

JOB DESCRIPTION

Post Title	Head of Team - Safeguarding & Community Services
Grade	15
Business Unit or Division	Law & Governance
Department	Finance & Governance
Reporting to	Deputy Head of Law (Communities)

PURPOSE OF THE JOB

Responsible for the strategic management of the service area, ensuring the principles of good governance, and priorities are met in accordance with the regulatory framework.

Make an effective contribution to the development and delivery of Corporate & service strategies, and operational plans that secure the achievement of Council objectives.

To lead a team of professional lawyers and be responsible for the provision of the highest quality, responsive legal services to clients – including the Cabinet, Committees, steering groups, other Council bodies and elected Members.

PRINCIPAL ACCOUNTABILITIES

1. To lead and manage a service area function ensuring that the service is business driven and complies with the Council's statutory and contractual obligations.
2. With the Deputy Head of Law, participate in determining and setting the direction for the department in business and financial planning, ensuring that the service is responsive to the changing environment and the best use is made of available resources. .
3. To be responsible for the provision of expert advice at Committee and other decision making bodies, steering groups and panels. Offering high level legal advice to members, chief officers and departments on matters relating to the work of the service.
4. Work with the Deputy Head of Law to identify opportunities for the development of Legal Services and for creating more efficient ways of working across the council and Safeguarding & Community Services.
5. Develop strong partnership working with Government Departments, Council departments, other teams within Legal Services, key stakeholders, Courts, external Solicitors, Barristers, QC's and recognised experts on all aspects of the work of the team, establishing procedures for processing that work and other ancillary matters.

6. Establish good governance and implement new methods, forms and procedures in accordance with requirements of the DPA, FOI and Local Government Law.
7. To keep up to date with changes in legislation guidance and policy and be able to assess the implications of these changes on council policy.
8. Undertake research upon legal questions arising from the work of team including, where necessary, providing advocacy, briefing Counsel and/or consultants and instructing experts.
9. Responsible for the performance management of the team. Directing the senior lawyers to undertake the primary role in day to day staff management of their teams as well as being the expert professional supervisors for their teams. Providing effective leadership, motivation and personal development to all staff within the area of service.
10. Setting the strategic framework for delivery of the team, negotiating and developing Service Level Agreements, within the framework of customer focus.
11. Preparing reports, briefings and comments for the Council's Assembly, Committees and Sub-Committee, Project Groups, Steering Panels and Project Groups.
12. Lead on negotiating and concluding contractual arrangements with Solicitors, Barristers, and external other agencies.
13. To lead and manage improvement and development of equality, diversity and inclusion in accordance with the Borough Plan and Southwark Stands Together (SST).
14. To co-ordinate and manage legal and/or corporate strategies that cross service, organisational and/or professional boundaries
15. To handle personally a caseload of more complex matters.

Job Context

Law & Governance have a Business Plan for 2020-2024.

Legal Services consists of approximately 80 staff.

This role will have management responsibility for the safeguarding and education functions of Legal Services, consisting of approximately 25 staff.

Grade / Conditions of Service

The employment is subject to a probationary period of twenty six weeks from your start date of employment with Southwark Council, during which time you will be required to demonstrate to the council's satisfaction your suitability for the position in which you are employed.

Contacts

1. Attending and advising at meetings of the Committees and Sub-Committee on behalf of the Council.
2. Chief officers, cabinet members and members of the Council.
3. Senior managers and Heads of Services across the Council
4. The post holder works as part of the Senior Management Team for Legal Services.
5. The post holder leads on client liaison within their discrete area of service.
6. Frequent attendance at Committee including Cabinet and Overview and scrutiny.
7. Government departments, Members of Parliament, and senior officers in other Local Authorities.

Financial Management

1. Responsible for managing and monitoring of budgets up to £2m.
2. SAP authorisations up to £250k.
3. To monitor the recorded chargeable hours targets for the area of service.
4. To record the number of chargeable hours required for the post.
5. To maintain files in accordance with Lexcel requirements and the Office Procedure Manual.
6. To comply with the Law Society and Solicitors Regulatory Rules.
7. To undertake the duties of the post in accordance with the 'Key Competencies for Lawyers' in Legal Services.

Staff Management

1. The post reports to the Deputy Head of Law (Communities).
2. Responsible for managing a team of Legal professionals. Providing leadership and performance management across the team.

Person Specification

KNOWLEDGE, INCLUDING EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:	Essential Criteria	How assessed (S/ I/ T)
A solicitor with a current practising certificate and significant experience, or a Barrister admitted to the Bar with significant experience.	E	S
Evidence of continuing professional and managerial development.	E	S
EXPERIENCE:		
Significant experience of managing a team in the public or private sector.	E	S
Extensive experience of advising on local government law and Data Protection and Freedom of Information.	E	I/T
Significant experience of undertaking and advising on complex cases, policies or projects within one or more of the following areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • safeguarding of children, including care proceedings and adoption • safeguarding adults, including mental health, Court of Protection and families and individuals with no recourse to public funds • SEN and strategic education advice 	E	S/I/T
Drafting complex legal documents including, pleadings, contracts and agreements.	E	T/I
Experience of writing briefings for Members, chief officers and senior managers which are clear and concise.	E	T
Budget management experience, which demonstrates competency in setting priorities and managing within allocated budgets.	E	I
Experience in good governance arrangements, to maintain democratic legitimacy of the Council's work to support effective decision making.	E	S/I
Managing effectively using performance measures to create a performance culture that drives improvement, including implementing new strategies, systems, policies and procedures.	E	I
Success in building, and sustaining effective relationships with Chief Officers, Members, External Partners and Stakeholders.	E	I

APTITUDES, SKILLS & COMPETENCIES:		
Strategic and Operational Planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning future operational events or situations. • Contributing to the development of Service Improvement and Business Plans. • Advising on departmental or section restructuring and redeployment. • Monitoring and directing work activity of department, section or project teams. 	E	I
COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIPS		
Excellent written, oral and presentational skills.	E	S/I/T
Communicating corporate vision and operational information.	E	I
Developing working relationships with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local community • key stakeholders • elected members 	E	I
SPECIAL CONDITIONS OF RECRUITMENT:		
Must be willing to work outside office hours during the week and at weekends, as dictated by the requirements of the service.	E	
As part of the selection process candidates will be required to undertake assessment tests designed to demonstrate their competencies in key areas detailed above.	E	
This post is politically restricted under the terms of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.		