

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	Paralegal (Childcare)
Office:	Pathfinder Legal Services Limited
Directorate:	Children’s Social Care and Safeguarding
Reports to:	Principal Paralegal (Childcare)
Grade:	B
Location:	Northampton / Huntingdon / Shefford (but able to travel to other offices as required)
Hours:	Full Time (37 hours)

OVERALL PURPOSE OF THE JOB

To provide paralegal and legal support to a team of Lawyers who provide a legal service to a range of public sector and not for profit clients with a professional and innovative legal service predominantly in respect of Children’s Social Care and Safeguarding and other areas of legal practice where necessary.

MAIN ACCOUNTABILITIES

1. To assist a team of Lawyers in the provision of a professional legal service to a range of public sector and not for profit clients regarding their social care functions, ensuring awareness of and compliance with legal duties within client organisations and protecting their best interests.
2. To manage a case load comprising mainly of children’s social care matters and private law Children Act matters.
3. To provide support to Lawyers in the preparation of cases in courts and tribunals, mainly relating to children’s social care.
4. To ensure the effective identification and awareness of risks associated with the relevant areas of legal practice.
5. To provide support to Lawyers and act as a point of contact on a variety of cases, to include taking instructions and giving advice, carrying out research, preparing applications, drafting documents and correspondence, commissioning and instructing expert witnesses, liaising with witnesses, attending meetings and providing advice and representation in courts or tribunals.
6. To develop, train and advise clients in legal skills and specific areas of law as appropriate.
7. To support the Pathfinder Legal Services management team in building and maintaining effective working relationships with clients to ensure the delivery of a seamless and client focussed service.
8. To support the Pathfinder Legal Services management team by complying with all SRA and practice management requirements including time recording, billing, Lexcel and other accreditation schemes.
9. To support the Pathfinder Legal Services management team in developing and maintaining effective partnerships, networks and joint working arrangements to ensure the most effective provision of legal services to meet the needs and aspirations of clients.
10. To make a positive contribution to the Children’s Social Care & Safeguarding team and contribute to the development, training or mentoring of colleagues where required.

11. To carry out other duties which fall within the broad spirit, scope and purpose of the job description as required by the Director of Pathfinder Legal Services, Heads of Service or Senior Lawyers from time to time and which are commensurate with the grade of the post.
12. To buddy, train and support colleagues.

This job description reflects the key duties to be carried out by the post holder and identifies a level of responsibility at which they will be required to work. In the interests of effective working, the key duties may be reviewed from time to time to reflect changing needs and circumstances. Such reviews and any consequential changes will be carried out in consultation with the post holder.

PERSON SPECIFICATION			
POSITION:	Paralegal (Childcare)	REPORTS TO:	Principal Paralegal (Childcare)
SERVICE:	Children's Social Care and Safeguarding	OFFICE:	Pathfinder Legal Services Ltd
GRADE:	B	LOCATION:	Northampton / Huntingdon / Shefford (but able to travel to other offices as required)

The following criteria are appropriate for this post. You must meet the essential criteria in order to be shortlisted for the post and it would be advantageous if you meet the desirable criteria.

QUALIFICATIONS	
<u>Essential</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Educated to degree level or equivalent or qualified by experience 	<u>Desirable</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives GDL and/or LPC qualified (or working towards gaining qualification)
KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE	
<u>Essential</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least two years of experience working in a Local Authority setting Experience of holding case files, drafting pleadings and witness statements Knowledge of court and tribunal procedures Ability to conduct legal research, interpret legislation and summarise the key points of case law Speaking in public (experience may be by way of advocacy, delivering presentations or training or participating in meetings) 	<u>Desirable</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A demonstrable understanding of the local government legal framework including practice and policy issues, with particular reference to Children's Social Care matters including:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care proceedings Adoption matters Public Law Outline Judicial review

SKILLS

Essential

- Ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing with a diverse range of persons/organisations
- Ability to work under own initiative, and to look ahead, anticipate challenges and deal with them pro-actively
- Ability to work with limited supervision and to provide sound and clear advice on own initiative
- Ability to plan and prioritise work effectively to meet own objectives and those of the team
- Ability to evaluate information in complex situations and the confidence to take sound decisions with limited supervision
- Ability to work under pressure, meet tight deadlines, adapt to change and to manage competing priorities
- Team player with an approachable, adaptable and positive attitude towards work with a willingness to provide cover in colleagues' absence and to pick up work outside of own specialism if necessary
- Excellent client care skills and a commitment to client focus and continuing service development
- Ability to travel to meetings at client offices and to work in other office locations on a regular basis
- Ability to work to time recording targets
- Drive, enthusiasm, versatility and self-motivation
- Computer literate with experience in using Microsoft office, legal research tools and bespoke software including case management systems

Desirable

- Flexibility with office hours – working to the demands of the job
- An approach to problem solving that demonstrates an awareness of client and corporate priorities
- A commitment to Lexcel/Quality Management Standards

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES & HEALTH & SAFETY

Essential

- Ability to demonstrate awareness and understanding of equal opportunities and other people's behaviour, physical, social and welfare needs
- Ability to demonstrate a clear understanding of, and commitment to, health & safety