

Housing

Ombudsman Service



Investigators
Candidate information pack

The recruitment process

Enclosed within this document you will find:

- Overview of recruitment process
- Indicative timetable for the recruitment process
- The role profiles for the Investigator - job profile and person specification
- Benefits

Our website www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk has details about what we do and how we do it.

The following corporate publications may be of interest and can be found under the Corporate Information menu, under Publications on our website:

- Business Plan 2022-23
- Corporate Plan 2022-25
- Annual Report and Accounts 2020-21

We hope that you decide to apply to these key roles within our organisation.

Candidates who are long-listed will be asked to complete an online deductive reasoning exercise. Those passing this stage will be invited to complete a timed assessment exercise and subject to the result of this written assessment - may be asked to attend an online panel interview with the Housing Ombudsman Service. It is likely that the interviews will be conducted remotely (via MS Teams).

We are hoping that successful candidates will be able to commence employment with us on Monday 22nd April 2024. Candidates are requested not to take leave in the 6 weeks subsequent to this date as we will be delivering an in depth and highly focused induction during this period.

Indicative Timetable

Closing date for receipt of applications: 23.59 on Monday 8th January 2024.

Please note: due to the unprecedented level of interest in our vacancies, we reserve the right to close the recruitment process to new applications without warning if / when we receive 700 applications.

Long-listed candidates will be asked to complete a Deductive Reasoning online assessment, to be completed between 22nd and 24th January.

Short-listed candidates at this stage will be asked to carry out a written assessment exercise - and subject to the result of this written assessment - may be asked to attend an online panel interview. We anticipate that these interviews will take place between 14th and 29th February inclusive.

Throughout the process, we will advise you about the outcome of your application at the earliest opportunity.

Application Process

Our application process is anonymised.

Submitting an application is a two stage process:

Stage 1 - create an account.

This largely focuses on the information that you would include in your CV.

Stage 2 - complete the application form.

The application form consists of six questions for you to respond to. Questions 1 and 2 require a yes or no answer only. Questions 3, 4 and 5 (each answer to be a maximum of 300 words) will help demonstrate that you offer the knowledge and experience required for these key roles. Question 6 is purely for information purposes and asks regarding your preferred working arrangements and your notice period.

Please note that once you have submitted your application for a specific role, the application for that role cannot then be changed.

If you have any questions, please contact Jonathan McIntyre, Managing Director of CJA Group, our advising consultant on 020 7588 5407 or via jmm@cjagroup.com.

Job Description

Investigator

Position:	Investigator
Grade:	Grade 2A - Salary £43,771.67
Working pattern:	Permanent
Hours:	Full time (35 hours); part time and compressed hours also available.
Location:	Home-based

Overall purpose of the role

The Investigator role sits within the Dispute Resolution function which is responsible for conducting fair, impartial and independent investigations into complaints brought to the Ombudsman by residents.

Using attention to detail, logical and inquisitorial thinking, Investigators assess landlord responses to complaints against policy, procedure, legislation and any relevant good practice and make decisions about the landlord's handling of the substantive issue of complaint and its complaint handling.

With clear, concise and plain language skills Investigators communicate the outcome of decisions, orders and recommendations to all involved parties within an appropriate timescale, ensuring that work is of a high quality and meets our casework standards.

Working as part of a busy team you will use your investigative skills and excellent customer care skills to investigate housing complaints within the jurisdiction of the Housing Ombudsman.

Overall purpose of the role cont....

You will define the outstanding issues of complaint and write clear and concise investigation reports. A proportion of our residents are vulnerable and you will be responsible for guiding them through the process.

On completion of the investigation, you will use guidance and insight to make appropriate orders recommendations that put things right for the resident where there has been a failure.

You will also use your insights and experience to make creative but reasonable recommendations to influence the future of the landlord's complaint handling where improvements are identified.

In addition, Investigators are responsible for sharing knowledge and insight gathered from their caseload to ensure that best practice and areas for improvement are identified and addressed.

Main Accountabilities

- Investigating complaints within the jurisdiction of the Housing Ombudsman. Adjudicating on disputes, some of which may be difficult and complex, and defending those decisions despite criticism and challenge from affected parties.
- Analysing information, identifying key issues in order to issue decisions, orders and recommendations on disputes at pace, communicating outcomes to all interested parties and manage ongoing contact.
- Work independently and at pace to meet internal targets, scheduling your work to meet business requirements and to support your colleagues. This also involves balancing competing priorities to ensure that objectives are met, and services are delivered effectively.
- You will have responsibility for completing checks to ensure that the complaint meets the criteria for entry into the Ombudsman's formal remit and that all necessary documentation to support this is held on file. This will include making further evidence requests where required in order to determine the case and requires logical and inquisitive thinking to ensure that all documentation is considered and reduce the need for reviews.

Main Accountabilities cont....

- You will analyse information, identifying key issues in order to make clear and confident decisions using sound judgment. You will be responsible for reading and summarising large amounts of information.
- You will be responsible for providing excellent customer service, ensuring residents understand what we can deliver and what we will do next.
- A proportion of our customers are vulnerable or have specific needs. You will be responsible for identifying and supporting these residents effectively and proportionally so our service is accessible to all and thereby avoiding complaints against the Ombudsman.
- You will work collaboratively with colleagues and become involved in mentoring and assisting with organisational projects where appropriate.
- You will be responsible for identifying and sharing trends and insights from the cases that you investigate that will be used to inform the Ombudsman's wider programme of support to the sector. As part of this, you will be expected to communicate regularly with colleagues in the Quality, Engagement and Development function.
- You will work as part of a team while managing your own caseload which you will prioritise in a timely and effective manner.
- You will articulate decisions on jurisdiction / intervention / investigation and formulate appropriate and proportionate orders and recommendations in a way that meets the Ombudsman's high quality standards but remain accessible to residents and their representatives. You will monitor compliance with our orders and issue Complaint Handling Failure Orders for failure to comply.
- You will liaise with appropriate external stakeholders including landlords, MPs, councillors and tenant representatives.

Main Accountabilities cont....

- The Ombudsman holds a great deal of personal data and some of this is sensitive. You will be responsible for treating this data responsibly and in line with internal policies to ensure the Ombudsman remains compliant with Data Protection legislation and avoids breaches which could result in severe harm to our residents. You will deal with relevant Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act requests within the legislative timescales to protect the Ombudsman's reputation.
- You will build strong and effective relationships with a range of stakeholders including landlord complaint handling teams and other Ombudsman Schemes with housing related responsibilities.
- You will carry out any other duties which fall within the scope and purpose of this role profile and which are commensurate with the grade of the post.
- You will ensure accurate and timely recording of casework data into the casework management system.

Person Specification

Investigator

Qualifications

- Degree level and /or a demonstrable record of CPD relevant to experience.

Knowledge and Experience

Essential

- Significant demonstrable experience in at least one of the following fields/industries:
 - Housing Association or Local Authority
 - Ombudsman experience (inc. complaints commissions)
 - Legal sector
 - Audit
 - Regulators and industry bodies
 - Insurance
- Significant demonstrable experience of delivery in at least one of the following areas:
 - Complaint engagement / investigation
 - Tenancy enforcement, tenancy / leasehold management
 - Complaints investigation role
 - Housing, Landlord and Tenant services
 - Auditing
 - Claims and disputes
- Experience of delivering against set targets and KPI's.
- Experience in producing written reports across difference audiences.

Skills and Abilities

- Proven ability to produce high quality, accessible and understandable written work at pace, including report writing, letters and forms and other written correspondence.
- Proven ability to listen to, and understand, customers, identifying their needs, vulnerabilities and other factors which may be a barrier to their ability to access services.
- Proven ability to explain complex and complicated information and concepts customers in an understandable and accessible way.
- A track record of successful learning, research and continuous personal development.
- A demonstrable proactive approach to delivery, delivering autonomously with minimal direction, identifying areas for concern and delivering improvements when required.
- Ability to have effective conversations with a wide range of people including those with additional needs.
- Ability to deal with difficult situations in an effective manner.
- A demonstrable track record of collaborative working, delivering successfully in a team environment and sharing best practice and insights with colleagues.

Additional Requirements

Willingness to work flexibly within the team to ensure high quality, effective and efficient services are delivered.

To comply with the Housing Ombudsman Equal Opportunities policies.

To comply with the Housing Ombudsman Health & Safety policies.

To comply with the Housing Ombudsman IT policies and procedures.

This role profile is not exclusive or exhaustive. It is intended as an outline indication of the areas of responsibility and may be amended in light of the changing needs of the organisation.

Benefits

Rewarding career, rewarding benefits

In addition to an annual salary of £43,771.67, you will also receive a benefits package including:

- Local Government Pension Scheme – opportunity to join the Local Government Defined Benefit Pension Scheme.
- Healthy Work/Life Balance – 35 hour working week and flexi-time scheme.
- Generous Annual Leave – Minimum of 25 days holiday, rising after four years of continuous service plus eight statutory bank holidays and three, paid Christmas closure days.
- Commitment to health and wellbeing – cycle to work scheme, free yearly health check-up, employee assistance programme, access to CSSC Sports and Leisure website, discounts on days out, restaurants and high street shopping (coming soon), contribution towards eye-tests and glasses.
- Commitment to ongoing development - Payment of professional memberships fees. Regular training workshops.



"I joined the service because I relish the opportunity to make a difference every day"

Richard Blakeway
The Housing Ombudsman

