

Offender Housing Options Worker

Role Profile			
Job Title	Offender Housing Options Worker (OHOW)	Grade	Client Worker
Area	Plymouth	Team	Private Rented Access Service (PRAS)
Reports to (Job Title)	Private Rented Access Manager	Hours	18.5 pw
Location	Council building(s) / Harwell Centre / from home / as required	Shift Pattern	Mostly office hours; but evening and weekend work may be required.
CRB check required	Y – enhanced		
<p><u>Role / team</u></p> <p>Private Rented Access workers are part of Path’s Private Renting Access Service (PRAS), which aims to set up and support sustainable PRS tenancies.</p> <p>This service therefore provides support to clients to gain access to private rented accommodation, including through giving deposit guarantees to private landlords for single people, couples and families, as relevant.</p> <p>This role is specifically to support people on probation, working with the local authority’s Housing Options team to identify offenders who present as homeless and ensuring suitable responses and options for them.</p>			

1. Role

The role of the Offender Housing Options Worker (OHOW) is to work with Probation and Community Connections within Plymouth City Council to identify people on probation requiring housing advice and support and to contribute to that provision, linking those concerned with relevant services and accommodation options.

Duties

Supporting people in the Criminal Justice System, in particular those working with the Probation Service or Plymouth Integrated Offender Management Team, to secure new or maintain existing accommodation through the provision of housing information, advice, guidance and support.

2. Identifying and responding to referrals

This worker will be based and work with local authority staff, with a specific focus on DTRs (people identified as part of the ‘duty to refer’ anyone vulnerable to homelessness), to contribute to the response to them by identifying options, contributing to personal housing plans and providing advice and support to the clients concerned.

Specific duties therefore include:

- Contribute to undertaking the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 statutory duties to assess an Applicant’s needs and circumstances
- Help prepare a personal housing plan to perform the Prevention and Relief Duties of the Act.
- Thereby identify accommodation options for clients, linking them with relevant services

- Provide necessary information to services and support the clients to engage with them
Advice and support may include:
- Looking at financial needs and options of clients for setting up tenancies, including affordability assessment, tenancy deposit savings, applying to benevolent funds and other sources of money for clients
- Referring onto other services / agencies, where appropriate, including other Path services, to ensure joined up support

3. Working relationships

- Develop effective relationships with Plymouth City Council and Alliance partner housing teams to access other information, advice, guidance and support and any available grants, provided the offender meets the relevant criteria.
- Develop effective relationships and provide a point of contact for the Probation Service, Devon and Cornwall Police, and any Criminal Justice System organisation staff to access general housing information, advice, guidance, and support, supporting them to make best use of all available housing options in the social, voluntary, and private sectors.
- Develop effective relationships and support broader Criminal Justice System partners with Duty to Refer requirements and to increase the understanding of broader Criminal Justice System staff around housing.
- Utilise services and relationships with Registered Providers, private landlords and other accommodation providers, to support them to develop an understanding of the needs of offenders and how and when to alert housing or Criminal Justice System staff about offenders who are at risk / vulnerable.

4. Performance & Reporting Measures

The following will be the initial key performance indicators for the OHOW post.

- To be working with an average of 30 clients at any one time
- On average, to have supported a minimum of 10 new clients per month, across any given 12 month period.
- All clients supported will have a housing assessment and appropriate personalised housing plan in place within 28 days of first contact.
- A minimum of 25% of clients supported are found suitable accommodation
- (Temporary, Dry House, Supported or Independent).
- To have worked with an average of at least 5 stakeholders a week, across a four week period, to provide specific criminal justice related housing advice and guidance. A stakeholder could include the Probation Service, any other criminal justice organisation, private landlords, other accommodation providers or any other organisation engaged in housing offenders.

5. General

- Participation in team, staff and other meetings, as required
- Recording and reporting on work done
- Keeping up-to-date with relevant legislation and other developments
- Developing & maintaining PRAS literature, monitoring systems & referral procedures
- Covering for other workers, when needed
- Representing Path at Private Rented Sector events and functions
- Other duties as required by line manager or Director
- Compliance with Path Worker Conditions.

Offender Housing Options Worker: Person Specification

Path is looking for someone with a good understanding of housing and homelessness issues, experience of and skills in assessing people's needs, plus a positive attitude toward working with homeless people.

Essential	Desirable
<p><u>Personal Qualities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approachable • Non-Judgemental • Motivational communicator • Demonstrable ability to engage, refer and collaborate effectively • Problem-solving, realistic approach <p><u>Housing and homelessness</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of temporary and settled housing • Ability to deliver housing advice • Understanding of welfare benefits, HB, appeals and backdating (Universal Credit etc.) • Understanding of private and social rented sectors, cultures and markets <p><u>Client work</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to assess independent living skills; identify housing options; problem-solve; prevent homelessness • Ability to identify and manage risk • Understanding of and commitment to equal opportunities and diversity • Ability to provide advocacy and support for clients <p><u>Office and communication</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience of liaising / communicating with other staff on professional basis, including being an active part of a busy team • Good written and verbal communication skills • Good negotiation skills • IT skills: ability to use databases + Microsoft Office (word processing, e-mail, spreadsheets) as minimum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of housing and homelessness legislation/guidance, including Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, HMO licensing, HHSRS (property standards), Deposits protection etc and related rights and responsibilities. • Understanding of the criminal justice system • Emergency First Aid for Appointed Persons • More developed IT skills, such as design and creation of literature • Knowledge of local services, referral systems, and local procedures • Experience of writing / contributing to formal reports • Experience of negotiating with accommodation providers, including private landlords • Have a valid drivers' license & use of a car

- Experience of being line managed and / or demonstrable ability to work under formal supervision

General

- Ability to efficiently respond to need, handle a large caseload and work to tight deadlines
- Ability to manage your own time using flexible working
- Ability to travel, in some cases outside of the local authority area.
- 5 GCSEs level C and above; including Maths & English; or equivalent
- Ability to represent oneself and Path to the public
- Enthusiasm for this post and this area of work