

Housing & Civil Litigation Lawyer

Job Description / Person Specification

Contents:

[Job Description](#)

[Person Specification](#)



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Job Description

Job Title Housing & Civil litigation Solicitor/Chartered Legal Executive

Location Civic Offices, Bridge Street

Grade/Salary Range RG 7/8

Service/Directorate LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES/DIRECTORATE OF RESOURCES

Job Purpose

1. To provide experience skill and advice to Members and Officers on legal matters relating to housing and civil litigation, homelessness, tenancies, nuisance, anti-social behaviour, disrepair and other projects or casework, ensuring the Council's best interests are achieved within the law.
2. To contribute to the successful achievement of the Council's strategies and policies, in particular through advice and support to Housing Services.
3. To ensure that timely and appropriate legal advice and actions are provided for the Council's Housing Services with maximum effectiveness and efficiency.
4. To undertake such duties and representation of the Council in courts, tribunals or committees as required.
5. To deliver strategic and service objectives identified in the Service Plan.

Designation of Post and Position within Departmental Structure

Reporting to the Acting Principal Planning & Litigation Lawyer or designated officer as required.

Health and Safety Responsibility - Level 1

Main Duties and Responsibilities

1. Ensure that appropriate, high quality legal services are provided to the Council, its relevant service areas or specific teams with a minimum of supervision and in an efficient and friendly manner.
2. To work with Project and Service managers, Assistant Directors, and other lead officers on particular projects of significant importance to the Council providing appropriate legal advice and support and contributing to achievement of the Council's key policies and strategies

3. Develop the existing services of the Council in line with the Team Reading corporate values and identify innovative ways of improving service provision and user satisfaction.
4. To carry out proper conduct of case work and appear on behalf of the Council in courts, tribunals and other inquiries when required.
5. To demonstrate, (and continuously strive for) an in-depth knowledge of housing, homelessness law, anti-social behaviour law and other areas of civil litigation as required.
6. Participate actively in the development of the Council's policies and objectives as required, including such responsibilities for specific projects as may be allocated, and participation in multi-disciplinary working parties and/or committees.
7. Ensure that actions taken by the postholder comply with relevant Council policies, the Council's Standing Orders, the Council's Financial Regulations and the Code of Conduct for Council Officers.
8. Promote equality of opportunity in service delivery to ensure that all members of the community are treated fairly, paying particular attention to those who have special needs or who are disadvantaged.
9. Undertake case work, including those of a complex or sensitive nature, and the giving of advice appropriate to the professional qualification and background of the postholder. Promote and represent the Council externally as appropriate.
10. Contribute to the management of the Legal Services Department participating in Legal Services Management Team.
11. Provide training to officers within the Council on relevant legislation where necessary.
12. Scrutiny of all new legislation, statutory instruments, circulars and case law, the evaluation of its effect and of new practices and giving advice to officers and members consequent thereon, with particular reference to legislation etc affecting the work of the post.
13. Contributing to the achievement of the Council's strategies and policies by giving advice and assistance to other staff on the evidence required to enable them to pursue these strategies and policies successfully through the courts where necessary.
14. Ensuring adequate costs are charged for work done in those cases where Council's costs are to be borne by the other party and to ensure that all costs paid by the Council are reasonable.
15. To give guidance on points of law and procedures in a competent manner to Head of Service and Directors and other officers of the Council.
16. To support the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services in the provision of legal advice to the Council.

Gateway Criteria - if applicable (needed for any post with a spinal point range that spans a gateway)

- With a minimum of supervision to deal with/advise on more complex projects involving housing, homelessness and anti-social behaviour law or other civil litigation matters as directed by the Acting Principal Planning & Litigation lawyer or the Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services
- To mentor and train less experienced colleagues in the Legal Services section and work with Officers from the Housing Services Department and its wider remit conducting training and mentoring as directed by the Acting Principal Planning & Litigation lawyer or the Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services; and
- To undertake all hearings with a time estimate of 1 day or less.

Gateway Criteria - if applicable (needed for any post with a spinal point range that spans a gateway)

RG8 - Points 39-42

- Proven experience in post
- Ability to take specific responsibilities, advising and leading on key projects and substantial or high profile work that is additional to that undertaken in normal circumstances as directed by the Acting Principal Planning & Litigation lawyer or the Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services.
- To undertake all hearings unless in exceptional circumstances and with the agreement of the Acting Principal Planning & Litigation lawyer or the Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services.
- Ability to co-ordinate and manage a substantial and most complex caseload with the minimum of supervision.

Scope of Job (Budgetary/Resource Control/Impact)

1. This is a politically restricted post under the provisions of Part 1 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.
2. It is also exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Special/Other Requirements/Responsibilities of this Post

Level of DBS check required for this post Standard

*If *, does the post require a check against the list of people barred from working with vulnerable adults?* NO

*If *, does the post require a check against the list of people barred from working with children?* NO

What other security/safer recruitment clearances are required for this post? (excluding standard identity/work permit/education qualification checks) Not applicable

Is this post “politically restricted”? YES

Responsibility for Health & Safety: LEVEL 1

Please specify responsibility for implementing the Council’s risk management strategy as it applies to the service, ensuring risks to service delivery and specific projects or initiatives are recognised and that actions are taken and monitored to mitigate risks identified N/A

Please specify any other Statutory Duties and/or responsibilities of this post not already covered in the “Main Duties & Responsibilities” above N/A

Person Specification

Qualifications/Education/Training

1. Admitted Solicitor, Barrister or Chartered Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executive with at least 10 years' post qualification experience.
2. Evidence of continuing professional development.

Experience

1. Appropriate experience of providing legal advice services for Housing and Civil litigation.
2. Minimum 10 years' experience of Housing, homelessness and anti-social behaviour.
3. Good experience of conducting civil litigation, particularly advocacy in Civil matters in all courts and tribunals.
4. Experience of working in and with housing law and in particular defended possession cases, nuisance, homelessness anti social behaviour, injunctions and disrepair matters.
5. Experience of training and development of staff.

Skills, Abilities & Competencies

1. Able to deal effectively with complex legal matters and problems.
2. Able to draft accurate documentation whether for court pleadings or otherwise with minimal supervision and work on own initiative within established guidelines.
3. Able to work collaboratively and organise own workload and assist with other workloads as required and as part of a team.
3. Able to inspire confidence and to influence and motivate others, including officers at a senior level in the organisation and leading councillors.
4. Able to understand and assess written or verbal data and to assess situations and deal with them appropriately.
5. Able to handle a complex workload of matters.
6. Able to demonstrate personal resilience to effectively manage the demands of the role.
7. Able to keep abreast of developments in best practice, and to anticipate requirements for change by appropriate action.
8. Able to identify and implement opportunities for service improvement.

9. Ability to give clear and concise advice verbally or in writing.
10. Ability to work quickly and accurately where occasion demands and under pressure.
11. Ability to communicate well with other members of staff at all levels.
12. Ability to work largely unsupervised.

Essential

1. Detailed knowledge of housing, homelessness, anti-social behaviour and civil litigation.
2. Good communication skills, both written and oral. Able to give clear advice in a public forum.
3. Politically aware and able to anticipate and resolve sensitive issues.
4. Computer literate. Able to deploy case management technology for best effect.
5. Confidential, committed and adaptable.
6. Pro-active and innovative.