

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE	Principal Lawyer
GRADE	EPO10
REPORTING TO	Head of Legal Services
JD REF	CSUP0101P

PURPOSE

Lead and manage a team for a specialist area, ensuring the provision of professional legal advice, support and assistance to the Council, Senior Leaders, Members and Partners. Specialist areas may include Safeguarding, Education, Litigation and Governance, Property and Planning or Contracts and Commercial.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Manage all litigation to ensure the Council's interests are safeguarded.
2. Provide high quality, constructive legal and constitutional advice and assistance to Council, Council committees/panels, members and senior management.
3. Provide or obtain as required, constitutional, procedural and administrative advice for the Council and its services in relation to the area of legal practice assigned, and for that purpose shall inform him/herself of all material matters.
4. Provide sound and comprehensive advice and support to Council departments in relation to the legal areas practised.
5. Attend Council Committee/panel meetings and provide legal and constitutional advice as necessary.
6. Proactively advise on policy and policy development in line with changing law, legislation and best practice.
7. Provide effective legal advice and support and conduct personally high value/complex/high profile/significant litigation/matters in relation to such areas of legal practice falling within Legal Services. Including those allocated by the Head of Legal Services which range from (amongst others) children and adult safeguarding, education, adoption, procurement, major projects, contracts, employment, land/real estate, litigation (civil and criminal), anti-social behaviour, housing, through to regulatory, constitutional/administrative law.
8. Supply constructive legal advice to schools, Council functions and external client to ensure compliance with the law.

9. Ensure proper procedures are in place for the authorisation of covert surveillance under Regulatory and Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA).
10. To pro-actively manage working practices and workloads to ensure the provision of an effective legal service.

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

Qualifications:

- Qualified and practising barrister, solicitor, Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives.

Experience:

- Extensive experience of having conduct of, dealing with, drafting and/or advising on either (linked to specialist area):
 - Civil litigation
 - Criminal litigation
 - Safeguarding (Children's or Adults)
 - Education
 - Governance
 - Contracts
 - Procurement
 - Planning
 - Property
- Experience of managing legally qualified staff, including mentoring and providing support.
- Experience of undertaking first line management duties and responsibilities.
- Experience of delivering training to a wide audience.
- Experience of dealing with complex matters within relevant areas of law, having provided advice, guidance and support in a wide variety of cases.
- Commitment to obtaining, and maintaining, up to date knowledge of case law, regulation and best practice relevant to role.
- As per SRA rules, at least 3 years post qualification experience.

Knowledge and Skills:

- Able to identify issues and summarise discussions.
 - Organisational and time management skills.
 - Able to prioritise varying workloads and deal with high volumes of work to tight deadlines whilst maintaining a high-quality service.
 - IT Literate;
 - Able to effectively maintain manual and computerised administrative systems.
 - Sound grasp of local government legislation and guidance relevant to role and keen awareness of current local government issues.
 - An understanding of Local Authority governance arrangements, decision making and corporate governance.
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- Excellent written and verbal presentation skills – able to convey wide ranging complex and contentious information to a range of audiences, including non-specialist, in a clear and concise manner.



- Excellent analytical problem solving and research skills.
- Excellent listening and interviewing skills.
- Ability to successfully work within broad guidelines, using discretion and initiative over a range of activity with limited escalation to senior managers,
- A sound knowledge, awareness and application of ethical, professional and capability standards and requirements.
- Tact, diplomacy, empathy and political awareness.
- Commitment to consistently delivering high standards of customer care.
- Resilience in dealing with competing and demanding pressures and potentially emotionally difficult situations and information.
- Able to work with colleagues as a team.
- Flexible and co-operative attitude towards work, able to multi-skill.
- Understand need for political sensitivity and confidentiality.
- Ability to innovate and solve problems in dealing with major projects.

DESIRABLE CRITERIA

- Knowledge and experience of working in local government or working in a political environment.
- Sound understanding of Local Authority governance arrangements, decision making and corporate governance.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- Able to work of an evening and weekend as required.
- To attend meeting on behalf of Head of Legal Services and Director of Law and Governance.
- Be able to travel within and around the Borough using public or private transport and work from various locations.
- This post requires a combination of home and office work – hybrid working applicable
- This post is classed as a 'Sensitive' politically restricted post.

DATE OF APPROVAL: 14/04/2023

APPROVED BY: VICKI SHAW (HEAD OF LEGAL SERVICES)

