

Job Description and Person Specification

Children's Social Care Advocate

A Lambeth to be proud of



Job Title: Children's Social Care Advocate

Grade: PO7

Department: Communities, Governance and Change

Division: Legal and Governance

Business Unit: Legal Services

Reports to: Principal Lawyer

Job Purpose

To ensure the Council receives cost effective, proactive, high quality, accurate, strategic, solutions focused legal advice and representation in the areas of childcare law, local government law and such other areas as are allocated from time to time.

To act as in-house advocate in all Social Services matters including all aspects of public law proceedings.

To support the Principal Lawyer in an in-house project to reduce expenditure on Counsel.

To lead on behalf of the Principal Lawyer on the Council's in house training scheme in respect pupil barristers.

Duties and Responsibilities:

1. To lead on behalf of the Principal Social Care Lawyer in delivering specialist, proactive, comprehensive legal advice and representation to, and on behalf of the Council in the areas of childcare law and such other areas as are allocated from time to time. In particular to lead on behalf of the Principal Social Care Lawyer, in relation to all proceedings under the Children Act 1989 and Adoption & Children Act 2002, and related legislation, delegated legislation, statutory and non-statutory guidance and case law and best practice.
2. To provide advocacy as an in-house advocate in Social Services matters to include contested and final hearings of up to 14 days including care, placement, adoption, DOL and private law proceedings.
3. To deliver specialist advice on complex legal matters that is informed by appropriate legal and factual analysis and identifies the consequences of different options, as required with minimum supervision in a variety of forums.
4. To brief and lead on specific areas of child protection law as allocated by the Principal Lawyer.

5. To support the Principal Lawyer in an in-house project to reduce expenditure on Counsel.
6. To set high professional standards and conduct all work in accordance with practice management standards laid down by the Law Society (Lexcel) and all other departmental and corporate performance standards
7. To build and maintain strong positive relationships with clients, Council colleagues, external partners and stakeholders to ensure the most effective provision of Legal Services to meet the needs and aspirations of the clients.
8. To provide high level Corporate and Service legal advice to the Council, the Executive, Committees, Executive Directors and Departments in relation to Childcare Law and related issues as required by the Head of Legal Services or the Principal Social Care Lawyer from time to time.
9. To lead on behalf of Legal Services in such Corporate projects and initiatives as required from time to time.
10. To assess the impact of legislative and case law changes on the Council's functions, strategies and policies.
11. To make use of the materials provided by the Service, such as electronic products, journals to ensure that they are conversant with the most current law in their area of work to enable them to give effective and efficient legal advice.
12. To ensure that the provision of legal advice to Departments, Professional Boards, Scrutiny Committees and the Executive that enables them to develop strategies and deliver services and transact business within powers and constraints which apply.
13. To provide training and briefings in conjunction with other staff, to other members of the Service and the Council and its partners, to ensure that they are kept up to date and are acting in accordance with the law at all times.
14. To conduct all work in accordance with BSB, SRA or CILEx standards and ethics at all times and practice management standards laid down by the Law Society (Lexcel) and all other departmental and corporate performance standards.
15. To assist the Principal Social Care Lawyer in implementing and maintaining practice standards and procedures in order to maintain a standard of excellence.
16. To provide regular reports to the Principal Lawyer and client Department in relation to performance and costs as and when required.
17. To contribute to the development of the Legal Service through identifying opportunities for improvement and supporting, motivating and coaching colleagues within the Legal Service.

18. To assist the Principal Social Care Lawyer to achieve the goals set out in its Business Plan including participating in projects to ensure the continuous improvement of the Service.
19. To carry out all duties in accordance with the Council's equality and diversity policies, contract standing orders, health and safety, security, data protection, codes of practice, and to undergo such training as may be required.
20. To work flexibly in undertaking the duties and responsibilities of this job and participate as required in multi-disciplinary cross-department and cross-organisational groups and task teams and to be available to provide legal advice and assistance outside normal working hours by arrangement as and when required in accordance with the needs of the service.
21. To identify matters which have corporate governance, propriety or probity implications and report them to the Principal Lawyer and Assistant Director (and the Monitoring Officer where appropriate).
22. To undertake other duties and tasks as determined by the operational needs of the Legal Service as may be reasonably allocated within the grade of the post.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Children's Social Care Advocate (PO7)

<p>It is essential that in you can meet the following requirements for the role and be able to give evidence or examples of your proven experience in each of the short-listing criteria marked Application (A).</p> <p>You should expect that all areas listed below will be assessed as part of the interview and assessment process should you be shortlisted.</p> <p>If you are applying under the Disability Confident scheme, you will need to give evidence or examples of your proven experience in the areas marked with "Ticks" (✓) on the person specification when you complete the application form.</p>			Shortlisting Criteria
Qualification	Q1	Qualified Solicitor, Barrister or CILEX advocate with current practicing certificate.	✓A
Key Knowledge	K1	Excellent, thorough up to date working knowledge of key public child protection legislation and practice, in particular The Children Act 1989, The Adoption and Children Act 2002, The Children & Families Act 2014 and related delegated legislation, statutory and non-statutory guidance and case law; and best practice.	✓A
Relevant Experience	E1	Relevant and substantial post qualification experience working as an advocate Barrister/ Solicitor with Higher Rights or CILEx advocate in the field of childcare law, preferably in a local government setting.	✓A
	E2	Experience of undertaking advocacy as an in-house advocate in Social Services matters to include contested and final hearings of up to 14 days including care, placement, adoption, DOL and private law proceedings.	✓A
	E3	Experience of using Word, Excel, Power Point and electronic case management systems	✓A

Core Values and Behaviours		<p>Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the views of others and ask for their opinions making sure that everyone in my team inputs into the things that matter. • Ensure fairness and justice is at the heart of my decision making and support to my team and others. • Take time to build trust, building the respect of our stakeholders and ensuring as a team we take accountability for doing what we agree to do. • Develop others and ensure we work as one team for Lambeth, encouraging everyone to play their part • Take positive action to ensure everyone in my team has opportunities to learn and grow at work • Encourage everyone to be themselves at work and value who they are • I am inclusive and actively celebrate diversity, recognising everyone in my team as individuals. 	
		<p>Kindness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat each member of my team with respect and dignity just as I would want for myself. • Encourage each member of my team to do their very best work and am available to them to provide support and guidance. • Personalise my support to each team members and look out for them, lending a hand wherever I can • Encourage everyone to try and learn from mistakes and use integrity to take action with my team to put things right together • Work with empathy seeking to understand each and every member of team, their unique perspective and circumstances and ensure everyone is heard • Take the time to communicate, being honest, open and genuine and taking the time to get to know team members as individuals. • Show compassion and patience recognising that everyone in the team has unique experience and celebrating the great work they do for Lambeth. • Look after the health and wellbeing of my team members and encourage open and regular discussions about the issues that 	

		impact on them, working together to find solutions.	
		<p>Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I encourage and support my team to do the right thing even when it's tough and we communicate our decisions in a timely way • I ensure my team and employees take individual and collective accountability for performance and delivery, making sure that they have clear plans and performance objectives. • I ensure my team plan ahead, getting the basics right and take swift action when problems arise • I encourage my team to be risk aware and ensuring that our decisions and actions are informed and understood and communicated to others. • I provide regular, timely and constructive feedback to my team members on their performance and behaviours and act quickly when performance is not on track. • I share my learning, knowledge and skills with others thorough coaching and mentoring and encourage others to do the same. • I ensure that my team and I put residents, communities, customers and their needs at the centre of everything we do. • I encourage my team to learn and grow and ask questions to find the information they need to do their jobs 	
		<p>Ambition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Am proud of our borough and my team and encourage everyone in the team to aim for the highest possible standards of excellence in everything we do. • Encourage my team to be flexible and try new things when it's appropriate to do so and tell me what could be improved. • Promote a one team for Lambeth approach reaching out to our stakeholders to face our challenges together • Encourage and support my team to be courageous for our residents and communities and stop at nothing to ensure they have the best possible outcomes 	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I make time for the team to Innovate and look for creative ways to do things better, being curious about possibilities.• Positively challenge and encourage the team to collaborate and look for solutions together across service and team boundaries.• Make time for my team to grow and develop taking advantage of opportunities to learn from each other and others. We plan our learning and career growth.	
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