UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

1 Advertisement

Ref: 1678 fixed term

Residential and Campus Services
University Housing Services
Housing Officer (Communities & Headleased Residences)
Full time, Fixed term until 31 October 2017
Salary range: starting at £20,624 and rising to £23,879 per year
Expected start date: asap

Housing Services is a recently accredited Investor In People department at the University of Sussex and the four teams that make up the service care very much about the student housing experience in the same way that each team member cares about each other. We are enhancing our capabilities to help more of our customers (students, applicants, landlords, parents, agents, members of the local community and others).

The University of Sussex would like to recruit two Housing Officers (Private Sector & Head leased Residences) to work in the Headlease Residences & Private Sector Advice team of the University Housing Services Department. One post on a permanent basis, and one post on a fixed term basis. Both post-holders will help to coordinate the daily management of a growing residential property portfolio: 500 bed-spaces Headleased to the University in over 100 small properties dotted throughout the city, and to help with the advice we provide to our students searching for private rented accommodation. The roles also provide private sector housing advice to our students, operate our database of private properties while safeguarding quality and help to resolve feedback about our students from the local community.

Both posts will join the service at an exciting time for student accommodation at Sussex, as we continue expand our housing portfolio from 5,500 bed-spaces to 7,500 by 2020 and remain one of the largest, accessible and professional University housing teams in the UK.

The Housing Services Department is busy, so the post-holders will need to handle a variety of tasks simultaneously, remain calm, be reliable and demonstrate excellent customer service and time management skills. You will be supported by a dedicated and friendly team.

Closing date for applications: 19 February 2017
Expected Interview date: 6 and 7 March 2017
For full details and how to apply see www.sussex.ac.uk/jobs

The University of Sussex is committed to equality of opportunity

2. Senior leadership and management

The Vice-Chancellor (Professor Adam Tickell) is the senior academic officer and, as Chief Executive, is responsible to the University Council for management of the University. He is supported by an executive group which includes the three Pro-Vice-Chancellors, the Registrar and Secretary, the Director of Finance and the Director of Human Resources. The Heads of the Schools of Studies at Sussex report to the Pro-Vice-Chancellors.

The Chief Operating Officer heads the Professional Services of the University. In addition, under the University Statutes, the Registrar and Secretary is Secretary to the University
Council. The Director of Finance reports to the Vice-Chancellor. The Director of ITS reports to the Registrar and Secretary, and the Librarian reports to one of the Pro-Vice-Chancellors.

3. **Professional Services**

The Professional Services comprise approximately 650 staff across eleven main divisions. The budget is approximately £12m a year. In addition, trading activities for residences and other campus services have a turnover of £17m a year.

Reporting to the Registrar and Secretary, the Professional Services are organised as follows:

The University’s professional services also include the Finance Division, with the Director of Finance reporting to the Vice-Chancellor.

The professional services support within each of the eleven Schools of Studies is headed by a School Administrator who reports to their Head of School.

4. **The Department**

The University Housing Services is responsible for managing the application and allocation process for 5,500 bed-spaces (and rising), all of which is let on a self-catering basis, together with providing a reception point to 8,000 visitors annually and direct management of over 100 houses across the city. The majority of the housing is located on the Falmer campus, but there are also a number of properties in Brighton & Hove. The University has signed up to the UUK Code of Practice for the Management of Student Housing. Emphasis is placed on assisting students in a professional and caring manner. Housing Services has receptions on and off campus and the role holder will be expected to work across both at times.

5. **Job Description**

**Job Title:** Housing Officer (Communities & Headleased Residences)

**Department** Housing Services

**Section / Unit / School** Residential and Campus Services

**Location** 91 Lewes Road in the city & Bramber House, Falmer Campus

**Grade** 4

**Responsible to** The permanent post will report to the Housing Services Manager (Private Sector & Headlease Residences) and the fixed term post to the Housing Services Manager (Communities & Development).

**Responsible for** Daily interaction with external contractors and student residents

To share responsibility for the daily management of a growing residential property portfolio: 500 bed-spaces Headleased to the University in over 100 small properties dotted throughout
the city, and to help with the advice we provide to our students searching for private rented accommodation.

To take responsibility for the marketing, inspecting, letting, organising payments to Landlords and other invoices for approval, and in the management of properties in the private sector leased to the University, whilst meeting yearly occupancy targets, and maximising income, and having due regard for student welfare needs. Helping to resolve feedback about our students from member of the local community, attending regular evening community meetings as required.

To provide advice and guidance to our students searching for private rented accommodation, which will include reading over tenancy agreements with small groups of students to highlight responsibilities and referring any issues to the Housing Services Management Team for guidance and action.

To help to inspect properties that are both Headleased to the University, and those that are advertised on our database of private rented accommodation, Sussex Student Pad and to operate following training and support, the private sector housing database and student allocation software.

**Key Responsibilities:**

1. **Coordination of the Headlease scheme and private rented sector advice service**

   1. To be responsible for the smooth running of the Headlease scheme, including marketing, inspecting, letting and managing the developing property portfolio.
   2. Liaising with and resolving complaints amongst owners, landlords, students, neighbours and other agencies, including Brighton and Hove City Council and Brighton University.
   3. Helping to increase Homestay places.
   4. Responding to reported maintenance and other issues during the tenancy period, and allocating and overseeing the work of agreed straight-forward repairs.
   5. Issuing and then coordinating the return of tenancy agreements, keys, inventories, and other items in a timely way, checking for accuracy in particular.
   6. With the Housing Services Manager, allocating bed spaces in Headlease properties and seeking opportunities to maximise income and minimise voids.
   7. Coordinating a complaints procedure with stakeholders in accordance with the University's disciplinary procedure.
   8. Having due regard for student welfare needs and coordinating any action with a range of expertise sources.
   9. Promoting the Headlease scheme to expand the property portfolio, whilst ensuring compliance with housing and health and safety guidance and law.
   10. Dealing with requests for references and deposit enquiries, and working with internal teams, including Students Accounts and supporting the Housing Services Manager with issuing Notices to Quit where appropriate.
   11. Monitoring income and other budgets.
   12. Liaising with Landlords over major repairs/landlords responsibilities
   13. Ensure properties are managed and maintained in accordance with the terms of the Headlease Agreement.
   14. Ensure utility bills are appropriate set up with utility companies
   15. To provide advice and guidance to our students searching for private rented accommodation, which will include reading over tenancy agreements with small groups of students to highlight responsibilities.
16. To help to inspect properties that are both Headleased to the University, and those that are advertised on our database of private rented accommodation, Sussex Student Pad.
17. Help to investigate complaints in a timely and cooperative manor.
18. Advertising properties on Sussex Student Pad, and helping to update records following training and support on the system.

2. Reception and information provision

1. Helping with counter, email and telephone queries about student housing in a friendly and professional manner, referring on when appropriate and liaising with other University departments as necessary.
2. Providing general information and advice about University owned and managed housing and informing enquirers about the University housing policy.
3. Providing explanations of University rent statements and tenancy termination clauses when required.
4. Replying promptly to queries about the progression of an individual's housing allocation, taking into account the University's data protection policy where applicable.
5. Assisting the Housing Services Manager with the update of information on the website.
6. Supporting the Housing Services Manager by representing the University externally in public fora, including area based residents meetings during occasional evenings.
7. Reading through private sector tenancy agreements with small groups of students in reception upon request and helping to resolve any issues.
8. Providing information via Housing Talks and events about private rented sector house search advice.

3. General office assistance

1. Assisting with general office duties such as post, filing, photocopying, shredding and ensuring the office is kept as tidy as possible.
2. Following training, using StarRez and other systems including Complaints Tracker, Agresso to log and then respond to maintenance requests and for raising charges onto students accounts.
3. Assisting with the maintenance of the landlord database, Sussex Student Pad and providing general private sector information when necessary.
4. Assisting other team members during busy periods.
5. Assisting with occasional cover at University open days and events during the week and at weekends.

Further Information

This job description sets out the current duties of the post that may vary from time to time without changing the general character of the post or the level of responsibility entailed.

The post-holders will be required to work occasional evenings and weekends and will need to demonstrate how they could travel around the city effectively.

Because of pressure of work, it will not be possible for the post holder to take annual leave of longer than two days during August, September and the first two weeks of October.
The role-holders will need to demonstrate how they can get around the city effectively.

The post-holder will be on call outside of office hours on a shared rota basis.

Date    May 2016, updated February 2017

5. Person Specification

SKILLS / ABILITIES

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<th>Essential</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Good organisational skills and attention to detail</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Excellent verbal, written and inter-personal communication skills</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Proficient IT skills, particularly Microsoft Office and other computerised systems</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Excellent customer service skills</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Ability to keep calm under pressure</td>
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<td>Ability to persuade others</td>
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KNOWLEDGE

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<th>Essential</th>
<th>Desirable</th>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge of current housing legislation</td>
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<tr>
<td>English language proficiency to the equivalent of GCSE English Language grades A*-C</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>An understanding about Headleased and private rented housing policies and practices as they impact on students.</td>
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<td>Degree in a relevant subject or comparable work experience</td>
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EXPERIENCE

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<th>Essential</th>
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<td>Experience of working or studying in a higher / further? education environment</td>
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<td>Experience of working with community groups</td>
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<td>Experience of managing a property portfolio</td>
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<td>Experience of working in an office based customer service environment</td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>Experience of working within a housing environment</td>
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<td>Experience of inspecting properties</td>
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<td>Experience of using a database system</td>
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<td>Experience of providing private rented sector advice</td>
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<td>Experience of organising events</td>
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**PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES AND CIRCUMSTANCES**

| Friendly disposition and willingness to work as part of a close knit team    |   | X |
| Ability to stay calm in a busy working environment                           |   | X |
| Ability to deal courteously with customers experiencing stress              |   | X |
| A demonstrable interest in student housing issues                            |   | X |
| Takes an innovate approach                                                  |   | X |
| Takes a flexible approach to working hours                                  |   | X |

**Date**  May 2016, updated February 2017