

Job description

Principal Contracts Lawyer

- Grade: PO8
- Reports to: Head of Legal – Planning, Property and Contracts
- Direct reports: Up to 6 Reports
- Your team: Planning, Property and Contracts Team
- Service area: Resources
- Directorate: Law and Governance

Special requirements of the post

Workstyle: Desk-based worker (Lower presence, one day a week minimum)

- Colleagues who are not usually client or customer-facing and can mostly work anywhere with the right technology. Regular on-site activities are required such as team events and collaboration that are more productive face to face

This is a safety critical post and will be subject to the council's drug and alcohol policy

This post is subject to the council's declaration of interest procedure

This post is designated as politically restricted

Our mission

Islington is a place rich with diversity and culture. As a council our sense of purpose couldn't be clearer: we serve. It's in the logo. We are committed to challenging inequality in the borough and as one of the largest employers we know that to look after the place and the planet, we have to look after our people. **Together we can change the future.**

To do this, everyone who works at Islington Council lives by a set of values which guide us in everything that we do: collaborative, ambitious, resourceful, and empowering. They spell out 'CARE', which is what we think public service is all about.

Overview of the role

A Principal Contracts Lawyer provides expert legal advice on complex contract and procurement matters, primarily within Islington Council. You will lead on drafting, negotiating, and reviewing high-value contracts, including service agreements, shared services, and commercial arrangements. The role involves advising senior officers and elected members, ensuring compliance with procurement laws and supporting strategic projects. You may also oversee external legal advisors, contribute to policy development and mentor staff. This position requires deep knowledge of contract law, strong analytical skills, and the ability to manage sensitive legal issues while protecting the organisation's interests and ensuring legal and procedural compliance

Key responsibilities

- To be the lead lawyer in all aspects of Contracts and Commercial Law, including providing legal advice on matters such as the Council's Procurement Rules, procurement legislation, partnerships, externalisation vehicles and best value commercial transactions, and being the senior trusted voice on those issues deputising for the Head of Legal – Planning, Property and Contracts Team as and when required, and representing at external networks.
- To provide specialist and proactive legal advice on all aspects of Contract negotiation, including contracts for works, services and supplies, investigating and advising on contract claims by or against the Council including those arising out of building contracts, ensuring the legality of the Council's decisions and risk mitigation.
- Manage a substantial complex caseload, and oversee the team's caseload, including providing legal advice and drafting comprehensive documents and offering specialised expertise in your field.
- To lead and manage a team of lawyers in your area of law, allocating work, making arrangements for supervision and monitoring performance, providing advice, guidance and assistance as required.
- Draft reports, negotiate contracts, comment on, and prepare legal implications for reports to the Council, its relevant committees and subcommittees, the Executive, and other member and officer-level meetings, and attend these meetings as a representative of Legal Services as needed.
- To ensure that relevant decisions of the Council and its committees and the Executive are implemented, in the context of any legal constraints, in an efficient and timely manner.
- Manage and oversee corporate complaints and responses to enquiries from Members, ensuring timely and effective resolution.
- To maintain an up-to-date comprehensive knowledge of developments in all relevant areas of law, supporting policy development, and disseminate that information and any

implications for the Council to relevant stakeholder and members of the Team, including preparing and presenting briefing papers and reports and delivering training.

- To act as an advocate and support coordinating advocacy within your team on behalf of the Council, where appropriate in relevant Courts, tribunals and inquiries and instruct Counsel to represent the Council where necessary.
- To ensure that the service is highly responsive to client requirements and that work undertaken meets chargeable hours and is reflective of best practice, quality standards and performance targets set by the Legal Services Management Team and Service Level Agreements.
- To take a lead in developing effective procedures and reporting mechanisms on the performance of the Contracts Team. This includes utilising the case management system for reporting purposes. Provide regular updates on caseload status to clients, internal partners, colleagues, and management.
- To work in a co-operative way, fostering collaboration within Legal Services and with other Council Officers and Members, and to provide cover as necessary for other areas within Legal Services as a whole to contribute to shared goals.
- To carry out duties in the most efficient and effective manner and to promote the development of new digital initiatives within the Team and ensure that duties are undertaken with due regard to compliance other relevant legislation.
- To assist in monitoring and reducing spend on Counsel.

Compliance

Ensure adherence to legal, regulatory, and policy requirements under GDPR, Health and Safety, Employee Code of Conduct and in your area of expertise by identifying opportunities and risks, and escalating issues as necessary.

Person specification

Your application form needs to demonstrate how you fulfil the role's requirements. It is essential to address the criteria, as this will be used to evaluate your suitability for the position.

Essential and desirable criteria

Essential: the basic requirements that must be met for someone to be considered for a particular job. These criteria are mandatory and cannot be negotiated. Essential criteria directly impact the core qualifications or skills necessary to perform the job effectively.

Desirable: the additional qualities, skills, or qualifications that would be advantageous for a candidate to possess but are not mandatory. Not meeting them does not automatically

disqualify someone from consideration for the job. This also allows candidates who do not possess certain desirable criteria the opportunity to explain how their other knowledge, experience and skills relate to these and what they may be in the process of doing or willing to do to achieve these.

Knowledge, experience, and skills

Point	Criteria description	Essential/desirable
1	Qualified to practice as solicitor or barrister in England (or comparable jurisdiction) or FILEX qualification.	Essential
2	Substantial post qualification experience of drafting a wide range of contracts and giving legal advice	Essential
3	A thorough knowledge of the law and practice relating to contract and procurement law (including recent and proposed changes)	Essential
4	Ability to deal with local government and administrative law	Desirable
5	Ability to provide pre-litigation advice on contractual disputes	Essential
6	Ability to draft and negotiate and agree complex contractual documentation.	Essential
7	Ability to review and advise on new legislation, case law and other developments	Essential
8	Ability to communicate and present legal and other matters clearly and cogently both verbally and in writing	Essential
9	Ability to lead a Team of lawyers and maintain a high level of performance and proactively deal with performance issues.	Essential
10	Ability to comply with good practice management standards as laid down by the Law Society or other relevant body	Essential
11	Ability to assist the Head of Legal – Planning, Property & Contracts with the development of and implement procedures, practices and systems for the provision of effective legal property services	Essential

Point	Criteria description	Essential/desirable
12	This post is designated as politically restricted	Essential
13	This post requires evening attendance at committee meetings.	Essential

Our accreditations



Our accreditations include Disability Confident Leader, The Mayor's Good Work Standard, London Living Wage Employer, Stonewall Diversity Champion, and Employer with Heart.