Role profile

**Senior Tribunal Officer**

**Our values:**

**We are dedicated, respectful, collaborative. We are Milton Keynes City Council.**

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| **Service** | SEND |
| **Reports to** | Assessment/EHCP Strategic Lead |
| **Job family** | Professional & Technical |
| **Grade** | I |
| **Political restricted?** | N |
| **DBS required?** | Y – Enhanced plus barred list Child and Adult |
| **Date** | July 2025 |
| **JE Code** | JE2727 |

Key deliverables

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| **1** | Manage and respond to appeals lodged against Education, Health and Care Plan decisions, making recommendations in-line with compliance and meeting statutory deadlines by preparing detailed written responses, case statements, and legal submissions in collaboration with the relevant members of the SEND Team working in partnership. |
| **2** | Continue to build upon a strong professional network of colleagues and partners within education, health and care ensuring colleagues and partners are well informed throughout an appeal and have a firm understanding of their role including their accountability. |
| **3** | Represent the Local Authority at SENDis Tribunal hearings by taking the lead, providing expert knowledge and advice, being point of contact and presenting evidence. Where required working with our in house legal representatives and external legal services in exceptional cases. |
| **4** | Frequently making decisions, while understanding risks in order to represent the local authority as a decision maker at mediation meetings with families. This will also include sharing best course of action, specifically with regards to complex cases with the Senior Leadership Team. |
| **5** | Provide expert advice on SEND legislation, including the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice. |
| **6** | Liaise with families, schools and professionals on cases that involve confidential, sensitive and complex information to seek resolution before Tribunal where possible. |
| **7** | Responsibility for gathering, handling and managing complex and confidential information in relation to appeal cases, in preparation of mediation and tribunals. |
| **8** | Liaise with our Legal Team and work to resolve Judicial Review claims ahead of action. |
| **9** | Line management and supervision of the tribunals team. |
| **10** | Enhanced plus barred DBS – Working within regulated activity providing advice/guidance on physical, emotional or educational wellbeing. |

*Within reason these key deliverables may evolve to meet service need and it is expected that you will be flexible and adaptable in your delivery to meet both service and city council wide needs*

**Essential requirements** Key skills, expertise, and qualifications

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| **1** | Level 5 qualification or above in the relevant area, as well as demonstrable knowledge and experience of working within the education environment and SEND law. With a clear understanding of current Special Educational Needs principles, procedures and current legislation related to SEN and Disability Discrimination Act. |
| **2** | Understanding of the statutory assessment and review process for an EHCP with a clear understanding of current Special Educational Needs principles and procedures and current legislation related to SEN and Disability Discrimination Act. |
| **3** | Strong written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to produce clear, evidence-based case statements. |
| **4** | Experience of working within SEND, education, legal services or a similar field. |
| **5** | Excellent negotiation and problem-solving skills to resolve disputes effectively, with experience in working with families and professionals who may be at dispute with the Local Authority whilst being considerate of the need for a sensitive and constructive manner. |
| **6** | Knowledge of complex information and data required from different sources, for appeal bundles and tribunal cases. |

Job family

**Professional and Technical (Grade I)**

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| **Colleague expectations**   * Be professional at all times * Work together for the good of the team, city council and local people * Promote a supportive culture * Challenge assumptions * Take ownership * Be willing to change and do things differently * Always work in a safe manner | **Manager expectations**   * Be a role model by displaying positive behaviours at all times * Make well-considered decisions * Support, coach and communicate with my team * Be accountable for my team’s performance |

Professional/Technical job holders rely upon their deep knowledge of the specialism or discipline in which they work to carry out vital tasks and provide authoritative advice to others. Often developing within recognised career paths, their evolving expertise sees them bear increasing responsibility for managing Council assets, the development of policies and procedures and the strategic direction of the functions they support.

**Role characteristics**

At this level job holders use their extensive experience and postgraduate level professional knowledge to take a lead in complex interactions with others, delivering change by evidence-based argument and persuasion. They exert professional influence on the organisational structures and procedures within their working area to enhance productivity, efficiency and customer satisfaction.

**The knowledge and skills required**

The advanced theoretical knowledge required to make appropriate judgements and decisions at this level is augmented by ongoing professional development and awareness of external legislative and societal change. Also, by a deeper understanding of the Council operational structures which both support and depend upon the job holder’s actions and advice. Roles will be professional experts, providing guidance to those in earlier career stages.

While the majority of roles will have demands for manual dexterity in relation to typing and similar functions, other jobs will use a range of equipment requiring precision in their use and handling.

**Thinking, planning and communication**

Job holders will use their professional expertise to deal with complex, pressing issues on a day-to-day basis, but will also look well ahead and take a more strategic view of their project and service delivery objectives, shaping their teams’ composition, approach and operating procedures in accordance with wider service goals mandated by Service management.

The information exchanged at this level will be routinely complex and even contentious in nature. Job holders will, however, have additional demands placed upon them by the need to persuade others to adopt courses of action which they may not otherwise wish to take, based on evidence-based and reasoned argument. This will occur in written interactions but can also be the case in face-to-face verbal exchanges where job holders will advocate a position in response to opposing opinion in a formal or informal setting.

**Decision making and innovation**

Job holders will have the freedom to interpret policy and broad operating guidelines in order to shape their teams’ detailed approach to meeting their corporate objectives and targets. They will deal with escalated, multi-faceted problems independently and will tend to only consult their manager on fundamental policy or resource issues.

**Areas of responsibility**

With a diverse range of jobs being represented at this level, the precise blend of responsibilities for which the job holder is accountable will depend upon the service in which they operate.

External facing roles will focus on the needs of people, whether external service users or partners and will be responsible for high impact decision making and the implementation of appropriate programmes on behalf of individuals or groups of people or enforcement of regulations which have direct and significant consequences upon those served. Such roles are likely to have at least one other elevated level of responsibility for such elements as finance, information assets, equipment or premises.

Internal facing roles are likely to have this pattern reversed, with the weightiest responsibility for highly valuable or significant financial and non-financial assets, but somewhat less accountability for the assessment of needs of individuals and groups.

Jobs will generally have formal line management responsibility and will not only allocate and check work, but also be directly involved in assessment, recruitment, and other human resource related procedures. Posts that do not have this level of managerial responsibility are likely to have compensatory levels of accountability in relation to the users of Council services, finance or other major asset(s).

**Impacts and demands**

Tasks and duties will be generally carried out in a sedentary position but there will always be a requirement for standing and walking from time to time, and the occasional need to lift or carry items.

The combination of both tactical and strategic matters that job holders deal with means that roles are inherently complex, demanding of lengthy periods of concentrated mental attention while also managing high levels of work-related pressure from deadlines, interruptions or conflicting demands.

Duties of jobs at this level will not require job holders to develop and maintain working relationships with people who, through their circumstances or behaviour, place particular emotional demands on the job holder.

Job holders find themselves exposed to some disagreeable, unpleasant or hazardous working conditions. Particularly when the needs of their specialism require them to work on external sites exposed to the weather, in or around refuse and waste plant, close to particularly noisy machinery and in similar environments.

Other jobs, such as enforcement roles, may also see job holders exposed to verbal abuse and threatening environments. In all cases, job holders will minimise risk and conform to health and safety regulations to mitigate any negative effects of such exposure.