Your job

Job Title: PRAS Officer

Service: Strategic and Private Sector Housing Team

Grade: 6

Reporting to: Senior Private Rented Sector Officer

The Strategic and Private Sector Housing Team help to set the strategic direction for housing locally, whilst delivering a range of incentives, support and interventions to help tackle housing inequalities and ensure all Wigan residents have access to an affordable, safe and secure home that aids their health, wellbeing and independence. With a lack of available social housing to meet demand, the Private Rented Sector (PRS) plays an increasingly important role within the local housing market, yet a significant number of local households struggle to meet the upfront costs and requirements to secure a private rented home.

As PRAS Officer, you will help to remove the barriers often faced by low-income households and those in urgent housing need, and open up access to the PRS. You will help to oversee the delivery of the Council's Private Renting Assistance Scheme (PRAS) and the Tenant Matching Service, providing both cash and non-cash incentives to facilitate new PRS tenancies, and 'matching' prospective tenants, often facing homelessness, with available homes. You will provide advice and assistance to PRAS applicants and private tenants on a range of tenancy matters, including things to consider when finding a home in the PRS, their rights and responsibilities, tenancy deposit protection, and how to deal with problems that may arise in relation to a tenancy or landlord.

The role will be varied in responding to demand across the service area, from working directly with customers in a front-line role to the implementation and ongoing delivery of new schemes and landlord incentive initiatives. A key part of the role is working collaboratively

with other Council teams and partner agencies and developing good working relationships, particularly with landlords and letting agents, helping us to maximise our impact across the PRS and encourage ethical and responsible property management.

Mandatory Statement

The Council is committed to complying with European General Data Protection regulations (UKGDPR) and meeting the requirements of the Information Commissioner's office (regulating data protection compliance in the UK). It is your responsibility to ensure that the work you undertake is compliant with the General Data Protection regulations.

Wigan Council is an active, strong, and committed corporate parent. As a priority, all employees have a responsibility towards the children we look after and care leavers, not just those employed by the Children's Directorate.

In this job you will:

In the next 12 months, you will:

- Work to deliver a range of financial assistance and advice to meet the needs of diverse cohorts and groups in significant housing need – to include individuals and families threatened with homelessness or residing in temporary accommodation, Care Leavers, migrants and refugees – opening up access to the PRS via the delivery of cash and non-cash incentives.
- Support the promotion and rollout of the scheme's new guarantor offer for households facing significant housing challenges, engaging with applicants, landlords and agents to effectively overcome the guarantor barrier and secure PRS placements.
- Maintain effective records in relation to the delivery of the Private Renting Assistance Scheme, tracking costs, outcomes and successful interventions.

On an ongoing basis you will:

- Work to deliver and grow the Private Renting Assistance Scheme and Tenant Matching Service through effective engagement, assistance and the timely provision of financial incentives. This will include the administration of Bond guarantees - managing referrals to the scheme, completing property inventories, issuing new bonds and processing claims against existing – but also the provision and payment of cash deposits, upfront rent, rental top-ups and guarantor products and agreements, as we broaden our financial support to those in significant housing need.
- Ensure our eligibility requirements are met and perform due diligence checks – in terms of the applicant, landlord and property - before acceptance onto the Private Renting Assistance Scheme, or Tenant Matching Service.
- Where PRAS applicants/customers have been served notice in relation to an existing private tenancy, check the Section 8 notice and any associated paperwork to ensure its validity and that the correct notice period has been used.
- Provide pre-tenancy advice to a range of cohorts, such as individuals/ families facing homelessness (including those residing in temporary accommodation), asylum seekers and refugees, and Care Leavers. This offer will extend to working with a range of Council services and partners to receive referrals, providing hands-on support with finding accommodation (as and when required), and the facilitation of incentives and upfront payments to secure PRS tenancies, helping to divert pressures away from the Council's own housing stock.
- Maintain an accurate record of spend in relation to the Private Renting Assistance Scheme, logging details of all cash incentives paid to landlords/agents alongside a register of all non-cash bonds.
- Promote the Private Renting Assistance Scheme, the Tenant Matching Service and the Ethical Lettings Agency to prospective tenants, landlords, letting agents and wider stakeholders and partners. You will provide general information and support for private landlords on being an ethical landlord, including linking to relevant Government regulations and landlord trade bodies.
- Provide adhoc advice and assistance to PRS tenants on a broad range of tenancy matters, including their rights and responsibilities (especially in the context of the Renters' Rights Act 2025), prohibited payments, tenancy deposit protection, and landlord harassment and

illegal eviction, referring to the service's Tenancy Relations Officers where appropriate.
- Signpost tenants to the appropriate agencies, legal aid providers and external advice where relevant.
- Work collaboratively with a range of Council teams and partners to provide the most appropriate outcomes for residents and partners.
- Keep up to date on legislation relevant to the role, through attending the relevant training courses and liaising with partners, including landlord/letting agent trade bodies.
- Ensure you operate within GDPR guidelines by regularly reviewing data held and destroying information in line with retention schedules

In this job you will need:

You must be able to demonstrate the following essential requirements:

- 5 GCSEs Grade C or above (or grade 4 or above) including English Language and Mathematics or equivalent relevant qualifications which demonstrate literacy and numeracy.
- Experience of working with customers in a front-line capacity and with private landlords/letting agents.
- A good knowledge of the private rented sector and the challenges in relation to demand, affordability and the management of properties.
- An awareness of housing legislation, policies and procedures, key operational issues and good practice relevant to the sector.
- The ability to respond and adapt quickly to emerging legislation and changes in policy.
- Have proven influencing and negotiating skills which lead to successful outcomes.
- Excellent interpersonal skills which allow you to quickly establish relationships and build trust across a range of customers, partners and stakeholders.
- The ability to raise awareness of, and assert, best practice within the sector to both private tenants and landlords, encouraging both parties to act responsibly and fulfil their obligations.
- An ability to take ownership of problems, to use initiative and to actively seek solutions wherever possible.
- The ability to work flexibly in line with the demands of the service and to plan and prioritise workload to meet deadlines.

- Excellent approach to customer care when dealing with customers, landlords and other stakeholders.
- A desire to deliver the best outcomes for a range of customers.
- Strong communication skills, both written and verbal.
- Strong administration and organisational skills, with excellent attention to detail.
- Good general IT skills.
- Current valid driving licence with the ability to travel as required using own transport.

Our Culture

For us, it's not just about all we achieve as an organisation, but how we do it. Therefore, all employees are expected to display our **TeamWigan** behaviours.

Be Positive	"Take pride in all that you do and support and develop yourself and others."
Be Accountable	"Be responsible for making things better, enabling change and supporting improvement."
Be Courageous	"Be open to doing things differently and working collaboratively with others."
Be Kind	"Be helpful, generous and thoughtful towards yourself and others."