

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 profile 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 2024-25
- Corporate Plan 2022-25
- Annual Report and Accounts 2022-23

We hope that you decide to apply to this key role within our organisation.

Indicative Timetable

Closing date for receipt of applications: 23.59 on Monday 20th January 2025.

Recruitment stages

Long-listed candidates will be asked to complete a one hour Deductive Reasoning assessment.

Subject to passing the Deductive Reasoning assessment, candidates will be asked to carry out a two-hour written assessment exercise - and if passing this written assessment - will be asked to attend an online panel interview.

It is envisaged that interviews will take place between 20th March and 3rd April.

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

It is anticipated that those successful in the process will formally commence employment with the Housing Ombudsman Service on Monday 30th June 2025.

There will be an "in-person" on Wednesday 2nd July 2025.

Application Process

Our application process is anonymised.

Submitting an application is a two stage process:

Stage 1 - complete the EDI form.

Stage 2 - complete CV section. Press "submit".

Please note: there are no application questions per se to complete and we are not requesting a supporting statement / covering letter. Solely your CV will be assessed against the criteria in the Person Specification

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 £45,960.25
Working pattern:	Permanent
Hours:	Either Full time (35 hours) or part time (17.5 hours)
Location:	Home-based with some attendance at staff meetings and events

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.

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

Working independently and using their own initiative, the postholder will use their investigative skills and excellent customer care skills to investigate housing complaints within the jurisdiction of the Housing Ombudsman.

Responsibilities and Outcomes:

Investigators will define the outstanding issues of complaint and write clear and concise investigation reports. A proportion of our residents are vulnerable and they will be responsible for guiding them through the process. On completion of the investigation, they will use guidance and insight to make appropriate orders recommendations that put things right for the resident where there has been a failure.

Investigators will also use their 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.

- Investigate complaints within the jurisdiction of the Housing Ombudsman.
- Adjudicate on disputes, some of which may be difficult and complex, and defending those decisions despite criticism and challenge from affected parties.
- Analyse 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 work to meet business requirements and to support colleagues. Balance competing priorities to ensure that objectives are met, and services are delivered effectively.
- Take 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. Make further evidence requests where required to determine the case, thinking logically and inquisitively to ensure that all documentation is considered and reduce the need for reviews.
- 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.
- Provide excellent customer service, ensuring residents understand what we can deliver and what we will do next. This will include communicating with customers by all available media and channels.

Responsibilities and Outcomes cont....

- Responsible for identifying and supporting customers who are vulnerable or have specific needs, responding to these residents effectively and proportionally so our service is accessible to all and thereby avoiding complaints against the Ombudsman.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues and become involved in mentoring and assisting with organisational projects where appropriate.
- 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. Communicate regularly with colleagues in the Quality, Engagement and Development function to report these findings.
- Work as part of a team while managing their own caseload, prioritising in a timely and effective manner.
- 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. Monitor compliance with our orders and issue Complaint Handling Failure Orders for failure to comply.
- Liaise with appropriate external stakeholders including landlords, MPs, councillors and tenant representatives.
- The Ombudsman holds a great deal of personal data and some of this is sensitive. The postholder 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.
- Respond to relevant Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act requests within the legislative timescales to protect the Ombudsman's reputation.
- Build strong and effective relationships with a range of stakeholders including landlord complaint handling teams and other Ombudsman Schemes with housing related responsibilities.
- 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.
- Ensure accurate and timely recording of casework data into the casework management system.

Responsibilities and Outcomes cont....

The post holder should strive at all times to adhere to HOS values of Learning , Excellence, Openness and Fairness.

HOS is committed to equality of opportunity in all its practices, policies and procedures. It is our intention to promote a working environment that is free from harassment, bullying, victimisation or discrimination, where everyone is treated with dignity and respect. We expect all staff to behave respectfully with courtesy and consideration, whilst carrying out their duties.

Person Specification

Investigator

Qualifications

- A relevant and relatable degree level qualification and a demonstrable record of CPD relevant to the role, for example around Housing Law or Ombudsman best practice

Experience

- Significant demonstrable experience in at least one of the following fields/industries:
 - Housing Association or Local Authority Housing
 - Ombudsman experience (inc. complaints commissions)
 - Legal / charity sector with a specific Social Housing focus
 - Regulators and industry bodies
- Significant demonstrable experience of delivery in at least one of the following areas:
 - Complaint engagement / investigation
 - Tenancy enforcement, tenancy / leasehold management
 - Independent Investigations in a housing or regulatory environment
 - Housing, Landlord and Tenant services
 - Considering complex evidence and applying the law to make decisions and/or provide advice ideally in a housing or regulatory / ombudsman setting
- Experience of delivering against challenging set targets and KPI's
- Experience in producing high quality written reports, created to set standards and delivered across difference audiences

Knowledge and Skills

- Proven ability to analyse large volumes of complex information (including contradictory evidence) at pace in order to reach fair and balanced decisions.
- Proven ability to produce high quality, accessible and understandable written work, delivered against challenging timeframes and targets including report writing, letters and forms and other written correspondence.
- A demonstrable proactive approach to delivery, delivering autonomously with minimal direction, identifying areas for concern and delivering improvements when required.

Behaviours

- Learning - A track record of successful learning, research and continuous personal development.
- Learning - A demonstrable track record of collaborative working, delivering successfully in a team environment and sharing best practice and insights with colleagues.
- Openness - Ability to have effective conversations with a wide range of people including those with additional needs.

Additional Requirements

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 £45,960.25, 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

