

Principal Lawyer Grade 13

About the Service

Staffordshire Legal Services is an accredited professional advisory service for the whole Council, based within the Corporate Services Directorate. It provides quality services, promoting Staffordshire County Council's pursuit of excellence.

Staffordshire Legal Services also provides services to a range of external clients which are effective, customer friendly and provide value for money.

We endeavour to deliver by taking into account our customer commitments, our Council values and our individual objectives.

About the Role

The Principal Lawyer will be critical and influential in ensuring that our legal service aspires to and achieves practice excellence. The post holder will play a key role in developing and putting in place programmes of development which are informed by national best practice up to date law and developments in law. Their valuable work will support lawyers within Legal Services Unit and they will also provide an updating service for our professional client base.

They will have lead responsibility for developing and supporting the growth of consistent subject matter expertise within Legal Services Unit. They will themselves be subject matter experts and so they will also be undertaking highly complex, high risk legal cases and complex advocacy to support their own CPD. This role will develop and maintain a reflective and learning culture within the team, which strives to continually improve.

They will provide coaching and mentorship to colleagues and develop others through the sharing of their expert knowledge. Leading reflective learning practice to empower and enable colleagues to growth within their legal career.

This role is critical in the development of succession planning within legal services.

The role will be fundamental in continuing to develop the service offer of Legal Services. This role will develop and deliver a selling services strategy within their subject area (with consideration of cross-selling). They will support the delivery of traded services. Legal Services work within a part traded model.

Job ID: 70000853 / G13 / CAS

GP Date: 28/10/2024



The role is crucial in ensuring that there is a sufficient breadth of knowledge across the service to ensure that there is resilience and available expertise to support the traded model. The role will itself contribute, by reason of the work undertaken, to income streams. An understanding of financial modelling for a part traded service and workforce strategies will support the holder of this role. The role will not directly line manage people. They are instead responsible for reviewing existing strategies and developing, implementing and monitoring new strategies for the training, assessment and development of staff, of all grades, as required by the business plan and needs of the service.

Reporting Relationships

Responsible to: Deputy Legal Services Manager (Development)

Responsible for: N/A

Key Accountabilities:

1. Be the lead subject matter expert provide specialist legal advice, Interpret complex legislation for legal colleagues, internal and external clients, to ensure the delivery of a high-quality professional service. Role model and lead on reflective learning, sharing best practice by coaching, mentoring and developing legal colleagues to ensure a focused, professional and customer focused service is delivered and to support career development.
2. Undertake continuous, comprehensive and thorough research of current legislation and case law. This will support the role holder to deliver the most complex case work and support them in their cascading of knowledge as described within the role.
3. Manage and undertake the most complex legal casework and highly complex legal cases. Providing a high-quality professional service to internal and external clients and so reducing externalisation of work to Counsel and private law firms. Provide expert professional legal representation and advise clients at high-level case related meetings and conduct complex advocacy, to include cross-examination of witnesses and experts at court or tribunal hearings where relevant within subject matter.
4. Work in collaboration with the Legal Services Senior Management Team to develop the workforce development and succession plan. Identify internal and external trends and changes, sharing intelligence and research. Promote and champion the legal profession by

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working closely with universities, work experience placement and apprentices to support the development of workforce succession planning and the recruitment and retention of legal professionals.

5. Promote a culture of innovation and learning across the team and client services by developing and delivering training packages and programmes and embedding into working practice. Contributing to the appraisal and development of paralegals and lawyers to inform the workforce development plan by undertaking a periodic casework review and provide constructive feedback and positive learning to individuals.
6. Develop a sales strategy. Leading on elements within the Legal Services Unit's marketing and selling services commercial activities, in order to support the wider Legal Services business objectives. Identifying and proposing creative solutions in relation to developing resilience and shared knowledge within LSU to assist LSU stay with budgetary restrictions whilst meeting the changing needs of the client.
7. Identifying and managing risk, as defined by LSU office manual and by Lexcel Standards and SRA standards, to a successful conclusion and escalating any potential implications to senior management.
8. Leading by example in ensuring compliance in legal service quality standards (as defined by LSU Office manual and Lexcel). Completing and promoting time-recording in order to maintain the professional standards and contribute to the process of securing re-accreditation.
9. Leading on designated projects, including programmes relating to Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution, evaluating and monitoring for continuous improvement, to maintain high standards of service delivery to any client of LSU.
10. Building positive working relationships with clients, colleagues at all levels within the council and partner agencies to support the delivery of a high-quality customer experience.

Person Specification

Qualifications/Professional membership

- Practising solicitor/lawyer, Fellow of CILEX or a Barrister with Practice Certificate
- Member of the CMI or other Management or Training Institution or equivalent experience

Knowledge and Experience

- Extensive experience in the relevant field in a legal environment and an in-depth understanding of the law relating to the role and extensive and up to date knowledge of caselaw/ legislation relating to the relevant specialism.
- Experienced in researching and interpreting complex legislation.
- Local Government experience with a comprehensive understanding of the work done by the Council and an awareness of the political makeup and constitutional provisions of a Local Authority.
- Significant experience of completing all aspects of the most complex legal casework, to High Court/ Senior Tribunal level.
- Extensive expertise in relation to Judicial Review applications.
- Experienced in representing clients at high level case-related meetings and, where relevant to role, conducting complex advocacy.
- Extensive experience of training/supervising/mentoring staff.
- Experience of identifying and implementing evidence based operational improvements and experience in leading projects.
- Experience of using IT, with the ability to work all elements of M365 and a case management system.
- Experience of building positive constructive relationships with senior management and external partnership agencies.
- Experience of working within set budgetary restraints and financial acumen to enable the post holder to contribute toward the financial strategy.
- Experience of working within Lexcel professional standards.

Skills

- Effective communication skills with the ability to clearly, with confidence, and effectively communicate in all media forms; verbally, digitally and in writing.
- Ability to present training, in any format, in a compelling, engaging and persuasive way.
- Coaching skills with the ability to motivate, support and develop staff of all grades.

- Ability to interpret complex information and present to a diverse audience, influence, persuade and negotiate.
- Ability to work effectively both as a team member and independently.
- Flexible and able to adapt to change and aim to achieve continuous improvement.
- Effective time management and prioritisation skills.
- Attention to detail.
- Ability to work under the demands of competing pressures.
- Ability to coordinate different work streams and delegate work in order to create capacity.
- Ability to lead and decision make with confidence and authority.

This post is designated as a casual Car user
The content of this Job Description and Person Specification will be reviewed on a regular basis.