JOB DESCRIPTION	
Job Title:	Principal Paralegal with Management Responsibilites (Childcare)
Office:	Pathfinder Legal Services Limited
Directorate:	Children's Social Care and Safeguarding
Reports to:	Principal Lawyer/Lawyer (Childcare)
Grade:	C
Location:	Huntingdon / Shefford / Northampton (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 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 and act as a point of contact on a variety of cases, to include but not limited to, 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.
2. To manage a case load comprising a wide range of children's social care matters, ensuring awareness of safeguarding responsibilities, compliance with statutory duties and obligations and to protect the best interests of the client organisations.
3. To ensure the effective identification and awareness of risks associated with the relevant areas of legal practice.
4. Develop and provide legal input into training courses, briefing notes and legal clinic/surgeries for a range of professional clients. Where required, assist Lawyers with the provision of training to clients in specialist areas of law.
5. Manage the activities of the paralegal team including performance, work allocation, productivity, motivation and development, recruitment and selection and appraisals.
6. Supervise other members of the team in a line management capacity. To provide overall management of the Paralegal teams 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.
7. Contribute to the development, training or mentoring of colleagues where required.
8. Demonstrate awareness and understanding of equal opportunities, other people's behaviour and their physical, social and welfare needs.
9. 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.
10. Provide cover and support, including in times of absence, to other Principal Paralegals and Paralegals based within the wider Children's Social Care and Safeguarding team.

11. Support the Pathfinder Legal Services Leadership Team in building and maintaining effective working relationships with clients to ensure the delivery of a seamless and client focussed service.
12. Support the Pathfinder Legal Services Leadership Team by complying with all Legal Services' practice management requirements including time recording, billing, Lexcel and other accreditation schemes, and compliance with all policies and procedures.
13. Support the Pathfinder Legal Services Leadership 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.
14. 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 Principal Lawyers from time to time and which are commensurate with the grade of the post.
15. 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:	Principal Paralegal (Childcare)	**REPORTS TO:**	Principal Lawyer/Lawyer (Childcare)
SERVICE:	Children's Social Care and Safeguarding	**OFFICE:**	Pathfinder Legal Services Ltd
GRADE:	C	**LOCATION:**	Huntingdon / Shefford / Northampton (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

Essential

- Educated to degree level or equivalent or qualified by experience

Desirable

- Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives
- GDL and/or LPC qualified (or working towards gaining qualification)

KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

Essential

- A demonstrated understanding of the local government legal framework including practice and policy issues, with particular reference to Children's Social Care matters including:-
  - Care proceedings
  - Adoption matters
  - Public Law Outline
  - Judicial review
- Experience of holding case files, drafting pleadings and witness statements

Desirable

- At least two years of experience working in a Local Authority setting
- Experience of leading, managing or supervising a team of experienced professionals successfully

- 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.)

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

Desirable

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

- Computer literate with experience in using Microsoft office, legal research tools and bespoke software including case management systems

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