

LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON
CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT
JOB DESCRIPTION

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| POST TITLE: | Lawyer – Expert Practitioner |
| Grade: | MGA |
| Department: | Corporate Services |
| Location: | Various offices according to the needs of the service |
| Responsible to: | Assistant Head of Law |
| Responsible for: | n/a |
| Post number: | TBC |

MAIN PURPOSE

- To act as a senior expert practitioner in one of the following areas of legal:
 - Children’s Social Care
 - Adults Social Care
 - Education
 - Employment
 - Planning
 - Highways
 - Property
 - Procurement
 - Administrative Law
 - Finance
 - Elections
 - FOI
 - Licensing
 - Environment
- To be responsible for delivering high quality customer focussed services within that specialism.
- To be responsible, , for 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 deputise for the Principal Lawyer, Assistant Head of Law of Head of Law as required.
-

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 both 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 by-laws 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 improvement the relationship with the clients of the Shared Legal Service.
- To share expertise and guide junior staff as required, including acting as training principal.
- 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.
- To lead cross team project teams – co-ordinating the delivery of complex legal projects with lawyers from multiple teams to clients.
- To be responsible for the coordination of the activities within the team to ensure the provision of a quality legal service to all authorities.
- To work proactively to improve productivity, and quality, within the team.
- To be responsible, in conjunction with the strategic direction of the Head of Law and Assistant Head of Law for the development of the team
- Any other duties as requested by the Managing Director.

**LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON
CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT
PERSON SPECIFICATION**

POST TITLE: Lawyer – Expert Practitioner
Grade: MGA

Qualifications and Experience

- Qualified legal executive, solicitor or barrister or chartered legal executive 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
- Comprehensive working experience of subject matter including handling complex matters with limited supervision

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
- Good communication skills, both orally and in writing and good numeracy and analytical skills
- Ability to be the expert in either Children's Services, Education or Adults Services and provide visible support to other 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 both authorities