

Senior Lawyer (In-House Advocate – Child Care)

Reports to:	Chief Lawyer / Senior Lawyer		
Department:	Law & Governance	Grade:	PO6 to PO7
DBS Status:	Standard	Politically restricted:	Yes
Job Purpose: - To provide legal advice and assistance on all aspects of Children's Social Services law, including: - Child Protection - Adoption Law - Children Act 1989 - Other related social care law issues - To provide high level and proactive expert legal advice to the Council, its members and officers and to be a point of contact for members and senior officers on all legal matters. - To attend court or tribunals or public inquiries as a Senior Advocate and in particular, conduct high quality advocacy in the High Court, Family Court, Coroners Court, including all hearings up to trial and appeals and including complex hearings.			
Values Collaborate proactively. Lead inclusively. Embrace change. Be bold and curious. Celebrate and share our success.			
Job specific roles and responsibilities - Make a positive contribution to the delivery of the service, this will include working flexibly and positively to achieve the objectives of the council. - Manage and lead staff to achieve high performance and effective operational delivery, including developing and improving staff capability. - Manage a customer focused service and the effective use of resources. - Ensure that the council's overall vision, values and ethos are central to the requirements of the service. - Support effective working relationships and act as an ambassador and advocate with external organisations - Keep up to date with developments in service delivery and best practice to ensure the service performs effectively and to the highest standards. - Make a positive contribution to the delivery of the service, this will include working flexibly and positively to achieve the objectives of the council. - Manage and lead staff to achieve high performance and effective operational delivery, including developing and improving staff capability. - Ensure that the council's overall vision, values and ethos are central to the requirements of the service. - Support effective working relationships and act as an ambassador and advocate with external organisations			

11. Keep up to date with developments in service delivery and best practice to ensure the service performs effectively and to the highest standards.
12. To provide high level specialist and proactive legal advice to the Council, it's Cabinet, Committee members and senior officers and other external clients on all issues arising in relation to childcare matters.
13. To advise on the Council's powers and it's decision making process and ensure the legality of its decision making.
14. To consider and give advice on committee and other similar reports and to attend committee.
15. To deal with corporate complaints and Member enquiries.
16. To provide high level input to the Council's policies and help develop and implement the Corporate Strategy and the performance framework alongside the Council's policies strategies and targets.
17. To deal with complex individual casework and conduct litigation arising in the area of responsibility, undertaking advocacy as may be required.
18. To contribute and assist towards the running of Legal Services as required and to provide general supervision guidance and training to lawyers within the team.
19. To provide cover as necessary for other areas within the team or within Legal Services as a whole, including advising on information governance law.
20. To keep up to date with changes in the law and other developments in this area of work, and to advise on any action to be taken as a result, and to provide training to clients or members of the team.
21. To take a lead in developing policy and good practice in the post holder's area of responsibility.
22. Carry out duties with due regard to the council's customer care, equal opportunities, information governance, data protection and health and safety policies and procedures.
23. Employees should embed environmental sustainability into their work, actively contributing to Brent becoming a carbon-neutral borough in 2030.
24. Undertake any other duties commensurate with the general level of responsibility of this post.
25. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and all employees are required to act in such a way that at all times safeguards the health and well-being of children and vulnerable adults.
26. Undertake any other duties commensurate with the general level of responsibility of this post.

Progression to PO7 will be by demonstrating capability to handle the most complex cases without the need for counsel and managing matters which have the highest risk implications or financial or other consequences for the Council. The postholder will be expected to develop and monitor the impact of legal policy across the full range of specialist areas

Essential Requirements (key skills & qualifications)

Knowledge and Qualifications

1. Admitted solicitor or qualified Barrister or Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives with litigation practice rights
2. Qualification of Higher Rights of Audience
3. Full understanding of risk management in the context of corporate governance
4. Detailed knowledge of childcare and other relevant area of law
5. Comprehensive knowledge of the law affecting local government and its trends in the UK.

Experience

1. Evidence of significant relevant Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
2. Experience of attending court as Senior advocate (Higher Rights of Audience) in the Single Family Court , including all hearings up to trial.
3. A track record of achievement in conducting high level and complex casework, including high risk cases.
4. Experience of dealing with complex cases in area of expertise.
5. Experience of providing advice to members of a Council/ Board
6. Advising members on legal issues both in public meetings and through presentation briefing reports.

Skills and Abilities

1. Excellent communication and influencing skills, including the ability to write accurate and engaging copy/correspondence for a range of audiences, including members and the Council Management Team.
2. Ability to contribute to the longer term development of the service area.
3. Work collaboratively corporately and departmentally
4. Strong role model who demonstrates a personal commitment to high standards of public service, honesty and integrity and professionalism
5. High level analytical skills to identify issues and develop responses and solutions.
6. High level and excellent advocacy skills and ability to have conduct of complex and high risk casework
7. Ability to personally handle with minimum supervision all matters within the post holder's area of responsibility and to carry a heavy caseload

Budget Responsibility
Overall Headcount

Within reason these key deliverables may evolve to meet service need and it is expected that the postholder will be flexible and adaptable in their delivery to meet both service and council wide needs