

**LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON**  
**CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT**  
**JOB DESCRIPTION**

**POST TITLE:** Lawyer - Senior Lawyer  
**Grade:** ME14/16

This is a career graded post but there is not automatic progression between the grades. Progress is subject to:

- Management assessment of the individual postholder's ability to perform the tasks expected at a higher grade. This will be linked to agreed competencies for the duties involved as shown in the person profile.
- Management assessment of the need for the duties at a higher grade to be done and availability of work at the higher grade.

**Department:** Corporate Services  
**Location:** Various offices according to the needs of the service  
**Responsible to:** Team Manager or Head of Law

**Responsible for:** Dependent on level of career progression but up to 5 legal assistants and lawyers

**Post number:** TBC  
**Date:** November 2016

## **MAIN PURPOSE**

- To provide customer focused, high quality and responsive specialist legal advice in relation to at least one of the area of legal expertise covered by a local authority legal team. These areas are as follows:
  - Childrens Social Care
  - Adults Social Care
  - Education
  - Employment
  - Planning
  - Highways
  - Property
  - Procurement
  - Administrative 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, at different levels of seniority, 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 at the more senior levels to be managing 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 legal and non-legal junior staff and at the higher levels to supervise and provide line management of up to five FTE fee earning staff
- At the higher levels to deputise for the Team Manager or Head of Law

## **MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### At ME14 (Lawyer)

- To provide timely and effective specialist legal advice to elected members, including committees and to Chief Officers, senior managers and officers across all 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 supervise, and be responsible for the work of, junior staff as required and to provide management and leadership to the staff working on their cases.
- To undertake duties on behalf of the Monitoring Officer for all five authorities.
- 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.
- Advise upon, draft and approve committee reports in respect of cases and legal issues
- Attend, advise and provide legal services to council Committees and Panels as are required.

- Negotiating, 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.
- Any other duties as maybe commensurate with the grade

#### At ME16 (Senior Lawyer)

To do all of the above plus:

- 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 have lead responsibility 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 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 for the line management and supervision of the lawyers and legal assistants allocated to them; 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 be responsible, in conjunction with the strategic direction of the Head of Law and Team Manager for the development of the team
- To assist the Team Manager or Head of Law deputise for them, in managing the overall operation of the team
- Any other duties as requested by the Head of the Shared Legal Service or Assistant Director.

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

**POST TITLE:** Lawyer - Senior Lawyer  
**Grade:** ME14/16

**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

For ME16

- 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

For ME 16:

- 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 both authorities
- Performance orientated, able to manage and monitor performance effectively set clear objectives for the review of individual and service level performance