

LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON
INNOVATION AND CHANGE DEPARTMENT
JOB DESCRIPTION

POST TITLE:	Senior Lawyer
Grade:	MGA
Department:	Innovation and Change
Location:	Various offices according to the needs of the service
Responsible to:	Assistant Head of Law or Head of Law and/or Principal Lawyer
Responsible for:	Up to 5 legal assistants and lawyers
Post number:	TBC

MAIN PURPOSE

- To provide customer focused, high quality and responsive specialist legal advice in relation to at least one of the areas of legal expertise covered by a local authority legal team. These areas are as follows:
 - Children's Social Care
 - Adoption
 - Adults Social Care
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Planning
 - Housing
 - Debt recovery
 - Judicial Review
 - Highways
 - Property
 - Procurement
 - Administrative Law
 - Constitutional Law
 - Finance
 - Elections
 - FOI
 - Licensing
 - Environment
- To be responsible for delivering a variety of types of legal work as expected within that specialism.
- To be responsible providing creative legal solutions on a seamless basis to support service transformation and change and to meet client needs and at the more senior levels to be able to deliver advice on a broad range of areas.
- To carry an extensive case load of complex and sensitive matters and to manage cases that would be considered to be highly complex or organisationally high profile.

- To be responsible for representing the interests of the service within the wider council organisations in any of the five authorities and with external clients.
- To supervise and provide line management of up to five FTE fee earning staff.
- To deputise for the Head of Law or Assistant Head of Law and/or Principal Lawyer.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- To provide timely and effective specialist legal advice to elected members, including committees and to Chief Officers, senior managers and officers across the 5 authorities as part of a team of lawyers, and to any other clients of the Shared Legal Service.
- To be responsible for providing innovative solutions to deal with complex issues arising in connection with the work within the team and the legal issues presented by clients.
- To manage a large caseload of wide-ranging work, including but not limited to; drafting legal letters, legal agreements, deeds, notices, orders, consents byelaws as well as negotiating agreements, settlements and such matters, managing competing demands and meeting deadlines and the requirements of the Shared Legal Service.
- Where relevant, to prepare and process all matters relevant to any proceedings before a court, arbitration, mediation or public inquiry and to attend such as the client's advocate or, if appropriate, select and instruct appropriate external legal representation.
- To work proactively to maintain and improve the relationship with the clients of the Shared Legal Service.
- To line manage a team of up to 5 fee earning legal staff supporting the staff in their development, providing performance management and ensuring that the work they are delivering is appropriate and conducting appraisals and 1-2-1s.
- To provide management and leadership across the wider practice.
- To be part of the extended legal management team of the practice.
- To undertake duties on behalf of the Monitoring Officer for all five authorities.
- To keep clients informed of new legislation and case law relevant to their operations, including training seminars where appropriate and to ensure that they maintain a sound application of legal requirements.
- To advise upon, draft and approve committee reports in respect of cases and legal issues.
- To attend, advise and provide legal services to council Committees and Panels as are required.
- To negotiate on behalf of any of the five authorities, with solicitors and other professionals and liaising with outside bodies including the court service on matters relating to work of any client.
- Within the caseload of the team to be responsible for the strategically important legal work and to be the lead expert lawyer for a particular legal area.

- To lead cross team project teams and co-ordinate the delivery of complex legal projects with lawyers from multiple teams to clients.
- To be responsible for the co-ordination of the activities within the team to ensure the provision of a quality legal service to all authorities.
- To be responsible, in conjunction with the Assistant Head of Law and any Principal Lawyers for the development of the team.
- To deputise for the Assistant Head of Law or Head of Law or Principal lawyer as requested.
- Any other duties as requested by the Head of Law, Assistant Head of Law or Managing Director.

**LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON
INNOVATION AND CHANGE DEPARTMENT
PERSON SPECIFICATION**

POST TITLE: Senior Lawyer
Grade: MGA

Qualifications and Experience

- Qualified solicitor or barrister or chartered legal executive or equivalent legal experience with a background in local government.
- Good knowledge of relevant legislation to the service area and the decision-making processes and procedures.
- Good understanding of current issues and best practice on service delivery relevant to the service areas
- Good and demonstrable analytical legal skills.
- Experience of staff management and ability to manage, inspire and motivate staff.

Skills and Knowledge

- Ability to work under pressure and respond efficiently to the changing needs of the clients.
- Ability to be able to travel to attend client officers or courts wherever the client's case is being considered.
- Commitment to the principles of and development of the Shared Legal Service.
- Ability to contribute to the ongoing development of the Shared Legal Service.
- Good communication skills, both orally and in writing and good numeracy and analytical skills.
- Ability to provide visible support and leadership which empowers, enables and develops staff to achieve results.
- Ability to be available to attend premises out of hours to attend evening meetings and in the event of emergencies or urgent management issues in relation to all 5 authorities.
- Performance orientated, able to manage and monitor performance effectively set clear objectives for the review of individual and service level performance.