

Job description

Education Lawyer

- Grade: P04/6
- Reports to: Principal Education and Employment Lawyer
- Direct reports: Up to 1-2 Reports (Legal officer and or Solicitor Apprentice)
- Your team: Corporate Litigation and Compliance 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

The Education Lawyer specialises in legal matters related to the Local Authority's role and responsibilities in the education sector, and advising schools in accordance with the legal schools SLA. The work covers areas such as special educational needs (SEN), school admissions and exclusions, discrimination, safeguarding, school organisation (closing, opening and prescribed alterations) and governance. You will represent clients in tribunals, appeals, or judicial reviews, ensuring compliance with education law. Education lawyers also support schools and local authorities with regulatory advice, policy development, and dispute resolution. You will possess strong advocacy skills, legal research, and communication skills, along with a deep understanding of education legislation and the unique challenges within the education system.

Key responsibilities

At PO4 grade:

- Manage a substantial personal caseload, including providing legal advice and drafting comprehensive documents and offering specialised expertise in your field. This includes a wide range of education law issues, including school organisation, admissions, exclusions, and special educational needs.
- Stay current with developments in relevant areas of law and inform the Principal Lawyer about any implications for the team's work.
- Advise on the Council's powers and decision-making processes, ensuring the legality of its decisions and risk mitigation.
- Act as an advocate for the Council in relevant courts, education tribunals, and inquiries, and instruct Counsel to represent the Council when necessary.
- Contribute to the efficient operation of the team and Legal Services as a cohesive unit, fostering collaboration and supporting colleagues to achieve shared goals.
- Responsive to client needs and ensures that work reflects best practices and meets performance targets outlined in Service Level Agreements.
- Input data and utilise the case management system for reporting purposes. Provide regular updates on caseload status to clients, internal partners, colleagues, and management.
- Achieve the chargeable hours target for the position and meet the performance and quality standards set by the Legal Service Management Team.

At PO5 grade: all of the duties at PO4 and in addition to:

- Draft reports, comment on, and prepare legal implications for reports to the Council, its committees and subcommittees, the Executive, and other member and officer-level meetings, and attend these meetings as a representative of Legal Services as needed.
- Handle corporate complaints and respond to enquiries from Members, ensuring timely and effective resolution.

- Contribute to developing policy and good practice within the postholder's area of responsibility.
- To assist with client liaison including being proactive in forward planning for service requirements and facilitate with training needs.
- To manage a substantial and complex caseload and offer proactive advice in Education Law.

At PO6 grade – all the duties at PO4/PO5 plus the below:

- Assist the Principal Lawyer in managing the Corporate Litigation and Compliance Team acting as a deputy as and when required.
- Assist with the management of junior members of the Corporate Litigation and Compliance Team.
- In dealing with the most high-risk or sensitive cases, you will make sound judgments on case progression based on all the evidence and identify areas of risk to client officers and the Legal Senior Management Team and to personally ensure that high risk cases are entered into the Legal Services Risk Register.
- To draft complex instructions to counsel on the most high-risk or sensitive cases.
- You will apply strategic thinking for the Legal Services team which adopts best practice, making recommendations on any changes in policy or practice as and when appropriate. Proactive in your approach, you will seek out solutions rather than provide advice or support compliance as a default, acting as a role model for colleagues to adopt a similar way of working.

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	Admitted solicitor or qualified barrister in England (or comparable jurisdiction) or fellow of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives.	Essential
2	Significant post-qualification experience in the legal profession. (At grades P05-6)	Desirable
3	Thorough knowledge of and ability to apply the law and practice relating to Education Law.	Essential
4	Thorough knowledge of County Court, High Court and Education practice and procedure.	Essential
5	Ability to obtain evidence, evaluate evidence, prepare cases and appear as an advocate where appropriate, on behalf of the Council in Courts, Tribunals and Inquiries, particularly the Special Education Needs and Disability Tribunal.	Essential
6	Ability to comply with good practice management standards as laid down by the Law Society or other relevant body.	Essential
7	Ability to deal with legal matters and complex general Education cases.	Desirable
8	Ability to manage workload to a high standard and comply with KPIs, time recording targets or any other performance management indicators targets set by Legal Services Management Team, using appropriate casework management and technology to support.	Essential
9	Ability to review and advise on new legislation, case law and other developments.	Essential
10	Ability to assist the Principal Lawyer with the development and implementation of procedures, practices and systems for the provision of an effective Education service, ensuring compliance with Law Society or other relevant standards.	Essential

Point	Criteria description	Essential/desirable
11	Ability to work independently and as part of a team, developing and maintain good working relations with clients and colleagues.	Essential
12	Ability to communicate clearly and concisely in writing and orally and present arguments in a confident, articulate and persuasive manner at a senior level.	Essential
13	Ability to assist with the training supervision and development of staff.	Desirable
14	This post is designated as politically restricted	Essential
15	This post requires evening attendance at committee meetings –(If required)	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.