

Housing Officer

Housing officers are involved with the day to day management of rented properties for local authorities and housing associations.

The Work

You could be:

- interviewing new tenants, considering their needs, deciding how suitable they are and allocating housing
- arranging agreements with tenants, giving advice on benefits they could apply for and organising rent collections
- taking account of the needs of special groups such as those with disabilities, older people or asylum seekers
- inspecting houses or flats to check their condition and arranging repairs
- dealing with anti-social tenants and those who break agreements, abandoned tenancies and squatters
- dealing with social services and other welfare organisations
- preparing cases for court and representing your organisation in court cases
- meeting individual tenants or tenants' associations to discuss housing problems or property exchanges
- dealing with rent payments and arrears.

Pay

The figures below are only a guide. Actual pay rates may vary, depending on:

- where you work
- the local authority or organisation you work for
- the demand for the job.

Starting salaries for housing assistants in Scotland tend to be around £24,000 a year. Housing officers can earn up to between £28,000 and £33,000 a year. Managers can earn over £45,000 a year or more.

Conditions

- You would be based in an office.
- You would sometimes have to visit tenants in their homes and carry out inspections.
- You would also need to visit properties and the offices of related organisations.
- You would work normal office hours, but may have to work some evenings.
- You may be able to work part time.

Getting In

- There is no single entry route to this job. Although some entrants have a degree (SCQF Level 9) most employers prefer experience to qualifications.
- You might take a degree in a subject such as property management, social policy or public administration.

Entry requirements for a degree are 4-5 Highers, usually including English.

- Some employers ask for an SVQ in Housing at SCQF Level 4, or an NC (SCQF Levels 4-6) in a subject such as business.
- You could study part time at college on a day release, evening or distance learning basis, leading to a Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Certificate in Housing Practice at SCQF Level 5.
- You could take a postgraduate qualification (SCQF Level 11) in housing studies. In Scotland these are available at the Universities of Glasgow and Stirling.
- You may be able to start with a local authority or housing association in a clerical or administrative post and study part time to become a housing officer. You would normally need to have at least 3-4 subjects at National 4 including English.
- For most posts you need a driving licence.

What Does It Take

You should be:

- able to work well under pressure
- good at negotiating
- tactful and diplomatic
- able to take criticism and cope with stressful situations
- encouraging to other staff
- able to work on your own
- able to keep accurate records
- able to understand different cultural backgrounds and different needs.

You should have:

- a good knowledge of housing laws
- good spoken and written communication skills
- good IT skills
- excellent organisational skills
- an understanding of budgets.

Training

- You would train and gain experience on the job, combined with study for qualifications relevant to your level of entry.
- You could study part time for a qualification awarded by the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) such as the CIH level 3 Certificate in Letting and Managing Residential Property at SCQF Level 6.
- If you have a degree, you could take a part time postgraduate qualification in housing.
- Some courses are available by distance learning as well as by part time attendance at college.

Getting On

- In many organisations, there is a clear promotion structure.
- In a local authority you could follow a promotion route from housing officer to senior officer, through to

director level.

- You might move on to work for a housing association specialising in homes for older people, homeless or people with disabilities.
- Your promotion prospects may be helped if you are prepared to move to different parts of the country.

Contacts

Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) Scotland

Tel: 024 7685 1700

Email: scotland@cih.org

Website: www.cih.org

Scottish Federation of Housing Associations (SFHA)

Tel: 0141 332 8113

Email: enquiries@sfha.co.uk

Website: www.sfha.co.uk

Statistics

Employment Status : Not available this career.

Past Unemployment - Scotland

No Claimant statistics available for Scotland.

Predicted Employment Statistics : Not available this career.