

## About the Housing Options Project

The service began in June 2003 as part of six national pilot projects, established by Care and Repair England, under the working title of "Should I stay or Should I go". The housing options service in the Derbyshire Dales continues to the present day with direct funding to Age UK Derby & Derbyshire from Derbyshire Dales District Council with a 'HOPS' office based in the Town Hall at Matlock, Derbyshire.

Most service users value the independent, hands-on approach of the service, which has proved very popular with both service users and staff who work closely with the service in other districts. The service has already increased the income, independence and wellbeing of hundreds of older people in the Derbyshire Dales alone.

In response to need and the strategic direction of our funders we developed the 'Help to Move' service which supports older people to relocate to a property better suited to their needs or adapt an existing property. The service supports clients with full house moves or rearranging their home to put a bed downstairs and work includes dealing with applications, accessing funding and giving practical help and emotional support. Our Advisors work across the combined Help to Move and Housing Options Service.

The role of Housing Options Advisor is about providing good quality information, advice and support, by explaining how current systems work in relation to the needs of older people, in order that service users are empowered to make informed choices and crucial decisions about the future. The role can be very challenging and requires an empathetic, pro-active approach with the ability to think quickly and act effectively without close supervision in a confidential and professional manner. The role, covering the whole of the Derbyshire Dales, includes travelling to meet service users in their own homes, housing advice, benefits advice and completing the relevant forms, attending meetings, conferences and training events as required. No two days are the same, but every day has made a difference to an older person's life.

### All About Age UK

Age UK Derby and Derbyshire is an independent charity and a partner with Age UK nationally. We are the only Age UK in Derbyshire and the largest older people's organisation in our area of remit which includes all the County and the City of Derby. We are an independent charity able to respond to the needs of older people in our communities but able to draw on and influence the strength and profile of a national organisation.

**Hours and times of work:** The Housing Options Advisor's hours are worked predominantly between 9-5 Monday to Friday to enable the role to interact with others.

**The location:** The Housing Options team work from a dedicated office within the Derbyshire Dales District Council, on Bank Road in Matlock. Since March 2020 most staff work a hybrid of home and office base. All staff need to access the office regularly.

**The premises:** There is a staff kitchen. Tea and coffee, milk etc is provided free but you must provide for your own special preferences such as herbal teas etc. Lunches can be stored in the fridge and there are plenty of sandwich shops, bakeries, take-away's, cafe's and supermarkets nearby.

**Access:** The office areas of the building and access to toilet facilities are accessed via a ground floor door and stairs to the lower ground floor office.

**The role:** The service is based in a shared office space within a mixed building which can vary between very busy and deserted. The role demands a flexible approach as the

availability of part-time staff and the distractions of a sometimes busy office can vary considerably. The role demands good time-management skills and self-management to complete tasks working around the varying demands of regular and occasional tasks, but it also offers a good level of autonomy.

**Support for the role.** The new post-holder will benefit from an experienced manager providing training and support and a friendly team happy to help as they learn.

All our staff have 1:1 reviews with their manager each year. These reviews are designed to set targets based on the outcomes we want to achieve, identify opportunities for personal and professional development and identify solutions to problems. Day to day support and guidance is available and your colleagues are always happy to help.

As an organisation we have exceptionally good working relationships with our staff and volunteers, a stable workforce and happy, friendly working environments and the Housing Options Service team are an excellent example of this.

### **Applying for the post**

This post involves access to the Housing Options Office in Derbyshire Dales District Council. You are welcome to contact us for an informal chat or visit to consider any access issues you may have.

We look forward to receiving applications from candidates who feel their life, work, volunteering, educational or personal experience will help them meet our requirements. Our staff and volunteers are a varied team, and we value skills developed in a range of ways.

#### Tips for a successful application:

- Read the Job Description, Person Specification and this background information!
- When completing a job application please demonstrate *how* you meet the criteria in the person specification and what skills, qualifications and experience you have against the job description.
- Complete all the questions.
- Don't leave unexplained gaps in your employment history.
- Please complete the application form, do *not* send a CV.