Housing Options Service Specification

GRANT AWARD - AMOUNT ALLOCATED £30,000 per annum

The amount allocated will be paid in advance in two stages during the year on a 60/40 basis.

The level of funding will be reviewed after two years, however if for whatever reason there is a need to review the amount allocated then this will be done during monitoring meetings.

Mandatory and discretionary business rates tax relief (subject to eligibility).

Contribution towards car parking costs of volunteers while they are working in the town centre.

As sessional work at the Council’s Customer Service Centre is required, the following ‘in kind’ contributions will be provided:

- Desk/work space
- Telephones (line rental and calls)
- Free parking (while working at the Customer Service Centre)

Core Service Objectives

- To provide housing advice to non-priority and intentionally homeless households who are not owed the full statutory homeless duty by Kettering Borough Council.
- To work in partnership with the Council’s Housing Options team to provide a first point of contact in the Council’s Customer Service Centre for non-priority homeless households.
- To provide support to non-priority and intentionally homeless households to either prevent them from becoming homelessness, or access suitable alternative accommodation.
- To liaise with the Council’s Private Sector Housing team to ensure households are placed in decent and safe private rented accommodation.

Minimum Requirements

1. Provide a Housing Advice service for the equivalent of 37 hours per week to deliver this specification.

2. To work in partnership with the Local Authority’s Housing Options, Keyways and Private Sector Housing teams. To formally refer customers to KBC Housing Options team when it is felt that they require additional services from this team on an agreed referral form which will include contact
information, details of the housing circumstances and of any casework and intervention carried out so far under the terms of this SLA.

3. To liaise with the Housing Benefit team, DWP and other voluntary money advice organisations to improve access to services that help to improve understanding of benefit systems, in order for people to claim more effectively. To assist and/or refer to agencies that can assist customers in budgeting and managing their money more effectively, particularly those who are most affected by changes in the benefit regimes.

4. To provide individual advice, support and signposting services to single people and childless couples in housing need (including rough sleepers), in order that they be made aware of their housing options locally and to avoid further homelessness.

5. To support households to access social rented accommodation through Keyways our choice based allocations scheme.

6. To work to resettle individuals into decent and safe accommodation in the private rented sector.

7. To work in partnership with other agencies to resettle individuals into decent and safe accommodation such as specialised supported accommodation.

8. To liaise with the Council’s Private Sector Housing Team before securing accommodation for individuals in Houses in Multiple Occupation. The team may request to undertake an inspection of the property prior to agreeing to a household being placed in the accommodation.

9. The Housing Advisor will be available for the following:

   - Drop-in/appointment service at least three days per week at a location within Kettering town centre (hours and time to be agreed).
   - Monday to Friday for 3 hours per day (time to be agreed) at the Customer Service Centre, Kettering Borough Council (appointments and drop-in).

The housing advisor will be expected to make up the 37 hours outlined in the specification through casework.

In the event that the Housing Advisor is unable to provide the above service, the provider should make reasonable efforts to provide a replacement or interim arrangement with the agreement of the Lead Officer.

10. Make appropriate referrals to partner agencies to ensure households are supported to maintain successful tenancies and reduce the likelihood of repeat homelessness. Relevant partners may include specialised tenancy support services, mental health support services, drug / alcohol agencies, and adult social care teams.

11. To work in partnership with the Local Authority and other agencies to develop the Homelessness Strategy and deliver and monitor the
Homelessness Strategy Action Plan through the Kettering Homelessness Action Partnership.

12. To work in partnership with the Council to increase the supply of housing for single people; such as the promotion of lodging schemes in private sector accommodation and shared accommodation for U35s.

13. A member of the organisation who will be delivering the specification will possess a certificate in competency for the assessment of house conditions using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.

14. To attend training/information sessions delivered by the Council.

15. Attendance at quarterly monitoring meetings with a designated lead officer from Kettering Borough Council.

16. Acknowledge the funding and support from Kettering Borough Council when providing this service.

17. To take an active part in the Kettering Homelessness Action Partnership meetings, and to attend the Health and Wellbeing Forum when appropriate.

**Key Outcomes**

- Provide timely housing options advice and prevent homelessness amongst non-priority and intentionally homeless households.
- To secure decent and safe accommodation for households and work in partnership with the Council to increase the supply of housing in the private sector.
- Make appropriate referrals to partner agencies to ensure households are supported to maintain successful tenancies and reduce the likelihood of repeat homelessness.

**Performance Indicators**

(Performance indicators are to be agreed with successful service provider)

a) Attendance and provision of performance figures at quarterly monitoring meetings with designated lead officer at Kettering Borough Council.

b) 60 potentially homeless households prevented from becoming homeless because of their detailed casework, of which i) Total cases able to remain in existing home (by assistance type) ii) Total cases assisted to find alternative accommodation (by accommodation type) (data should be completed as per the P1E homelessness statistics on homelessness prevention).

**This PI relating to homelessness prevention must be provided to the council by the 2nd of each month (or the next working day).**

c) 700 households contacting the housing advisor, by method of contact. i) appointments and drop in at KBC offices ii) appointment and drop in at alternative location iii) other
d) Of which, 400 new households contacting the housing advisor by method of contact. i) appointments and drop in at KBC offices ii) appointment and drop in at alternative location iii) other.

e) Seek other funding to develop activities for this SLA, aiming to achieve up to 75% of the annual grant. This could include in kind support and income generation.

**Added Value**

I. Adopt the Borough Council’s Customer Service Standards.

II. Demonstrate partnership working with other voluntary and statutory agencies that help achieve the objectives of this specification.

III. Provide evidence of implementation of Quality Management systems including the quality of data for management purposes.

IV. Organisation’s activities should also support other local priorities (KBC Corporate Plans, Housing Strategy, Homelessness Strategy, Community Strategy, Community Safety Partnership Plan, Health and Wellbeing plan etc.)

V. Describe how during the next four years you would plan for your advice services to be accessed from the Council’s Customer Service Centre.