

JOB DESCRIPTION	
Job Title:	Principal Lawyer (Childcare)
Office:	LGSS Law Limited
Directorate:	Children’s Social Care and Safeguarding
Reports to:	Head of Child Social Care Lawyer & Safeguarding
Grade:	MB4
Location:	Huntingdon (but with to travel to other offices as required)
Hours:	Full Time (37 hours)
OVERALL PURPOSE OF THE JOB	
<p>To lead and manage a team of Lawyers providing innovative and pragmatic legal advice to a range of public sector bodies regarding their children’s social care functions.</p> <p>To manage a legal caseload including highly complex and politically sensitive issues predominately, in the areas of Children’s social care including care proceedings, adoption and other litigation and advice in connection with children and young people’s social services.</p>	
MAIN ACCOUNTABILITIES	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To provide legal advice and services to client organisations in in the areas of Children’s social care including care proceedings, adoption and other litigation to ensure compliance with statutory duties and obligations and to protect the best interests of the client organisations. 2. To provide high quality, innovative, well researched and comprehensive specialist legal advice to clients including elected members and senior officers, managing a complex caseload and delivering advice within the timescales required by the client. 3. To lead, direct, develop and improve the service to client organisations, predominately in the area of children’s social care to ensure the provision an excellent standard of client care and value for money. 4. To manage the activities of the team to include performance, caseloads and productivity, motivation and development, recruitment and selection and appraisals. 5. To supervise other members of the team in a line management capacity. To provide overall management of the teams complex and politically sensitive case load to ensure the provision of high quality, well researched and comprehensive legal advice within the timescales required by the client. 6. To provide supervision and manage the work of the team to ensure that professional guidance is given, that expertise is employed and work is allocated appropriately within the team. 7. To act as a legal advisor to client organisations to ensure compliance with statutory duties and obligations and to protect the best interests of the client organisations. 8. To act as a legal advisor to client organisations to ensure awareness of their safeguarding responsibilities and ensure compliance with statutory duties and obligations and to protect the best interest of the client organisations. 9. To build highly effective working relationships with clients to ensure that LGSS Law delivers a seamless and client focussed service to all its clients. 10. To liaise with heads of service to ensure that the legal service provided to them meets their needs and is focused on delivering high quality legal services, customer care and service improvements. 	

11. To develop effective partnerships, networks and joint working arrangements to ensure the most effective provision of Legal Services to meet the needs and aspirations of clients.
12. Where required, to provide training to clients in specialist areas of law.
13. To ensure the effective identification and management of risks associated with the relevant areas of legal practice.
14. To deputise for the Head of Community Services and Education where required.
15. Act as a source of legal advice and support to any of the client Committees and Directorates as directed to cover the absence of colleagues.
16. To support the LGSS Law management team in building and maintaining effective working relationships with clients to ensure the delivery of a seamless and client focussed service.
17. To support the LGSS Law management team by complying with all LGSS Law's practice management requirements including time recording, billing, Lexcel and other accreditation schemes.
18. To support the Executive Director and other colleagues in contributing to the overall management of the team including staff performance, financial and practice manager. This includes ensuring the effective use of the ICT systems and working in accordance with the standards set out in the team's Lexcel manual.
19. To attend courts and tribunals undertaking advocacy where required and to also to instruct and manager suppliers of external legal services such as solicitors and barristers.
20. To represent clients in negotiations and discussions with third parties in matters regarding the areas of legal practice relevant to the post.
21. To support the LGSS Law management team in developing and maintaining effective partnerships, networks and joint working arrangements to ensure the most effective provision of Legal Services to meet the needs and aspirations of clients.
22. To contribute to the development, training or mentoring of colleagues.
23. Develop and provide legal input into training courses for a range of professional clients including social care and mental health workers to reduce the directorates' need for legal services and to increase their self-sufficiency.
24. To ensure that reasonable care is taken for the health and safety of the team, including compliance with health and safety policy and procedure and to maintain good employment relations within your team.
25. Carry out other duties which fall within the broad spirit, scope and purpose of the job description and which are commensurate with the grade of the post.

This job description reflects the key duties to be carried out by the post holder and identifies a level of responsibility at which they will be required to work. In the interests of effective working, the key duties may be reviewed from time to time to reflect changing needs and circumstances. Such reviews and any consequential changes will be carried out in consultation with the post holder.

PERSON SPECIFICATION			
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SERVICE:	Children’s Social Care and Safeguarding	OFFICE:	LGSS Law Ltd
GRADE:	MB4	LOCATION:	Huntingdon (but with travel to other offices as required)

The following criteria are appropriate for this post. You must meet the essential criteria in order to be shortlisted for the post and it would be advantageous if you meet the desirable criteria.

QUALIFICATIONS	
<u>Essential</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solicitor or Barrister with current practising certificate 	<u>Desirable</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leadership/Management Qualification Member of the Law Society Children Panel
KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE	
<u>Essential</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extensive experience of conducting proceedings under the Children Act 1989, the Adoption and Children Act 2002 and the inherent jurisdiction of the High Court. A demonstrated understanding of the local government children’s social care legal framework, including policy and practice issues. Thorough knowledge and understanding of the legal framework and operation of local government. Evidenced experience of conducting judicial review proceedings. Evidenced experience of advocacy in the Family Court. Thorough knowledge of relevant courts and tribunals procedure. 	<u>Desirable</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 2 years post qualification experience preferably gained a Local Authority setting. Experience of working within local government. Experience of planning and delivering legal briefings/training courses.

- Thorough understanding of major legislation and policy issues affecting local government in the context of the submit areas within the remit of this post.
- Demonstrated success at managing a team’s workload including attracting and developing new clients/areas/pieces of work.
- Experience of leading, managing or supervising people successfully.
- Experience of leading and managing a team of experienced professionals.
- An evidenced commitment to Lexcel.
- A demonstrated commitment to customer care.
- Understanding of what providing legal services for a democratically elected local authority entails.
- Ability to conduct legal research, interpret legislation and summarise the key points of case law.

SKILLS

Essential

- Ability to work under own initiative, and to look ahead, anticipate challenges and deal with them pro-actively.
- Ability to communicate effectively both verbally and in writing with a diverse range of persons/organisations.
- Ability to work unsupervised and to provide sound and clear advice on own initiatives.
- Ability to work under pressure and meet tight deadlines.
- Ability to plan and prioritise work effectively to meet own objectives and those of the team.
- Ability to adapt to change.
- Team player with an approachable, adaptable and positive attitude towards work.
- Able to lead and motivate others
- Time management skills – must be able to prioritise effectively and deal with conflicting demands.
- Confidence to use own initiative and take difficult decisions when necessary.
- Customer care skills and a commitment to customer focus and continuing service development.

Desirable

- An approach to problem solving that demonstrates an awareness of professional clients’ corporate priorities.
- A commitment to Lexcel / Quality Management Standards.
- Political astuteness.
- Budget management skills.

- Ability to evaluate information in complex situations and the confidence to take sound decisions independently.
- Ability to travel to courts within the region, to meetings at client offices and to work in the Cambridge/Shefford/Northampton office when necessary.
- Drive, enthusiasm, versatility and self-motivation.
- Ability to demonstrate awareness/understanding of equal opportunities and other people's behaviour, physical, social and welfare needs.
- IT Skills:
 - o Microsoft Office
 - o Internet Search and Retrieval
 - o Bespoke Software Including Performance and Case Management

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES & HEALTH & SAFETY

Essential

- Ability to demonstrate awareness and understanding of equal opportunities and other people's behaviour, physical, social and welfare needs.
- Ability to demonstrate a clear understanding of, and commitment to, health & safety.