



Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness

Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered Charity No; 1075890; Registered Company No; 3735702
36a Fife Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey, KT1 1SU
Tel: 020 8255 2439; Fax: 020 8274 8405
E-mail: matt.h@kcah.org.uk

18 December 2015

Dear Applicant

Application for Part-Time Housing Adviser Position

Thank you for your enquiry about the above post with Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness ('KCAH'). Please find enclosed an application pack, which includes the following:-

1. Background to the post of part-time Housing Adviser
2. The Housing Adviser Job Description
3. The Housing Adviser Person Specification
4. Guidance notes on completing the application form
5. A guide to conditions of service
6. KCAH Equal Opportunities Statement and Code of Practice
7. Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form (word document)
8. Application form (word document)

If you wish to apply, we ask that you present us with the best view of your abilities by reading the person specification and job description and completing your application form carefully. Please demonstrate how your past experience and your skill profile meet our requirements. It is not enough to simply paraphrase or repeat the points on the person specification. If you do not fully address the points on the person specification you are not likely to be shortlisted for an interview. The decision to shortlist candidates will be made solely on the information you supply. Please see the enclosed guidance notes on completing the application form for further information.

THE CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATION IS 12 PM ON FRIDAY 15th JANUARY 2016

Completed application forms should be returned to me by post to the above address marked "Recruitment" on the envelope or by email to matt.h@kcah.org.uk

Interviews for the Housing Adviser post will be held on Thursday 21st January 2016. Shortlisted candidates may be notified by telephone. It is therefore important that you include a contact telephone number on your application form.

If you have not heard from us within three working days of the closing date, it will mean you have been unsuccessful on this occasion. May I take the opportunity to thank you for your interest in this role and in KCAH.

We look forward to receiving your completed application form.

Yours sincerely

Matt Hatton
KCAH Operational Director

KINGSTON CHURCHES ACTION ON HOMELESSNESS

Background to the Post of Part-Time Housing Adviser

KCAH aims to relieve the distress of homeless and those threatened with homelessness. Our focus is to work with single people in housing crisis and primarily those who do not qualify for getting help from the local authority. In addition, KCAH promotes public awareness of housing services and needs. KCAH serves, first and foremost, those who are in the borough of Kingston-upon-Thames. The services of KCAH are free, confidential, impartial and independent.

KCAH runs a Housing Crisis Intervention Service (HCIS), offering housing and welfare benefits advice. Our other key focus is the Access Project where shared accommodation in nine houses scattered around the borough is used to help single homeless people with low support needs. In February 2016, KCAH intends to oversee a pilot, month-long 'roaming' night shelter scheme using different church venues. This will be for a specific group of entrenched rough sleepers who struggle to access temporary accommodation. In mid-2016, KCAH expects to re-locate its office to the grounds of St Peter's Church, Norbiton and share a building with the Joel Community Trust Night Shelter.

The Housing Crisis Intervention Service (HCIS)

This service is overseen by a Senior Housing Adviser who line manages another part-time housing adviser. They provide general housing and welfare benefits advice and they also offer a Hostel Placement Service which aims to place single homeless people into the local night shelter or hostel or even appropriate temporary accommodation outside the borough.

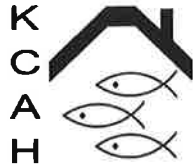
The advisers work very closely with a variety of local stakeholders including the faith community, the local authority, public health, the YMCA, the Joel Project, the local MPs and outreach teams that operate in Kingston. KCAH holds an Advice Quality Standard (the AQS) for the provision of housing and welfare benefits advice.

In general, the Advisers will see around 450 new clients each year and can also expect 1,500 repeat visits each year – it is rare that a solution is found for the client in one visit. The Advisers need to be sensitive to the needs of their clients and also know how to deal with difficult clients. The role is very person-centred.

KCAH Housing Advisers need to gain an excellent working knowledge of housing law and the welfare benefits system. Advocacy has become a significant part of the role and this comes in a range of forms eg challenging local authority homelessness decisions, safeguarding issues, DWP decisions, working with public health services.

The Housing Advisers are part of a growing team at KCAH that need to be close-knit in order to work best for those needing our services and in order to operate in a demanding working but rewarding work environment which is now very outcomes-focussed.

For more information, visit our website at www.kcah.org.uk



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JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	<u>Housing Adviser</u>
Hours:	25 (9.30am – 3.00pm)
Projected Start Date:	29th February 2015
Reporting to:	The Senior Housing Adviser

Main purpose of the job:

The Housing Crisis Intervention Service (HCIS) is the first point of contact for anyone approaching KCAH for help with a housing problem or who is homeless.

Working alongside the Senior Housing Adviser who oversees HCIS, this post is responsible for the provision of quality advice covering all relevant housing options. The advice areas surround housing law and welfare benefits. This is provided during a drop-in service in the morning and arranged appointments for complex cases in the afternoon.

The role also involves making referrals to suitable housing opportunities or acting as an advocate where appropriate.

SPECIFIC DUTIES

1. Advice and Advocacy

- a. Provide quality housing information, advice and representation to people who register with KCAH who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Responding effectively to any emergency situations, particularly when clients are rough sleeping to ensure appropriate referrals are made to outreach services or accommodation services if available.
- b. Provide advice and support on Welfare Benefits matters. This includes making effective applications, reconsiderations and submissions when attending tribunals on behalf of clients.

- c. Maintain an up-to-date working knowledge of the law and policy and procedures relevant to housing and welfare benefits advice, through training, publications and general research.
- d. Work sympathetically and effectively with clients, some of whom may be experiencing considerable stress, have a mental health or substance misuse diagnosis.
- e. To manage shared caseloads and administration where the tasks include:
 - i. Keeping accurate, detailed, computerised case notes and records as well as carrying out all necessary administration and maintenance of statistics required.
 - ii. Evaluating and prioritising cases, making decisions on appropriate options, including advising on any legal action that may be required. Completing referrals to appropriate agencies.
 - iii. Being flexible and adaptable to cases on an individual basis, including lone working, home visits and accompanying clients to external interviews.
 - iv. Advocating, corresponding and negotiating with a wide range of people to include: clients, landlords, solicitors, councillors, local MPs, council officers and other agencies.
 - v. Completing any training courses requested by KCAH and filter information to other colleagues ensuring full and regular liaison occurs with all other areas of the Charity.
 - vi. Liaising closely and develop close relations with relevant external agencies for the purposes of referral, liaison, information exchange, project work and training to ensure wherever possible they are fully aware of the services provided by KCAH.

2. Administration

- a. To work as part of the team of staff and volunteers and assist with the general office administration, filing, clerical work in co-operation with others. Offering support if required and at all times ensure the quality of service is maintained.
- b. Ensure all client data is collected accurately on the computer case management system and compile statistics and HAPi (Housing Advice Performance Indicators) for KCAH and its funders.
- c. Complete casework and attend external case reviews to ensure advice is accurate and meets the standards of The Advice Service Alliance Standard so that KCAH maintains its Advice Quality Standard for housing and welfare benefits advice.
- d. Prepare and maintain up-to-date information resources for clients and external agencies.

- e. To have full awareness of KCAH policies and procedures and maintain them in all work activities.
- f. To undertake any other duties commensurate with the grade and in line with the requirements of the post.

Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness

Person Specification For: Part-time Housing Adviser

Essential requirements

1. A sound, up-to-date knowledge of housing law and the welfare benefits system.
2. Awareness of the causes of homelessness, the housing options open to homeless people and of the issues involved in working with homeless clients.
3. Skills in interviewing clients – absorbing complex information quickly and accurately and to be able to communicate with clients verbally and in writing.
4. Ability to interact with people in a polite, appropriate and professional manner, including challenging and resolving difficult situations.
5. Ability to represent clients and negotiate effectively on their behalf with a range of third parties, including networking or public speaking.
6. Ability to work under pressure and prioritise own work load effectively with minimal supervision.
7. Ability to maintain accurate and detailed administrative systems including records of case working and monitoring information as required by KCAH to AQS standards and external funders.
8. Ability to work flexibly across the organisation, where necessary, in order to support the whole staff team and meet the objectives of KCAH.
9. To be self-servicing in terms of filing and to be IT literate with the ability to use Microsoft Office applications and a case management system.
10. Possess a demonstrable commitment to Equal Opportunities and to the aims, principles and policies of KCAH.

GUIDANCE NOTES ON COMPLETING YOUR APPLICATION FORM.

The information you provide in your application is the **ONLY** information we will use in deciding whether or not you will be shortlisted for an interview. Your application form is therefore very important and the following advice is designed to help you complete it as effectively as possible. This is a part of KCAH commitment to ensuring equal opportunities for job applications. **DO NOT SUBSTITUTE YOUR CV** for a completed application form since this will not be considered.

Planning your application form

Before filling in the application form read the job information carefully.

Every vacancy is based on a **job description**, which lists the main duties of the post and a **person specification** describing the skills, experience and qualifications we are looking for. Please look at this carefully so that you know what the job involves and the range of expertise required. The job information and application form, are enclosed with this booklet.

Using the person specification.

The **person specification** is the list of criteria or requirements regarded as necessary for the post. To be considered for an interview you have to fulfil each point of the person specification, demonstrating your abilities by telling us about your experience.

Before you fill the application form look at the person specification and decide how to relate your skills, knowledge and experience to each point. Try not to repeat yourself by using just one area of your experience to cover more than one requirement. Draw upon your past and present job or interests; you may discover you have a broader range of skills than you imagined.

Remember that voluntary work or work at home can be as valuable as paid employment. It is important that your application relates to the job you are applying for. Do not copy the same one for a series of different jobs.

Use the last section of the application form to answer **each point** of the person specification as fully as you can. If this is not done, it is highly unlikely that you will be called for interview. Here are some examples of how you might go about doing this:

Example

Say, the person specification asks for **ability to take accurate minutes of meetings**. Don't just say 'I can take accurate minutes of meetings'.

Consider how you have used these skills in different situations, for example:

- long/short meetings
- large/small meetings
- formal/informal minutes
- internal/external meetings

Example

Say, the person specification asks for the **ability to communicate effectively on the telephone**. Think about:

- Your experience communicating by telephone
- Why is communicating effectively by phone important ?
- What are the important details to write down when you take a phone call ? Why?

By giving us these details you show that you can deal with people helpfully and that you understand why good communication skills benefit your department as a whole.

Example

Say, the person specification asks for more general skills, for example, **ability to use initiative**. Use a specific experience to illustrate your ability. Perhaps you have simplified a complicated system, created a movement sheet to keep track of your colleagues or arranged for your office's waste paper to be recycled.

Whatever it is , the most important thing is to tell us - we are unable to guess or make assumptions.

Completing the application form

Application forms should be filled in as completely and as clearly as possible so that we can consider all candidates on the same basis. If you have any disabilities or need assistance in completing the form, then let us know and we will be pleased to help.

Application forms can be returned to us in any format.

Write out the form in rough first to avoid mistakes and repetitions.

Make sure you complete the form clearly. Type it or use dark ink (black ink shows up best when photocopied). You may wish to continue your application on one or more separate sheets, which should be attached to the application form.

In completing the "References" section, please give as your referees your current and most recent employers wherever possible.

Please also complete the Equal opportunities Monitoring Form (attached to application form). This should be returned with the application form.

Return your form on time and **keep a copy**.

The job information will state by which date you are to return your completed application. Please return both the application form and monitoring form to the address stated on the application form marking the envelope 'Recruitment'. **Applications received after the closing date will not be considered.**

If you would like your receipt of application acknowledged, please enclose a stamped addressed envelope or postcard which we will return to you.

Shortlisting

After the closing date, the application forms are read very carefully to see how each person's skills and experience relate to skills and experience in the person specification, and applicants who meet these requirements are shortlisted for interview. **Only information contained in application will be considered in making the decision to shortlist.**

Interviews

The interview panel is normally made up of three people who ask each candidate questions covering the person specification criteria. The questions are intended to allow you to expand on your application and to show the panel how far you meet the essential requirements of the post. Shortlisted candidates may be asked to complete a task either at or before the interview. You will have the opportunity to ask questions about the job, conditions or service etc.

Panel members have to keep a record of their assessment of each candidate so that the reasons for their decisions are clear and consistent. You should therefore not be worried about the panel taking notes.

If a candidate is not able to attend the interview there is no guarantee that an alternative date may be offered. The panel will consider requests for alternative dates as they arise.

Feedback

If you are unsuccessful and feel that feedback on your application and/or interview would be helpful in applying for other jobs, please write to the chair of the recruitment panel who will be pleased to arrange this for you.

Entitlement to work in the United Kingdom

An offer of employment will be subject to meeting legal requirements to live and work in the United Kingdom under Section 8 of the Asylum & Immigration Act 1996. You will need to provide one of the following documents to demonstrate this.

A document from a previous employer, the Inland Revenue, the Benefits Agency, the Contributions Agency or the Employment Service, which shows your name AND National Insurance number. This could be a P45, a pay slip, a P60, a NI card or a letter.

A passport confirming that you are either a British Citizen or a European Economic Area national or which shows that you are entitled to live and work in the United Kingdom.

A birth certificate confirming birth in the United Kingdom or Republic of Ireland.

A letter from the Home Office confirming that you are allowed to work.

We hope you will be successful in your application. If, however, you are not, please do not be discouraged from re-applying. Your skills and experience may be what we need for our next vacancy.

KINGSTON CHURCHES ACTION ON HOMELESSNESS

Guide to Conditions of Service: Part-Time Housing Adviser

Actual Salary: £17,147 - £18,213 for 25 hours a week

The salary for the post commences at NJC Pt 26 rising to Pt 28 and includes Outer London Weighting Allowance (£24,692-£26,227 for a full-time post).

Pension

Upon your taking out a personal pension scheme committing up to 6% of your gross salary, KCAH will contribute an amount equivalent to this percentage but a minimum of 3% of gross salary. (See also probationary period below).

Hours of work

The hours of work will be 25 hours per week, working Monday to Friday. The office is open to the public for housing advice during specified drop-in times and at other times clients may be seen by appointment. Between the staff and volunteers it is arranged always to have at least two members of staff present for safety reasons. Attendance at some evening meetings will also be required.

Holiday

The annual holiday allowance is 26 working days (paid holiday), with public holidays in addition. The holiday year is the financial year starting April and annual leave should normally be taken within the year.

Probationary period

A six-month probationary period will apply, after which there will be a review. The pension arrangement (above) will not commence until the post-holder has passed the probationary period.

Termination of Employment

For the initial six-month probationary period, one week's notice in writing by either party will apply. After a successful completion of the probationary period, the minimum period of notice will be one month by either party.

Supervision

The postholder will meet with the Senior Housing Adviser monthly.

Travel

Travel on KCAH business may occasionally be required and this is re-imbursed at public transport rates. No allowance is payable for travelling to and from the place of work.

Equal Opportunities

KCAH is committed to the principle of equal opportunity and a Policy Statement and Code of Practice is attached.



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EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT OF INTENT

The management and staff of Kingston Churches Action on Homelessness (KCAH) condemn all forms of prejudice. KCAH recognises that people experience prejudice because of their gender, race (ethnic or national origin), age, class, disability, marital status, sexuality, religious/cultural beliefs, caring responsibilities or irrelevant offences.

KCAH is committed to a programme of action, which will through the implementing of anti-discrimination policies take action to combat prejudice, in our management, employment, practices and operation of our services.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY STATEMENT

In the provision of services KCAH will seek to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment for all persons.

No person or groups of persons applying for help or for a job (paid or voluntary) will be treated less favourably than any other person or group of persons because of their gender, race (ethnic or national origin), age, class, disability, marital status, sexuality, religious/cultural beliefs, caring responsibilities or irrelevant offences.

KCAH will attempt to identify the needs of disadvantaged groups in its area of operation to ensure that its services are accessible to these groups.

To help it fulfil its commitment to equal opportunity KCAH will collect and monitor records of gender, racial/ethnic origin of all those applying for work (paid or voluntary) and of those using its services.

In the composition of the management board and staff group (paid and voluntary) KCAH will actively pursue its commitment to equality of opportunity.

EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITIES CODE OF PRACTICE

RESPONSIBILITY OF EMPLOYERS

That no job applicant or employee receives less favourable treatment than another on discriminatory grounds which are laid out above.

That no applicant or employee be placed at disadvantage by requirements or conditions which have a disproportionately adverse affect on her racial or sexual group and which cannot be shown to be justifiable on other grounds.

Each individual will be assessed according to his or her ability to do the job. Assumptions about a person's ability to do a job because of sex, age or disability will not be made.

To foster an atmosphere of mutual respect which recognises and accepts cultural differences.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

Whilst the overall responsibility for ensuring that there is no discrimination in the workplace rests mainly with the management of KCAH individual employees and volunteers have certain responsibilities.

1. To co-operate with measures introduced by management to ensure equal opportunity and non-discrimination.
2. To actively promote equal opportunity in your own sphere of work.
3. To treat all clients, volunteers and employees in a fair and non-discriminatory way, respecting cultural differences.
4. Not to attempt to induce other clients, employees, volunteers or management to practice discrimination.
5. Not to attempt to victimise individuals who have made complaints or provided information on discrimination.
6. Not to harass, abuse, or intimidate clients, employees or volunteers for any reason.
7. Should inform management if they feel any form of discrimination has taken place in accordance with the procedure on this.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF CLIENTS

Clients of KCAH have a role in ensuring that discrimination does not occur. As such they too have responsibilities.

1. To treat other clients, staff and volunteers in a fair and non-discriminatory way, respecting cultural differences.
2. Should not harass, abuse, or intimidate clients, volunteers or employees for any reason.