaviour and rent arrears. This gives you the chance to become an expert in your area although you might not have quite so much variety
- Sometimes housing officers will handle a case up to a certain point, such as taking legal action, and then hand it over to a specialist colleague to take it further

The number and kind of homes you manage might vary also. If some patches are more challenging, for example, there are a high number of tenants who are behind with their rent payments, then patch sizes might be smaller to allow more time to work on this. Some patches might be concentrated on one estate while some might be spread over a wide geographical area, for example, if the landlord owns homes in rural areas. You might also be managing homes where tenants have different types of tenancy, where people are part buying and part renting their home (known as shared ownership), or where many of the residents are retired and living in specialist housing.

What does a housing officer do?

If you are a housing officer you might be doing any of the following things:

- Dealing with tenants' queries and concerns about their homes and tenancies
- Inspecting vacant homes to check what repairs are needed before the next tenant moves in
- Showing prospective tenants around vacant homes
- Letting homes to new tenants including completing and signing tenancy agreements and explaining their rights and responsibilities
- Visiting new tenants to check they are settling in
- Carrying out regular checks on communal areas in blocks of flats
- Doing estate walkabouts – often with tenants – to identify any issues that need to be resolved
- Advising tenants how to pay their rent
- Working with tenants who have rent arrears to make sure that they repay them, preparing cases for court if legal action is needed and appearing in court to present the case
- Advising tenants who are experiencing difficulties with their neighbours and using a range of remedies to deal with the problem, including legal action in severe cases
- Dealing with homes which have been abandoned by the tenant
- Advising tenants about where they can get help and advice, for example, on claiming benefits and dealing with debts
- Talking to other agencies such as social care and the police to resolve issues that tenants might have
- Attending meetings with tenants and residents groups



Job profile

Housing officer

The person doing the job

Jenny is a housing officer with a housing association. Her background is in residential care and she moved into housing as an assistant housing officer and progressed to being a housing officer. She has completed an HNC in housing. Jenny's day starts at 9.00 am and can include anything from the day-to-day management of homes, dealing with new enquiries, new signings, environmental inspections and general customer services. She finishes her day at approximately 5.30 pm.

Jenny says:

"Within my job, I try to do the best for my customers. Many residents of social housing do need a lot of support. We deal in particular with neighbourhood nuisance, trying to resolve disputes as quickly and effectively as possible. I like the fact that my job is not office-based and I spend a lot of my time out and about. It's an independent job where I can manage my own priorities".

What qualifications are you likely to need?

Many housing organisations would look for someone who has, or is studying for, a housing qualification when they are recruiting housing officers or they might expect you to do a qualification once you have started the job. You can find out everything you need to know about housing qualifications [here](#).

What skills and experience might you need?

- Some housing management experience although some employers are keen to recruit people with the right attitude and train them on the technical things they need to know
- Awareness or understanding of tenancy law but if you don't have this, some employers will be happy to train you if they feel you are right for the job
- Good communication skills - listening as well as speaking!
- Experience of working with people - and feeling comfortable doing so
- Empathy and a willingness to see other peoples' points of view
- Good problem solving skills
- Ability to work on your own initiative, manage your own time and balance competing priorities
- Good IT skills