

Job description

Lead Advocacy Lawyer

- Grade: PO8
- Reports to: Head of Childrens and Adult Lawyer
- Direct reports: None
- Your team: Childrens and Adults Team
- Service area: Resources
- Directorate: Law and Governance

Special requirements of the post

Workstyle: Desk-based worker (Lower presence, one day a week minimum)

- Colleagues who are not usually client or customer-facing and can mostly work anywhere with the right technology. Regular on-site activities are required such as team events and collaboration that are more productive face to face

This post requires a DBS check at the appropriate level (Standard)

This is a safety critical post and will be subject to the council's drug and alcohol policy

This post is subject to the council's declaration of interest procedure

This post is designated as politically restricted

Our mission

Islington is a place rich with diversity and culture. As a council our sense of purpose couldn't be clearer: we serve. It's in the logo. We are committed to challenging inequality in the borough and as one of the largest employers we know that to look after the place and the planet, we have to look after our people. **Together we can change the future.**

To do this, everyone who works at Islington Council lives by a set of values which guide us in everything that we do: collaborative, ambitious, resourceful, and empowering. They spell out 'CARE', which is what we think public service is all about.

Overview of the role

The Lead Advocacy Lawyer provides expert in-house advocacy across a wide range of complex legal matters, including civil litigation, public law, and regulatory proceedings. You will represent the organisation in courts and tribunals, ensuring high-quality, cost-effective legal representation. The role involves managing a caseload of high-risk matters, advising senior officers, and contributing to legal strategy and policy. You will promote advocacy excellence and support continuous improvement in legal services. The role requires strong courtroom presence, legal analysis, and communication skills are essential, along with a deep understanding of procedural rules and public sector legal frameworks.

Key responsibilities

- To be the lead senior lawyer in all aspects of Advocacy matters for the childcare team including Magistrates, Central Family Court and High Court Family Division and associated family Courts to provide technical expertise in advocacy, including providing legal advice on court practices and procedures, deputising for the Principal Advocacy Lawyer as and when required.
- To provide specialist and proactive legal advice on all aspects of Safeguarding/advocacy, including childcare, community care/mental health, adoption practice and procedures, ensuring the legality of the Council's decisions and risk mitigation.
- Manage a substantial complex caseload and assist the Principal Adults Lawyer with overseeing the team's caseload, including providing legal advice and drafting comprehensive documents and offering specialised expertise in your field.
- To lead and manage a small team of lawyers/legal officers in your area of law, allocating work, making arrangements for supervision and monitoring performance, providing advice, guidance and assistance as required.
- Draft reports, comment on, and prepare legal implications for reports to the Council, its relevant committees and subcommittees, the Executive, and other member and officer-level meetings, and attend these meetings as a representative of Legal Services as needed.
- To ensure that relevant decisions of the Council and its committees and the Executive are implemented, in the context of any legal constraints, in an efficient and timely manner.
- Assist the Principal Advocacy Lawyer with managing and overseeing corporate complaints and responses to enquiries from Members, ensuring timely and effective resolution.

- To maintain an up-to-date comprehensive knowledge of developments in all relevant areas of law, supporting policy development, and disseminate that information and any implications for the Council to relevant stakeholder and members of the Team, including preparing and presenting briefing papers and reports and delivering training.
- To act as an advocate and support coordinating advocacy within your team on behalf of the Council, where appropriate in relevant Courts, tribunals and inquiries and instruct Counsel to represent the Council where necessary.
- To assist with forward planning to ensure that the service is highly responsive to client requirements and that work undertaken meets chargeable hours and is reflective of best practice, quality standards and performance targets set by the Legal Services Management Team and Service Level Agreements.
- To assist the Principal Advocacy Lawyer with developing effective procedures and reporting mechanisms on the performance of the Childrens and Adults Team. This includes utilising the case management system for reporting purposes. Provide regular updates on cases and hearings undertaken caseload status to clients, internal partners, colleagues, and management.
- To work in a co-operative way, fostering collaboration within Legal Services and with other Council Officers and Members, and to provide cover as necessary for other areas within Legal Services as a whole to contribute to shared goals.
- To carry out duties in the most efficient and effective manner and to assist the Principal Advocacy Lawyer with promoting the development of new digital initiatives within the Team and ensure that duties are undertaken with due regard to compliance with other relevant legislation.
- To assist in monitoring and reducing spend on Counsel.

Compliance

Ensure adherence to legal, regulatory, and policy requirements under GDPR, Health and Safety, Employee Code of Conduct and in your area of expertise by identifying opportunities and risks, and escalating issues as necessary.

Person specification

Your application form needs to demonstrate how you fulfil the role's requirements. It is essential to address the criteria, as this will be used to evaluate your suitability for the position.

Essential and desirable criteria

Essential: the basic requirements that must be met for someone to be considered for a particular job. These criteria are mandatory and cannot be negotiated. Essential criteria directly impact the core qualifications or skills necessary to perform the job effectively.

Desirable: the additional qualities, skills, or qualifications that would be advantageous for a candidate to possess but are not mandatory. Not meeting them does not automatically disqualify someone from consideration for the job. This also allows candidates who do not possess certain desirable criteria the opportunity to explain how their other knowledge, experience and skills relate to these and what they may be in the process of doing or willing to do to achieve these.

Knowledge, experience, and skills

Point	Criteria description	Essential/desirable
1	Qualified to practice as solicitor or barrister in England (or comparable jurisdiction) or FILEX qualification	Essential
2	Substantial post-qualification recent experience of high-level casework and advocacy in relation to complex social services matters.	Essential
3	Ability to demonstrate strong negotiation and communication skills when discussing advocacy cases.	Essential
4	Ability to obtain evidence, evaluate evidence, prepare cases and appear as an advocate on behalf of the Council in courts Tribunals and Inquiries, particularly in the family court or Court of Protection.	Essential
5	Ability to work collaboratively with professionals from various sectors	Essential
6	Ability to comply with good practice management standards as laid down by the Law Society or other relevant body.	Essential
7	Ability to communicate well in writing and verbally with good presentation skills.	Essential
8	Ability to work with other legal professionals and maintain a high level of performance and proactively deal with performance issues	Desirable

Point	Criteria description	Essential/desirable
9	Thorough knowledge of Judicial Review processes and the procedures of the High Court, County Court and Court of Protection in relation to social services Law	Desirable
10	Ability to assist the Principal Advocacy Lawyer with developing and implementing procedures, practices and systems for the provision of effective legal contract and commercial services	Essential
11	This role will require you to obtain an Enhanced/Standard/Basic satisfactory clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service	Essential
12	This post is designated as politically restricted	Essential

Our accreditations



Our accreditations include Disability Confident Leader, The Mayor's Good Work Standard, London Living Wage Employer, Stonewall Diversity Champion, and Employer with Heart.