



Day in the life of an Environmental Health Housing Officer in the Empty Property Unit

We hope you find the information provided below useful and it enables you to make an informed choice about applying for the role. We have included information we feel will be useful for you and that will provide you with a really good overview of the work you will be involved in.

Please be advised current post holders contributed to the content of this information, so it is a real-life and transparent overview of the post.

We hope that the above information helps you to prepare for any potential invite to an interview as you will be able to demonstrate how your skills, experience and knowledge match the requirements of the post you are applying for.

Practical information

Office location, parking, bus travel, nearby train stations, local shopping facilities (where can I get my lunch?).

In the Empty Property Unit we deal with long term privately owned empty residential properties. Long term empty properties are when a property has been empty for 6 months or more. Our small unit of 2.5 officers is part of the wider Private Housing Team in Growth and Regeneration.

We are based in 100 Temple Street which is across the road from Temple Meads train station and has a number of bus stops in the local area. There is a Greggs, Subway, Tesco, Co-op and Pret really close by and a nice park to sit and eat if you want to eat outside. In the office there is a lunch area so you don't have to sit at your desk to eat. There are boiling water points, sinks and a few



microwaves to use. We also have a balcony which is lovely to sit on in the summer.

Working conditions

Rotas, hours, flexible working opportunities (can I work from home or is this an office/site-based opportunity), office environment, induction, IT equipment, PPE, will I have a buddy/mentor when I start?

My role is very flexible. I choose to work in the office 3 days a week and home 2 days a week but I could do my job from home unless required to do site visits or office team days. I do go out on a lot of visits so I plan my office and home days around when I want to complete my visits and where they are. There are BCC pool cars to borrow at the office, but you can also use your own car for the visits. The office is a good place to work. There is a lot of collaboration and a want to help each other. We have PPE in the office to collect when we need it and we are supplied with a laptop and a phone as well as everything needed for the inspection of a property. Induction, training and support is offered for all new officers to team.

Who I'll be working with

- Is the role front-line/customer facing?
- Who will you be supporting in this role?
- What other teams/service areas do you work with?

In The Empty Property Unit, we deal with a lot of different people and interesting investigations. Our main focus is on the owners of the empty properties and helping them get their property back into use again. We also deal with neighbours of the empty properties when the empties are causing issues for neighbours and relatives of the empty property owners as well when the owner is deceased. We work with a lot of different teams including Cems



and Crems, the Refugee Resettlement Team, Council Tax, the Private Rented Team and wider than the council we can refer things to tracing agents to find next of kins.

Job satisfaction

- What is the best thing about the job?
- What does a typical day look like?
- Who or what has had the biggest impact on your development in this role?
- How has this job positively impacted your life outside of work?
- What challenges do you face and how are you supported to overcome them?
- How else are you supported in your role?

The best thing about my job is the variety of work I get to do, there's a bit of investigating, some serving notices and conversations with people and getting to listen to their stories. Empty Properties are complex and they often have interesting human stories linked to them.

A typical day may see me doing some visits to empty properties either to meet the owner and help them get it back into use or to check the occupancy of the property. I will work on any legal notices that are being prepared to serve, check council tax and info at work for any contact information for the empty owner that we haven't used before, write to the owners offering help and support or letting them know we may take action in the near future.

I have quite a few cases on the go at once so it's important to balance them all and prioritise the important cases. My team leader has the biggest impact on my development in this role. My team leader gives me the opportunities to grow and take on projects relating to empty properties as well as helps me manage my workload and problem solve without giving me all the answers. It feels like a collaboration.



This role has helped me to problem solve and work with people better by adapting to what they need out of me. Paying reference to our Policies and procedures. some empty property owners need a formal warning and legal notices and others advice and guidance is needed as dealing with the property can be too overwhelming. I feel like I am able to use that in my daily life to approach people with more empathy.

My team leader is great at supporting me through any challenging cases. We have a discussion about what we think the best way forward is and she supports my decisions and how I wish to handle situations. I am also supported by the wider private housing team. I know I could go to my colleagues for help if I need it as in Empty Properties we are a small team so being able to reach out to the wider private housing team is great.

Opportunities

- Who will support you through performance appraisals, and how often do they take place?
- What learning/development opportunities are available, and are you encouraged to attend?
- What type of progression opportunities are available in this role?
- Are there any relevant apprenticeships that could support my personal career development?

My team leader supports me through my performance appraisals which happen twice a year, once to set new targets and once to make sure I'm keeping on track. There are learning modules on the learning hub which cover everything from safeguarding to how to use some IT systems and we have a procedure manuals page where you can find other help and information.

There are also many external and internal training courses that we can attend including training from the Empty Homes Network, CIEH and various webinars from different companies and agencies. As an Environmental Health Housing



Officer, I am able to progress to senior level without having to reapply to my job. This means I can go from level 1 to senior when I want to with the help of my team leader. There are different competencies and tests that need to be completed but this is very doable with time and experience.

There are often paid apprenticeship opportunities for those eligible. The apprenticeship related to this role is the Environmental Health Degree Apprenticeship and we are often recruiting for these roles. If interested in finding out more about environmental health apprenticeship schemes, please contact private.housing@bristol.gov.uk.