



Job Description: Housing Project Worker.

Responsible to: Housing Manager.

Responsible for: Tenants, properties, and volunteers.

Organisational Context : Open Door North East is a Christian charity based in Middlesbrough that whose mission is to relieve destitution and poverty while empowering and providing opportunities for those seeking sanctuary in the UK. One of the ways this is expressed is through providing supported accommodation for asylum seekers with no recourse to public funding and to new refugees as well as providing; drop services, information advice and guidance, refugee move on and employment support services.

Job Context: This is one of two Housing Project Worker posts at Open Door North East. This post is initially for 12 months with funding provided by the Virgin Foundation and will be subject to review and extension should additional funding be sourced or other project income be sufficient to cover salary.

Job Purpose:

- This post is being funded specifically to enable Open Door to source appropriate stock and increase overall bed spaces for both asylum seekers and refugees living in Stockton-On-Tees and Hartlepool.
- The Housing Manager will take the lead in the procurement of the new housing stock.
- You will work with the Housing Manager (and volunteers) in managing new and existing properties and supporting tenants.
- You will be jointly responsible for the day-to-day management of Open Door houses including the management of privately owned houses placed with Open Door.
- You will be responsible for developing robust property management/maintenance and rent collection systems to ensure effective cost control; quality of the product offered to tenants; and service offered to property owners
- You will recruit, provide support & training, and oversee Open Door housing volunteers.
- You will assist other Open Door project worker(s) in the provision of support to both asylum seeker and refugee clients as appropriate.
- You will provide emergency out of hours cover on an agreed rota.

Duties & Responsibilities:

Managing Properties including;

- Inspect each property on a fortnightly basis, reporting maintenance and management issues and agreeing actions arising with the Housing Manager.
- Take photographs of concerns to allow team discussion on best course of action, prioritising of repairs and maintenance.
- Undertaking minor repairs and maintenance as appropriate and/or arrange for repairs and maintenance to be undertaken by professional contractors or property owners.
- Organising annual Gas Safety inspections and PAT testing, fire safety checks and annual property inspections to agree planned maintenance and replacement of household items with landlords.
- Organising 5 yearly Electrical Safety testing.
- Take monthly gas and electric reading and ensure Finance Officer makes appropriate payments.
- Record all readings on a spread sheet and produce info graphics to compare properties and identify miss use.
- Undertake monthly room inspections to check radiator pressures and ensure no prohibited electrical items are in use. Or immediate inspections should anomalies be found in gas/electric usage.
- Undertake annual review of utility contracts to ensure best price.
- Undertake annual reviews of management arrangements for each property with owners.
- Make payments and prepare invoices as appropriate, including the monthly transfer to landlords of rents owed minus expenditure and management fees.
- Generally ensure the general health and wellbeing of tenants and properties is maintained through routine property health and safety inspections / audit and action in response to risk assessments.
- Ensure all work is undertaken in accordance with Open Door policies and procedures and good practise.
- Ensure effective verbal and written communication with tenants and property owners including the issuing of formal notices in accordance with agreed procedures.

Tenant Management

- Show prospective tenants available properties
- Sign up tenants, explaining the tenancy agreement, house rules, payment terms and rent collection procedures.
- Take tenants to their new home and induct them in all aspects of living in the house, house rules, relevant polices etc.
- Support tenants with accessing Local Housing Allowance.
- Ensure that all tenants have had an appointment with the Move On Project Worker for benefits and Work Club Project Worker for CV and help with finding employment
- Treat all information about the houses and clients as confidential.
- Respect the privacy of the residents and carry out all duties in accordance with policies and procedures and housing management guidelines.
- Be sensitive to the cultural and religious differences of tenants.
- Talk to each tenant on at least a fortnightly basis and report any issues, problems and suggestions they may have.

- Manage the collection of rents and report to Housing Manager on late payment or any other significant tenant/property related matter so agreed action can be taken. Pay particular attention to fire/health and safety issues.
- Keep up to date statistics relating to existing and past tenants. This should include rent schedules and debt schedules.
- Support residents in accessing other services (health/social/voluntary etc.) as required.

New Lettings

- Support the Housing Manager in procuring new lettings.
- Liaise with statutory services (council building inspectors/licensing etc.) as appropriate.
- Negotiate/work with landlords/ prospective landlords helping in the procurement and improvement of appropriate properties.
- Agree service level agreements with landlords for the day-to-day management of their properties for an agreed fee.

General

- Meet with the Housing Manager and Finance Officer weekly to discuss property/tenant management issues, income and expenditure and prioritise actions etc.
- Meet with the CEO (or another as directed by the CEO) for supervision on a monthly basis
- Carry the “On Call” phone for tenant/housing management issues (on rota)
- Keep up to date with relevant health & safety, property management, housing sector and related legislative changes and in liaison with Housing Manager/CEO action changes necessary as appropriate.
- All the above provide a general guide to help define The Housing Managers role within Open Door. This list is not exhaustive and other duties and responsibilities may be added by your manager as the role develops.

Personal Specification/Key Competencies

Knowledge/Experience:

- A general desire to support those seeking sanctuary in the UK (essential)
- Some basic awareness of the issues facing asylum seekers and refugees (desirable)
- Experience of working with vulnerable people; paid or voluntary (desirable)
- An understanding of the need for resident confidentiality (essential)
- An understanding of the need to maintain safe working boundaries when working with residents and to work in accordance with Open Door policies and procedures (essential)

Skills/Abilities

- Experience of private rented housing sector & property procurement (desirable).
- Knowledge of appropriate housing law and practises relating to HMO and homelessness (desirable)
- Experience of project management (essential).
- A knowledge of health and safety practises (essential).
- Experience of inspecting & record taking, monitoring and evaluation (essential).

- Able to use own initiative to solve problems, including procuring repairs and maintenance (essential).
- Fully versed in the use of the main Microsoft Office word and excel (essential).
- Good general cultural awareness and ability to communication with people from many different countries etc.
- Able to work well in a team or on own with minimal supervision (essential).
- To be prepared to take responsibility and act in the best interests of tenants, property owners and Open Door itself.
- Able to recruit/lead/organise volunteers.
- General written administration and financial/budgetary management skills (essential).
- Good interpersonal skills (essential).
- To maintain strong lines of communication with other project staff.
- Strong organisational and planning skills.
- Prepared to work flexibly and out of hours.
- To take pride and have a profession approach to all you are tasked to do.
- Supportive of the Christian ethos of the organisation.

Updated 8th January 2016