

Job Title: Childcare Lawyer	Role Profile Number: LE332
Grade: Q Salary: Career Graded	Date Prepared: September 2020
Directorate/Group: Resources	Reporting to: Principal Childcare Solicitor
Structure Chart attached:	No

Job Purpose

- To provide a comprehensive legal service to members and officers of the Council in terms of transactional work and advice, legal advice and legal documentation and assistance to members and officers of the Council at all levels and other clients of the Legal Department in relation to all areas of law covered by the team
- To offer legal advice with supervision on child protection matters and the functions, duties and statutory responsibilities of the Children’s Services Department
- To offer legal advice, conduct casework and undertake advocacy in relation for cases under the Pre-proceedings Process and before the Court to include Care Proceedings, Adoption matters, Revocations and Discharge Proceedings and private law matters, included contested hearings
- To represent the Council in matters relating to safeguarding, including Children’s Services
- To handle legal matters (as allocated from time to time) and take case responsibility in relation to matters involving Education, Adult Services, Judicial Review, Age Assessments, Deprivation of Liberty, and all other work as required by the legal department.
- This is a career graded role and as such the knowledge and experience of the role holder will fluctuate and it is likely that a high level of monitoring and support from the Principal Solicitor will be required initially and as the role holder develops their skill and knowledge base they will take a greater autonomy over their work and overtime they will undertake a higher complexity of case matters and advocacy. This role profile relates to work at the lower end of the Q grade and the role profile for the R graded work is separately detailed.

Key Accountabilities

The role holder will;

- provide high quality legal advice and competently manage a caseload of legal working to solution problems through analytical ability and thorough research
- To manage a wide ranging varied caseload of routine and, with support, some complex matters in all areas dealt with by the childcare legal team.

- To ensure deadlines and agreed time frames are met
- To provide professional support for less experienced colleagues, and oversee effective completion of their work as delegated by you and as required.
- To provide professional support, advice to social workers and team managers for the progression of cases
- To represent the Council in the Family Court both remotely and in person, in case management and contested hearings
- The preparation and drafting of legal documents including but not limited to applications, threshold case summaries, statements of fact for the purpose of making and progressing applications before the Court with a degree of autonomy as relevant to their level of experience
- To correspond and liaise with client departments, outside solicitors, barristers and other agencies;
- To research legal questions arising from the work of the Council or its components or associated public bodies
- To keep updated of, and to ensure implementation and adherence to, legislation, regulation, case law, codes of practice and policy relating to relevant areas of work, (and to undertake the minimum number of hours of training required by the post holder's professional qualification annually) and inform clients of significant developments by providing guidance and training to client departments and junior members of staff
- To analytically consider documents and evidence provided by the client department and other parties and assist in the drafting and collation of Local Authority evidence
- to use the case management system, templates and the processes and procedures put in place and as required by the Principal Solicitor including appropriate utilisation of support staff within the department
- Attendance at meetings and hearings for the progression of their caseload as required
- To ensure, as required, duty cover for urgent legal matters is provided to the client department
- To promote the development and maintenance of the highest professional standards throughout the work and service of the Council and to conduct professional work in accordance with the codes set by the Chief Legal Officer and to contribute towards the development of the team
- To carry out other duties appropriate to the level of responsibility of the post as required from time to time by the Principal Solicitor and/or Chief Legal Officer.

Supplementary Accountabilities

- To participate in the Council's emergency response arrangements (Out of Hours Service) as directed by the principal solicitor.
- To provide support and cover with legal work within in the Legal Team as and when required and requested.
- To take all reasonable steps to ensure appropriate confidentiality including the encryption and redaction of documentation and utilisation of electronic resources
- To actively participate in team meetings, information briefings and events as directed by the Principal Solicitor and/or the Chief Legal Officer;
- To promote equality and diversity best practice in all areas of work;
- To protect the reputation of the Council

Knowledge & Experience

Candidates must have substantial knowledge and experience in the following areas of business and will be required to provide evidence of this:

- A knowledge and understanding of Childrens Law with a desire to practice in all areas stated above.
- An aptitude, experience or desire to undertake advocacy particularly in child care work
- A knowledge and understanding of drafting and amending legal applications, statements and forms as required and to amend and quality assure social work documents as required
- Ability to communicate clear and concise legal advice verbally and in writing.
- Strong intellectual and diagnostic problem-solving abilities, including the ability to weigh arguments and substantiate judgments
- Ability to function independently, take responsibility for your own work and make decisions without supervision
- Ability to handle a pressurised workload working to tight deadlines
- Strong verbal and written communication skills.
- Ability to adapt and understand the working environment of Children and Adult Services departments and to work creatively to meet the corporate objectives of those departments and clients.
- A commercial acumen, understand the commercial and community impact of the nature of work undertaken
- Unless newly qualified advocacy experience and a thorough understanding of child care law

You would benefit from:

- An understanding of the framework of local government and financial and legal constants
- Experience of working in Local Authority, legal or court environment
- Attendance at hearings and experience of advocacy.
- An understanding of the delegation of work within a legal environment

Qualifications

- This role is appropriate to a fully qualified Solicitor, Barrister or with a Fellow of Institute of Legal Executive's (FILEX)
- Admission on to the relevant authorising body and current practicing certificate

Decision Making

- To give advice on any matters including legal and policy related issues and to appear at the Courts or other Tribunals.
- To make important decisions as to the conduct of the matters dealt with by the post holder including whether to commence or end proceedings, threshold and the social worker plans.
- To make day to day decisions on case management and instruct the client department on actions required by them
- To make decisions subject to experience and supervision on complex and high profile transactions of significant financial value with far reaching implications to the council's short and long term budgets.

Creativity and Innovation

- To be able to use own initiative to create, amend documentation and or process to fit the needs to the department which subject to experience, and with limited supervision, may involve creative drafting of bespoke documentation to meet the variety of needs of the client.
- The provision of legal advice on routine, and sometimes complex legal issues, sometimes requiring extensive legal research and making a judgement on applicability or otherwise of legal principles on matters being dealt with.

<u>Job Scope</u>	Budget Holder	
Number and types of jobs managed <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 0•	Responsibility	No
Typical tasks supervised/allocated to others <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To supervise and mentor less experienced members of the Legal Team, as and when required.••	Asset Responsibility:	No

Contacts and Relationships

(how the role relates to the work of others i.e. officers, groups, committees, general public, members, partner organisations, internal and external contacts of the council)

- Internal Client departments, including officers at all levels, including Director level
- Elected Members
- External parties, as and when required in the course of your duties.

Values and Behaviours

We strive to underpin our culture of being 'At our Best' through strong management and authentic leadership. This means getting the management basics right. We own and demonstrate accountability, both individually and collectively, and aim to get things right first time. Building on this we also expect everyone at SBC to demonstrate and live our organisational values and behaviours, by displaying:

- Accountability at all levels
- Customer care and pride in what we do
- Continuous learning and evaluation
- Valuing one another and the contribution each of us makes

Other Key Features of the role

(working environment / emotional / conditions i.e. regular outside work, unpleasant or hazardous conditions, practical demands such as standing, carrying or working in constrained positions, potential verbal abuse and aggression from people, or risk of injury).

Employee Signature:	Print Name:
Date:	
Line Managers Signature:	Print Name::
Date:	

Please note that this role profile may be subject to alteration.