

Job title: Investigator

Team / department:	Operational delivery – Resolution centre
Reports to:	Team Leader
Salary / Grade:	£29,175 (with potential to go up to £31,713 pa. It should be noted that increases are not guaranteed and can only be considered after at least 6 months in post and are subject to achieving the required levels of performance for an increase. There is no automatic pay progression on completion of probation.)
Contract type:	Permanent
Location:	Edward House, Birmingham
Working Hours:	37.5 hours per week. Applications are welcome for full-time and part-time working. There must be a minimum of 22.5 hours per week over 3 days for this post.
Working pattern	You are expected to work your contracted hours between the hours of 8am and 6pm. All working patterns are agreed on appointment.
Checks:	All staff will be expected to undergo a basic criminal records check

Job description

Background

The Legal Ombudsman is an independent Ombudsman service that helps to resolve issues between members of the legal profession and their clients through informal resolution or impartial investigation and formal decision where an informal resolution is not possible.

We also play an important role in improving industry standards by feeding back information and insights from our investigations. Our aim is to provide a service that is fair, accessible and easy to use, and which focuses on resolving complaints informally where possible and on doing everything in a timely manner.

Job summary

The Legal Ombudsman has a statutory mandate to resolve disputes with minimum formality. We receive complaints covering any legal area, with varying degrees of complexity and from a diverse range of people. Being able to analyse detailed information, get to the heart of the matter and explain to people with differing degrees of understanding is key.

An investigator's role is to act as the principal point of contact for consumers who have a complaint about a member of the legal profession. This will include dealing with sometimes challenging and emotionally draining situations. Therefore emotional resilience is essential.

If a complaint is accepted for investigation, an investigator will discuss these with the complainant to identify the issues in dispute then attempt to resolve the complaint informally. If this is not successful they will put their findings in a written report.

An Investigator will use a range of skills to assess if a complaint is in jurisdiction and achieve a fair outcome. These include negotiating and agreeing appropriate outcomes and, if appropriate, remedies with the parties. Investigators will also need to use their judgement to decide on the approach in order to reach an appropriate conclusion to the complaint. Excellent telephone, customer service and negotiation skills are critical, alongside strong analytical, written communication and IT skills.

Investigators are expected to effectively manage a caseload of complaints at various stages of the complaints process, working with stretching targets and balancing competing demands. They work independently to a workload management framework, but are part of a team managed by a Team Leader. Each team also contains a number of Ombudsmen who support the Investigators by providing advice, guidance and direction at checkpoints throughout cases where required.

Key responsibilities (core)

- Accurately gather and record appropriate information about complaints received by various communication methods (telephone, letter, email).
- Where required, give accurate, good quality information and guidance to people who contact us to help them make a complaint to their lawyer, to us, or to signpost them elsewhere when we cannot help.
- Identify and make reasonable adjustments for individual communication needs.

- To discuss complaints with complainants and service providers effectively on the telephone, and use negotiation and influencing skills to achieve appropriate outcomes.
- Assess and decide whether complaints lie within the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman and write reasoned recommendations for this.
- Plan proportionate investigations on cases across a range of different complexities, identifying the appropriate scope of the case, what information is needed, and gathering evidence needed to investigate the complaint given its scope.
- Manage a portfolio of cases at different stages of our business process effectively
- Analyse and evaluate evidence and comments from the parties to reach a proportionate and fair view of the service provided and identify opportunities to achieve an agreed outcome.
- Recognise cases where an informal agreement is unlikely to be achieved or is not appropriate and make recommendations to both parties, and ultimately to the Ombudsman for decision.
- Write clear, accurate and concise letters and case decisions
- Summarising appeals to an Ombudsman to review a decision that a complaint is out of jurisdiction.
- Manage parties' expectations about the process, timeframes, and what will be needed from them.
- Meet performance expectations on answering telephones, responding to enquiries, quality of investigations and progressing complaints within workload management framework timescales, whilst working as part of a team to support delivery of organisational performance.
- Take responsibility for own performance, and reporting results as required by the business
- Drive forward own development and support the continuous improvement of the Legal Ombudsman service through positive behaviours and identifying opportunities.
- Ensure data integrity and adherence to Information and Data Protection requirements

General

Observe the requirements of the Legal Ombudsman's policies including the Health and Safety, Data Protection, and the Equality and Diversity Policies.

Personal and professional development is encouraged.

Person specification

Qualifications:

Essential

- Five GCSE Grades A - C or GCSE O Level passes (or equivalent), ideally English Language.

Skills and experience:

Analytical	<p>Ability to critically examine information and issues to arrive at well-reasoned and appropriate conclusions that stand up to scrutiny, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrable ability to apply sound reasoning to reach logical conclusions• Strong analytical skills, including getting to the heart of an issue through effective scoping• Demonstrable adaptability and resourcefulness in resolving complaints• Experience or demonstrable ability of gathering, critically assessing and analysing information to draw logical conclusions based on evidence
Impactful	<p>Ability to use communication skills to influence a diverse range of people, building consensus and understanding through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experience of providing a service to a diverse range of people over the telephone and in writing.• Experience of, or demonstrable ability to, deal confidently and authoritatively with people in challenging and sensitive situations.• Demonstrable collaborative approach to work, and ability to work effectively as part of a team• Demonstrable report writing skills and ability to communicate with clarity and brevity using plain English
Constructive	<p>Ability to successfully navigate changing and sometimes challenging environments to respond to service users' needs and achieve personal and organisational goals through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experience of using negotiation and persuasion skills to achieve appropriate outcomes• Demonstrable telephone skills• Demonstrable ability to negotiate and influence parties to complaints to find appropriate outcomes• Demonstrate emotional resilience
Approachable	<p>Creates an open and reassuring culture to earn the trust of others and generate confidence in the case-handling process through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrable ability to empathise, build trust and confidence through appropriate and professional communication• Able to adopt an open and appropriate communication style that

	<p>fosters genuine understanding and makes the service inclusive and accessible, treating people with courtesy, dignity and respect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to demonstrate the Legal Ombudsman's values and behaviours and contribute to a positive organisational culture, in particular approaching situations with enthusiasm, positivity and integrity • Works effectively in a team and positive in both sharing knowledge and delivering and receiving timely and constructive feedback
Open-minded	<p>Approaches problems and new ideas without prejudice to generate fair solutions that maximise the potential of available resources, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrable ability to find pragmatic or creative solutions to intractable problems • Ability to identify and suggest improvements to ways of working • Acts with neutrality and objectivity, and is willing to reconsider conclusions in light of new information or ideas • Able to reach logical conclusions based on a balanced analysis of evidence.
Professional	<p>Strives for excellence in individual and team endeavours to meet expectations and deliver a high quality service through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrable ability to deliver on promises and meet agreed deadlines in a performance driven organisation • Ability to pursue personal and organisational goals with energy and determination • Experience or demonstrable ability to manage and effectively progress multiple priorities; working to and meeting deadlines • Shows commitment to and pride in high quality customer service delivery • Demonstrable personal resilience • Strong IT skills to support effective caseload management • Maintains customer confidentiality, handles sensitive information appropriately and exercises discretion and sensitivity at all times.