

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	Principal Lawyer (Practice Area:SEN)
Office:	Pathfinder Legal Services Limited
Directorate:	Community Care and Litigation
Reports to:	Head of Service
Grade:	F
Location:	Northampton, Shefford, Huntingdon (but able to travel to other offices as required)
Hours:	Full time (37 hours)

OVERALL PURPOSE OF THE JOB

To lead a team of lawyers providing a range of public sector clients with a professional and innovative legal service predominantly regarding Special Educational Needs and education matters generally and other areas of legal practice where necessary.

MAIN ACCOUNTABILITIES

1. To provide legal advice and services to client organisations in litigation matters, predominately around Special Educational Needs and education matters to ensure compliance with statutory duties and obligations and to protect the best interests of the client organisations.
2. To act as a legal advisor to client organisations to ensure compliance with statutory duties and obligations and to protect the best interests of the client organisations.
3. Develop and provide legal input in to training courses for a range of professional clients.
4. To provide overall management of the team's complex and politically sensitive case load to ensure the provision of high quality, well researched and comprehensive legal advice within the timescales required by the client.
5. To ensure the effective identification and management of risks associated with the relevant areas of legal practice.
6. To provide supervision and manage the work of the team to ensure that professional guidance is given, that expertise is employed and work is allocated appropriately within the team.
7. To manage the activities of the team to include performance, caseloads and productivity, motivation and development, recruitment and selection and appraisals.
8. To attend courts and tribunals undertaking advocacy where required and to represent clients in negotiations and discussions with third parties in matters regarding the areas of legal practice relevant to the post.

9. 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.
10. To support the Pathfinder Legal Services management team by complying with all Legal Services practice management requirements including time recording, Lexcel and Investors in People.
11. 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.
12. To demonstrate awareness and understanding of equal opportunities, other people's behaviour and their physical, social and welfare needs.
13. To ensure that reasonable care is taken for the health and safety of the team, including compliance with health and safety policy and procedure and to maintain good employment relations within your team.
14. Carry out other duties which fall within the broad spirit, scope and purpose of the job description and which are commensurate with the grade of the post.
15. To act as an authorised signatory for an appropriate shareholder client.
16. To buddy, train and support colleagues.

This job description reflects the major tasks 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 major tasks 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			
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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"> Solicitor of the Supreme Court of England and Wales / member of the Bar who has completed pupillage / qualified Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives or Chartered Legal Executive. 	<u>Desirable</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership/Management Qualification.
KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE	
<u>Essential</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive experience of advising on, preparing and presenting SEN and education law matters. A demonstrated understanding of the local government legal framework including civil and criminal cases, contentious and non-contentious employment matters. Evidenced experience of advocacy in courts and tribunals. Knowledge of the school admissions appeals and exclusion appeals processes 	<u>Desirable</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of working in a legal practice. Experience of working in a Local Authority setting. Speaking in public (experience may be by way of advocacy, delivering presentations or training or participating in meetings.) Experience of planning and delivering legal briefings/training courses.

- Experience of leading, managing and supervising people successfully.

SKILLS

Essential

- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills
- Customer care skills and a commitment to customer focus and continuing service development
- Team player with an approachable, adaptable and positive attitude towards work
- Ability to lead and motivate others.
- Time management skills and the ability to deal effectively with competing priorities.
- Confidence to use own initiative and take difficult decisions when necessary.
- Ability to work under pressure.
- I.T skills including Microsoft Office, internet research and retrieval and bespoke software such as case management/ performance management systems.
- Ability and willingness to travel to different office locations.

Desirable

- Flexibility with office hours – working to the demands of the job
- 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.