



JOB DESCRIPTION

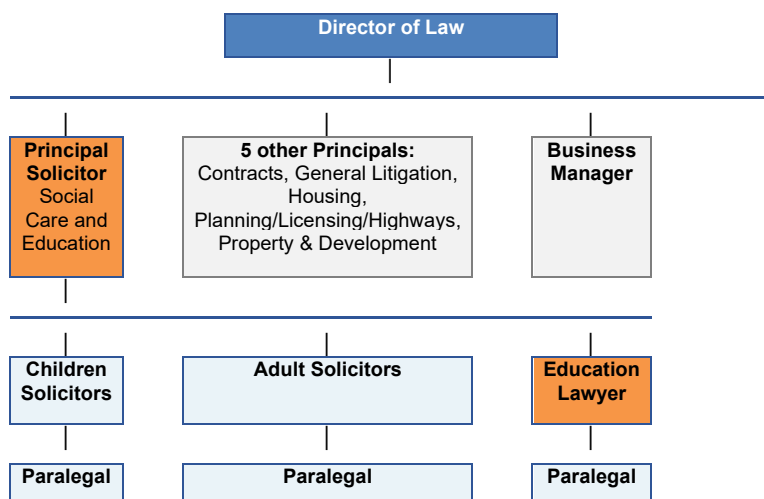
Job title	Lawyer (Education)
Directorate	Resources
Service	Legal Services
Team	Social Care and Education
Grade	H

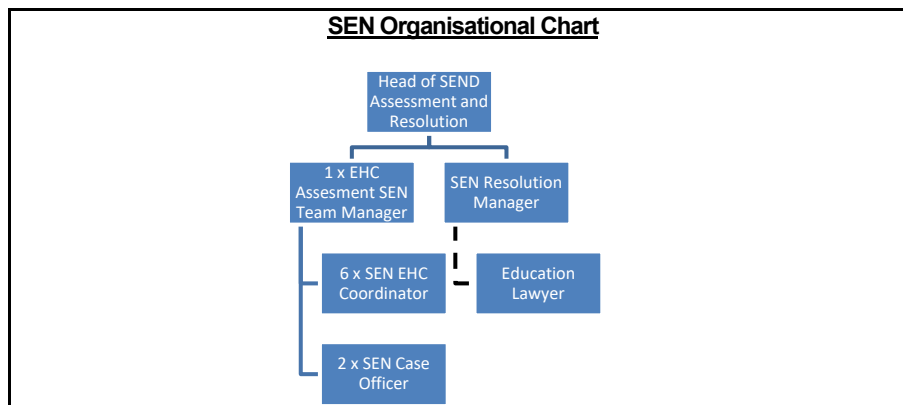
DBS Check Required	Enhanced with Children's and Adults Barred List
Justification for DBS	Regulated Activity with Children and Adults
Politically Restricted	No

Responsible to:	Principal Solicitor
Employees directly supervised (if applicable):	N/A
Organisational structure chart (job titles only, no employee names)	

This role sits in a Bi Borough Legal Service for the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) and Westminster City Council, and is employed directly by RBKC, reporting directly to the Principal Solicitor for Social Care and Education, while collaborating closely with the SEN Resolution Manager and Head of SEN.

Legal Services Organisational Chart





JOB PURPOSE:

The key areas of accountability for the Education Lawyer are to provide high-quality, business-focused legal advice, representation and support on education and SEND matters; manage a substantial and complex caseload with sound professional judgement; and work collaboratively with Legal Services, Council officers, schools, Members and partners to secure lawful, timely and defensible decision-making.

- **Operational Management:** leading and managing SEND Tribunal work and wider education law matters on behalf of the Council, including complex and contentious cases, with a clear professional reporting line to Legal Services for quality, standards, risk management and legal assurance.
- **Strategic Input:** contributing to strategic and operational decision-making on SEND and education law, identifying legal risk, learning themes and service improvement opportunities, and supporting the development of effective systems, guidance and practice standards.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** building and maintaining effective relationships with instructing officers, schools, professionals, families' representatives, partner agencies and external clients, providing clear, timely and practical advice in accordance with service standards and Council priorities.

1. DESCRIPTION OF DUTIES:

1. Provide accurate, succinct and timely specialist legal advice, representation and support to officers, senior managers, schools, professionals, partner agencies and, where required, Members on all areas of SEND and education law, including the Children and Families Act 2014, Education Act 1996, SEND Code of Practice 2015 and relevant case law.
2. Manage a substantial personal caseload of complex and routine SEND and education legal matters, applying sound judgement, prioritising effectively, meeting statutory and procedural deadlines, and leading by example in the quality of case preparation and advice.

3. Prepare, oversee and conduct First-tier Tribunal appeals and related legal forums, including drafting submissions, preparing evidence and bundles, advising on strategy and settlement, and acting as the Council's legal representative in complex or contentious hearings.
4. Monitor and interpret legislative, policy and case law developments, advising the SEND Heads of Service, SEND Team Managers and Legal Services on implications, legal risk and required changes to practice, governance or decision-making processes.
5. Draft, review and negotiate legal documentation, including agreements, settlement proposals, submissions, responses to complaints and Ombudsman matters, and reports or briefing notes needed to support lawful and defensible decision-making.
6. Ensure accurate and compliant record-keeping and adherence to GDPR and statutory duties.
7. Provide training and legal briefings to SEND practitioners, schools and partner agencies.
8. Participate in dispute resolution processes, including mediation, ensuring statutory compliance.
9. Work closely with the SEND Resolution Manager, SEND officers and Legal Services to support early, lawful and proportionate resolution of disputes, including through mediation, settlement discussions and robust review of the Council's legal position before matters proceed to hearing.
10. Provide legal oversight on the quality and defensibility of SEND decision-making, ensuring that EHC assessment, review, placement and provision decisions are evidence-based, clearly reasoned and capable of withstanding legal challenge.
11. Identify recurring themes arising from Tribunal appeals, complaints, mediation, Ombudsman matters and other dispute resolution activity, and translate these into legal briefings, training, template improvements and service learning.
12. Attend multi-agency panels advising on legal risk and statutory tests, at both an individual and strategic level.
13. Identify, record and escalate legal, financial, reputational and operational risks promptly, including instructing and liaising with Counsel or external advisers where appropriate and in accordance with Legal Services governance requirements.
14. Work collaboratively with Legal Services and the wider SEND Service to improve policies, service plans, templates, case management arrangements, performance information and quality assurance systems, ensuring they remain effective, compliant and responsive to service need.
15. Attend regular professional supervision and undergo continued professional development as required.
16. Apply equality, diversity and inclusion principles in all legal analysis, advice and representation.

17. Undertake other duties within the scope of the role as directed by the Principal Solicitor or Director of Law, adapting and developing the role to meet changing legal, service and organisational requirements.

The duties and responsibilities outlined in this job profile are indicative of the role, however they are not exhaustive and may be subject to change. In addition, you will be required to undertake other reasonable duties as directed by your manager.

SELECTION CRITERIA/PERSON SPECIFICATION

Conditions to Note:

The person specification outlines the essential requirements the post holder or applicant must meet to fulfil the role and the duties outlined.

Candidates:

When completing your application form, please address your answers directly to each of the selection criteria below. This enables the panel to assess your ability to meet each criterion. It is essential that you give at least one example of your ability to meet each of the four Values and Behaviours: Putting Communities First, Respect, Integrity and Working Together.

Recruiting Managers:

The following values and behaviours are essential criteria in each post and must be addressed directly by candidates. The Guidance Notes on values and behaviours for managers give example questions to probe candidates in the interview and application stages of the recruitment process.

Resilience:

We encourage staff to assist the council during a significant emergency response which will focus on meeting the needs of residents. This may necessitate staff involvement, and in exceptional circumstances, could involve redeployment to support the emergency response.

Informed by our learning from the Grenfell tragedy, senior managers (Head of Service and higher) are expected to play an active coordination and leadership role in the Council's broader emergency response efforts during major or serious incidents. This includes arranging urgent resources from their own services and rallying staff teams to help residents during their time in need.

Values & Behaviours

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea have identified four key behaviours and values that should be demonstrated by all council employees. Successful candidates will show the ability to meet these behaviours.

A	Equal Opportunities Demonstrate an understanding of and commitment to Council policies in relation to Equal Opportunity, Customer Care and service delivery, and the ability to implement these policies in the workplace.
B	Qualifications/Training/Certificates You will be a qualified Solicitor or Barrister with minimum significant years PQE in SEN Tribunal work or be a Senior CILEX Lawyer / Senior Legal Executive – Education entitled to practice in England and Wales with a minimum of several years PQE in SEN Tribunal work.
C	Skills, knowledge and experience - Demonstrable ability to explain and advise on complex public law and statutory decision-making issues clearly and persuasively to a wide range of stakeholders. - Outstanding verbal and written communication, with meticulous attention to

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	detail. • Experience of creating and understanding legal documents and terminology, particularly as related to education and SEND legislation • Experience of analysing and producing coherent bundles of complex evidence for legal proceedings • Experience presenting a case in legal arenas such as court hearings, particularly in relation to education, local government or public sector fields • Knowledge and understanding of the key legislative frameworks (including Children and Families Act 2014, Education Act 1996, SEND Code of Practice 2015). • Commitment to continuous learning and development in line with legislative and regulatory changes, and an awareness of the political context within which the Council operates. • Sound ability to establish constructive and positive relationships with Local Authority colleagues, governing bodies, head teachers, SENCOs, health partners and a wide range of other stakeholders to allow effective partnership working. • Ability to maintain professional resilience even in high-stakes situations, representing the service and the Council positively at all times. • Demonstrable cooperative and proactive approach to resolving issues as they arise, seeking instruction from others where needed in a clear and timely manner. • Strong understanding of SEND dispute resolution routes, including mediation, First-tier Tribunal proceedings, complaints and Ombudsman processes, and the ability to advise on the most appropriate lawful route to resolution. • Ability to balance robust legal risk management with practical, child-centred and solution-focused advice to operational services. • Experience of working collaboratively with operational managers while maintaining professional independence, sound legal judgement and clear escalation of legal risk. • Excellent organisation and record-keeping of a caseload, managing deadlines and ensuring cases are accurately and transparently recorded.
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OUR VALUES AND BEHAVIOURS

Our values and behaviours underpin everything we do.
They guide our interactions with residents, businesses, visitors, partners and each other.
They are also a measure of how well we've done.

Our Values & Behaviours	
D	PUTTING COMMUNITIES FIRST • We put local people at the heart of decision making in everything we do. • We seek to include and involve: all voices matter. • We provide quality services that are responsive, effective and efficient. The following examples are indicators of effective behaviour: • I actively involve and include the communities that I serve in my work. • I shall reflect the views of the communities in my daily work. • I shall improve the service I provide through seeking feedback from others. Our residents will feel that: • I have been included • I can see how my views have been taken into account • I can see improvements and developments based on my input
E	RESPECT • We listen to everyone and value the personal experiences of people in our communities and of each other. • We adopt a fair and involving approach regardless of any way in which an individual is different to us. The following examples are indicators of effective behaviour: • I adapt my approach to take account of all differences and cultures in the community and with colleagues. • I ensure I am equitable and fair by including those who are quiet or may not be able to represent themselves. • I communicate in a way that is respectful, encourages involvement and meets people's needs. Our residents will feel that: • I feel my culture and background are respected. • I have confidence that action is being taken. • I feel I am being treated fairly.

F	INTEGRITY • We act with openness, honesty, compassion, responsibility and humility. • We let people know what we are doing and communicate why and how decisions have been made. The following examples are indicators of effective behaviour: • I demonstrate empathy in my interactions with others. • I am honest and transparent about the decisions I take. • I follow through on the actions I say I will take and take ownership for communicating the outcome. Our residents will feel that: • I am told when something is not possible, and the reasons why are explained to me. • I feel my perspective is listened to and understood. • I feel my views are valued
G	WORKING TOGETHER • We work together and in partnership with everyone that has an impact on the lives of our residents. • We want to understand, learn from each other and continually adapt. The following examples are indicators of effective behaviour: • I work with others to provide an effective service for residents, local communities and other departments within the Council. • I seek ways to work with other departments to deliver a seamless service and find opportunities to improve. • I seek out opportunities to learn from my colleagues and build on good practice. Our residents will feel that: • I can get my issue resolved without being passed around departments. • I find it easy to access the services that I need. • I feel the Council is open to new ideas.