

## JOB DESCRIPTION

<b>Job Title:</b>	<b>Solicitor – Childcare</b>
<b>Directorate &amp; Section/Unit:</b>	<b>Commercial and Change, Commercial – Legal and Governance</b>
<b>Reporting to:</b>	<b>Principal Solicitor (childcare); Head of Adults, Childcare Education &amp; Debt Recovery(ACED)</b>
<b>Responsible for:</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>Salary Grade:</b>	<b>PO3</b>
<b>Number of Direct Reports:</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Supervisory Responsibility for:</b>	<b>Legal Assistant, Legal Clerk and Trainee Solicitor</b>
<b>WCC Management Level:</b>	<b>Frontline</b>

### Our People Values:

To uphold and act in accordance with Worcestershire County Council's values;

- **Customer Focus** – Ensure delivery of a high-quality service which meet the needs of customers
- **Can Do Culture** – Be proactive to achieve excellence, finding solutions and creative ways of working
- **Freedom within Boundaries** - Make constructive change through cohesive decision making, ensuring services are responsive

### Purpose of job:

- Delivery of the provision of quality Legal Services to, Children's Services, Worcestershire Children First (WCF) for the specific category portfolio comprising Childcare and related Education
- Support the development, management, and delivery of effective and efficient legal services within the Childcare Team with an emphasis on commercially focused strategies which meet the business objectives and deliver value for money outcomes both for the Client Directorate and the Legal and Governance Division.
- To provide legal expertise and conduct legal proceedings in the Family Court, High Court and County Court and tribunals in respect of Child protection and related educational work
- Deliver effective solutions to comply with the statutory 26 week timescale to complete care proceedings and to secure the desired outcomes

### Main Activities & Responsibilities:

- Support the Principal Solicitors(child care) from time to time and deputise in their absence in the management and areas of responsibility of the Childcare Team.
- Demonstrate effective negotiating skills with all stakeholders by representing, communicating and promoting the purpose, values and vision of the instructing Directorate in any given case
- Continually seek opportunities to lawfully deliver improved outcomes to the directorates' instructing Legal Services on the various projects being undertaken where legal input is required in the most cost-effective manner.
- To take conduct of complex and contentious and/or non-contentious legal matters concerning one or more aspects of the Council's functions as allocated, but particularly in respect of child protection, related education and local government law, often requiring creative appraisal and solutions
- To handle other legal matters within the remit of the Service or team as may be allocated from time to time.
- To participate and assist in managing the Out of Hours service for the appropriate fee
- Delivery of the Service Level Agreements with maintained schools and academies as it relates to child protection aspects of the Schools Helpline.
- To act as advocate in any forum; to prosecute; to pursue or defend child protection matters and to appear before the full range of Courts and in particular manage more complex cases (High, County and Magistrates Courts but particularly the Family Court and Deprivation of Liberty Court).

- To advocate personally in contested matters and manage and undertake multi-day contested hearings to promote robust quality case management and minimise the use of legal counsel
- To Instruct and assist Counsel where appropriate.
- To undertake legal research of legal issues arising from the work of the Council or its components or associated public bodies for whom the Assistant Director of Legal & Governance also acts, and to keep abreast of developments in relevant areas of law informing interested parties of their implications.
- To supervise the work of solicitors-lawyers(junior), legal assistants and legal clerks.
- To contribute as required and to assist in the implementation and development of appropriate policies, office procedures, standards and systems (including any case-management and time recording systems).
- To represent the Assistant Director of Legal and Governance at meetings of Member Bodies and Officer Groups, as required.
- To take all reasonable steps to ensure confidentiality, where appropriate.
- To bring to the attention of the Assistant Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer any matter of which s/he should be aware in order to discharge the duties of that office.
- To manage and participate in the implementation, development and maintenance of court bundling, case managements systems, office procedures, systems, standards and policies, as required with the aim of developing and maintaining a paperless office
- Use the adopted case management system to record and upload all correspondence, instructions and communications in relation to case work, management and supervisory work
- Promote the Council's commitment to achieving its corporate objectives
- Identify opportunities to develop collaborative relationships within the team and more widely with various stakeholders
- Maintain a comprehensive insight and understanding of legal developments, at local, regional and national levels, identifying the key issues in the respective legal topics covered by the Team; understanding thoroughly the legal principals, implications and opportunities to exploit new law, practice and procedures for the benefit of the Council.
- Develop and maintain effective working relationships, maximising the engagement and support of managers and other key stakeholders
- Comply with reporting statistics on workload, Feedback forms and the meeting of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) for bench marking purposes and development of business cases and identify and implement improvement plans where required
- Support team members, including personal development, training, continuing professional development and staff performance measurement, in accordance with Council staffing policies, and to ensure the delivery of the team and individual savings targets
- To robustly evaluate and challenge external suppliers of legal services, e.g., experts, counsel etc. to ensure that they are deliverable and represent best value to the Council
- Contribute to the development and implementation of WCF/Children' Services service improvement plan including updating and modernising policy and procedures

#### **Generic Accountabilities:**

- To maintain personal and professional development in accordance with professional standards; to meet the changing demands of the job, participate in appropriate training activities and encourage and support staff in their development and training
- To undertake other such duties, training and/or hours of work as may be reasonably required and which are consistent with the general level of responsibility of this job
- To undertake health and safety duties commensurate with the job and/or as detailed in the Directorate's Health and Safety Policy
- The duties described in this job description must be carried out in a manner which promotes equality of opportunity, dignity and due respect for all employees and service users and is consistent with the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy
- Working with some vulnerable children, young people and adults can, at times, be emotionally challenging for which appropriate support will be provided through management supervision. The post holder must be able to deal with such mental demands.

**Contacts:**

- In all contacts the post holder will be required to present a good image of the Commercial & Change Directorate and the Council, as well as maintaining constructive relationships.
  - Internal contacts: Elected Members, Strategic Directors, Directors, Assistant Directors, Senior Managers, Management Teams, Managers & Staff across all directorates, School Governors, Head Teachers, Teachers, Support and other school-based staff.
  - External. contacts: District & County Councils, Government Agencies & Departments, NHS, Clinical Commissioning Groups, Healthcare Professionals, Police, Fire, Probation Service, Educational Settings, Suppliers, Contractors, Service providers, Statutory and Voluntary Organisations, service users, clients, customers, parents & pupils, members of the public, volunteers

**Additional Information:**

- The Council reserves the right to alter the content of this job description, after consultation to reflect changes to the job or services provided, without altering the general character or level of responsibility
- Reasonable adjustments will be considered as required by the Equality Act

Author: Lewis Jones

Date: Sept 22

Date of grading confirmation:

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

**Job Title:** Solicitor - Childcare  
**Directorate & Section/Unit:** Commercial and Change, Legal and Governance  
**Salary Grade:** PO3  
**WCC Management Level:**

### EXPERIENCE:

It is **essential** that the post holder has:

- Substantial experience of successfully running a complex childcare caseload to include DOL/LPS and adoption matters
- Substantial experience of robust case management of child protection casework to achieve the 26-week statutory care completion outcomes
- Demonstrable experience advising and contributing on the development and improvement of child protection strategies and policies within the Children's Services Directorates
- Significant experience of advocacy and can demonstrate an aptitude for and commitment to advocacy including undertaking contested hearings and running multiday hearings
- Demonstrable experience a case management system (or similar) to deliver a paperless office solution
- Significant experience of advising on reports including redrafting, writing business cases, responding to corporate complaints for a range of audiences
- Considerable experience of proactively managing, supervising and developing Legal Services staff within the Team, especially through periods of change, to achieve SMART agreed performance outcomes and sustainable improvements

### KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ABILITIES:

It is **essential** that the post holder can demonstrate:

- Expert knowledge of child protection legislation, practice and procedure to include adoption law, DOL/LPS law, public/local government law to successfully provide legal advice and assistance to Childrens services/WCF in the exercise of its statutory functions
- Expert knowledge of statutory duties
- Specialist knowledge of public law principles including issuing or defending claims for Judicial Review
- Detailed knowledge in the use of corporate governance and decision making
- The ability to use and apply legislation and case law to formulate strategies to protect the Council's interests or make improvement to service delivery
- Proven ability to negotiate and influence
- The ability to produce documentation in a clear and concise way and to a range of audiences
- Strong personal and inter-personal skills including team building, communications, motivation, leadership and the ability to develop and maintain effective partnership working
- Resilient and deals positively with change.
- Works flexibly, efficiently and effectively, reducing costs and eliminating waste.
- Recognises political context.
- Takes ownership of own work area and the development of others
- Committed to excellence.
- Strives to build effective working relationships with team members and stakeholders

**QUALIFICATIONS/TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT:**

It is **essential** that the post holder is:

- A Solicitor or Barrister entitled to practise within England

It is **desirable** that the postholder has:

- A Level 1 qualification in Essential Digital Skills or evidence of excellent IT skills in Microsoft Office

**OTHER FACTORS**

It is **essential** that the post holder has:

- Not applicable

It is **desirable** that the post holder has:

- Not applicable

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

It is **essential** that the post holder:

- Maintains personal and professional development to meet the changing demands of the job, participate in appropriate training activities
- The ability to travel to various external meetings/venues, within and outside the County, which could be at short notice and in response to tight timescales
- Is able and willing to attend meetings that may be held outside of normal office hours (i.e. weekends and evenings).

Author: Lewis Jones(HACED)

Date: Sept 2022