



JOB DESCRIPTION

Post Title Community-Led Housing Co-Ordinator (Empty Homes and Buildings) – SE Scotland

This post is created by a joint project between South of Scotland Community Housing (SOSCH) and Scottish Empty Homes Partnership (SEHP). The role will be funded and overseen by SOSCH and SEHP, reporting to both.

Base Home based, working across SE Scotland region

Responsible To Chief Executive

Responsible For n/a

Pension Contribution Employer contribution of 6% of salary

Contract Period Twenty-four Months

Probationary Period Three months

Contract Hours Full Time. Flexible home working, with the likelihood of project-based travel.

Given the wide geographical area covered by the post, the post holder will be required to attend meetings across the region and, occasionally, beyond. In addition, meetings will require to be attended out-with normal working hours (for which time off in lieu will be given).

The Organisations

South of Scotland Community Housing (SOSCH) is an award winning Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation that provides support to community-led housing across the Southern Scottish region. For us, community-led housing is embedded within a wider culture of community ownership of land and assets, underpinned by Scottish Land Reform legislation, and community-led regeneration. We support communities to appraise and understand localised needs and to identify and deliver solutions that promote longer-term community sustainability and resilience. Our work is focused on project delivery and ensuring that outcomes are targeted towards those most in need. Our approach to support relates to working with community organisations – usually Community Development Trusts – from the very outset of a conversation about housing and community renewal, through to project delivery – and beyond. We work as an “enabler” and regard the facilitation of partnership as critical to delivery and securing important outcomes. We are a small, enthusiastic and successful team.

The organisation was established in 2006 as Dumfries and Galloway Small Communities Housing Trust as a reaction to a study undertaken by Shelter that identified a significant shortfall in affordable housing supply within rural Southwest Scotland. Since coming into grant with Nationwide



Foundation in 2018 we have worked to adapt and evolve the organisation, this culminating in our conversion to South of Scotland Community Housing in November 2020 following a period of governance and business review.

Further information on our approach, team and project delivery can be found on the website - <http://www.sosch.org>.

SOSCH's project work with communities is multi-faceted; we are currently supporting new-build low energy housing, the redevelopment of empty homes, the repurposing of long-term vacant and derelict properties and larger-scale mixed-use community-led regeneration projects. We work closely with partners and stakeholders, including South of Scotland Enterprise, Local Authorities, Scottish Government, Scottish Land Commission and Community Land Scotland. SOSCH currently have four staff – Chief Executive, Business Manager, Partnership and Learning Manager and CLH Project Coordinator (SW Scotland).

The **Scottish Empty Homes Partnership (SEHP)** is funded by Scottish Government and hosted by Shelter Scotland. The partnership was established in 2010 following the Scottish Government's 2009 review of the Private Rented Sector. SEHP's key aim is to encourage Scotland's 43,000+ private sector long term empty homes back into use. The Scottish Government definition of long term empty properties is any property identified as empty for 6 months or more and liable for council tax. The network of empty homes officers supported by SEHP have helped to bring more than 6,500 empty properties back to use since its commencement.

More information on SEHP is available on the website <https://emptyhomespartnership.scot/>

Project Background

This post is created by a joint project between SOSCH and SEHP. It will be overseen by both and the postholder will report to a Project Advisory Board representative of both organisations. The project aims to use community-led housing solutions as a mechanism to bring empty homes and buildings back into use as affordable housing, particularly in areas of high housing pressure.

Recognising that the specific housing needs of rural communities (including smaller towns) are not always entirely met by traditional housing supply, we seek to appraise the nature of demand (in terms of housing type and tenure), and then to develop appropriate solutions in partnership with local community organisations. SOSCH has developed a track-record in supporting communities to bring empty homes and buildings back into use as affordable housing that meets local needs. This work is illustrated by such projects as Langholm Old Police Station, Wigtown Former Bank, Moniaive, Glentroll Community Regeneration and our support to the Midsteeple Quarter project in Dumfries.

This project should prioritise support that brings homes back into use where there is a shortage in affordable housing supply, enables repopulation or regeneration of areas with high levels of empty homes, provide us with best practice models that can be shared to encourage others to engage in this type of work. In doing this, the project should develop closer links with delivery partners and council representatives which can support development of other projects. This will include undertaking Housing Needs and Demand Assessment on behalf of community organisations to evidence shortfall and nature of localised demand.



The primary focus of the post is to develop solutions to empty homes and buildings that are community-led, working alongside community organisations (Development Trusts, etc.), and promoting housing in community ownership. Our work, to date, has primarily focused on Southwest Scotland, with this role being a key element of proposed planned growth to offer our services across the wider South of Scotland region. The role will, therefore, involve identifying and building new relationships with community organisations and other key stakeholders. One focus of the role will be to commence a range of projects that consider routes towards delivery (repurposing of empty homes and buildings) and community empowerment – thus promoting increased resilience. SOSCH has worked to build stakeholder partnership in Southeast Scotland (in particular with Scottish Borders Council, Scottish Borders Housing Association and Berwickshire Housing Association) and have developed a Marketing/Comms Plan in partnership with University of Glasgow Business School.

The Scottish Government launched its Rural Housing Fund in April 2016, renewed in 2021. This fund supports the type of activity described above and is open to applications from, among others, community organisations. SOSCH is currently supporting a number of live applications to the Fund and this work will form a pivotal part of this particular role. In the majority of cases, application to the Rural Housing Fund is being supported in tandem with engagement with the Scottish Land Fund. Our project work will often relate to wider community-led regeneration or Place Planning and can also encompass non-housing elements.

Job Purpose

- Supporting community organisations to identify, develop and deliver upon community-led housing projects that address the specific housing needs of individual communities across SE Scotland and involve bringing empty homes and buildings back into use as affordable housing;
- Identifying opportunities relative to empty homes and buildings and engaging with community organisations as the potential mechanism for ownership and redevelopment as affordable homes;
- To identify, promote and deliver affordable and sustainable housing solutions utilising empty homes and buildings to meet housing needs in the rural communities, often alongside other non-housing outcomes;
- To raise awareness of community-led housing solutions across SE Scotland, helping to develop and implement an Empty Homes and Buildings Marketing Plan;
- To identify key partners and stakeholders and build key relationships relative to bringing empty homes and buildings back into use;
- To engage with Empty Homes Officers in Local Authorities and, where appropriate, to engage with owners of empty homes and buildings, whether public or private, on behalf of community organisations;
- To work in partnership with local communities, partners and stakeholders, disseminating experience and good practice (this element will involve working alongside the SOSCH CLH Coordinator for SW Scotland and SEHP (among others) to build a knowledge-sharing network across Southern Scotland);
- Working with the overall project team, to enact a Monitoring and Evaluation framework that can be used to facilitate the continuous improvement of our service and demonstrate the wider outcomes of the project;



- To help promote greater awareness and understanding of Empty Homes, rural housing issues and community-led housing, thus contributing to rural housing policy development at a local and national level.

Core Duties

- Reporting on targets and outcomes to the project Advisory Board (SOSCH and SEHP and prospectively including other relevant partners);
- Working alongside the wider SOSCH team, managing all stages of multiple community-led housing empty homes/buildings projects on a day-to-day basis;
- Identifying specific opportunities for projects within individual communities as part of a wider awareness-raising strategy;
- Preparing all components required for successful applications to the Rural Housing Fund for both feasibility / project development funding and capital grant, whilst also supporting communities through engagement with the Scottish Land Fund and any other relevant funders, including Scottish National Investment Band, Social and Sustainable Capital, and similar bodies (in addition to any other relevant Government supported funds);
- Appraisal and analysis of localised needs and demands, including undertaking survey and community engagement, report writing and public engagement;
- Understanding and promoting local housing and strategic housing/planning strategies and policies through engagement with Local Authorities;
- Business and financial planning in consultation with the wider SOSCH team (Business Manager);
- Maintaining project plans and records for internal and external monitoring and evaluation;
- Engaging with community groups and organisations and key stakeholders throughout the project lifecycle;
- Establishing and engaging with effective project teams, including professional services (for example architect, engineer, quantity surveyor);
- Prioritising and managing a work programme within the projects.

Promoting Strong Partnerships

- Engagement with Empty Homes Officers / Strategic Housing Teams in Local Authorities;
- Ensuring the specific and localised interests and needs of communities are considered at every stage in the process of developing sustainable solutions;
- Raising awareness of affordable housing needs and their impact on the social, economic and physical fabric of communities;
- Researching and identifying local housing need – undertaking surveys and analysis – on behalf of specific communities;
- Building and maintaining strong partnerships and networks across a broad range of diverse partners and stakeholders involved in the delivery and promotion of affordable housing solutions, both at a local and national level;
- Promoting sustainable and innovative solutions to increase affordable housing supply, particularly relative to funding and land supply;
- Appraising and identifying potential empty and redundant buildings and other opportunities and undertaking appraisals to assess their suitability for sustainable housing solutions;
- Supporting community organisations through all aspects of project development and costing;



- Ongoing liaison with appropriate funders and development partners.

Operational Duties

- Working closely with the Project Advisory Board;
- Working closely with colleagues as part of the overall SOSCH Team and engaging with the SEHP Team throughout;
- Sharing experience with other community-led housing organisations and key stakeholders, particularly relative to Scottish Government national outcomes framework;
- Responding to requests for advice and guidance from members of the public, community organisations and stakeholders;
- Producing information for publication through social and print media, briefings and other forms of communication;
- Relative to awareness raising and Marketing/Comms Strategy, contributing to SOSCH Communications and PR and SEHP Communications and PR as required, including website and social media – updating information on progress with the programme of work, highlighting notable achievements and good practice and developing community support resources;
- Assisting in the organisation of and attending appropriate events;
- Attending all appropriate meetings by Zoom/Teams or in-person.

Employer related Duties

- The application of a regular process of performance monitoring and communication;
- Ensuring the organisation's Equal Opportunities Policy and Safeguarding Policy is followed through in practice in the work of the post-holder;
- Attending and participating in appropriate internal meetings of the organisation;
- Working cooperatively with other staff members and stakeholders;
- Being particularly aware and responsive to the needs of both organisation's Trustee Directors and member organisations where appropriate;
- Complying with the monitoring and recording requirements of the organisations for the purposes of accountability and, where appropriate, funders.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS

- Possession of a Degree is desirable in a relevant discipline, although demonstrable relevant work experience will alternatively be taken into account.
- If not in possession of a degree level qualification, applicants should be able to demonstrate at least 2 years' relevant experience.
- In the circumstance of a prospective candidate being a recent graduate in receipt of a degree in a relevant discipline, this may also be taken into account.
- Must have a full and valid driving licence, with access to a car.



KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

Prospective candidates should preferably be able to demonstrate a working knowledge and experience of one or more the following, but noting that the ability to support the delivery of refurbished affordable homes or redeveloped buildings is critical to the post at this time:

- Community-led housing;
- Community-led regeneration, development, empowerment;
- Project management and project delivery;
- Build environment / place planning;
- Rural and urban housing issues;
- Business Planning;
- Affordable Housing sector, in particular relevant to Development;
- Housing legislation and/or planning;
- Community development, community engagement, community-led regeneration, land reform;
- Experience in the private/public housing sector but experience gained within the planning, surveying, property management or community development sectors is also relevant;
- Housing development, delivery and funding, in particular relative to affordable housing – we would welcome application from individuals with relevant technical expertise, for example Development Manager, Quantity Surveyor, Clerk of Works.

SKILLS

- Excellent verbal and written communication;
- Project Management;
- Report writing;
- Confident presentation and public speaking skills;
- Good general computing ability with competence in Microsoft Office 365 and Teams;
- Independent management of workload around a programme of multiple projects;
- Strong relationship management skills.

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- Strong team player
- Ability to relate well to a diverse range of occupations and organisations;
- Willingness to work flexible working hours, including evenings and weekends, according to the exigencies of the workload;
- Ability to travel throughout SOSCH's geographical area of operation and, occasionally, further afield (travel expenses will be reimbursed);
- Strong commitment to the aims and objectives of SOSCH and SEHP.