Role profile

**In-House Advocate Lawyer**

**Our values:**

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

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| **Service** | Legal & Democratic |
| **Reports to** | Head of Legal |
| **Job family** | Professional and Technical |
| **Grade** | L |
| **Political restricted?** | Y |
| **DBS required?** | N |
| **Date** | November 2021 |
| **JE Code** | JE2339 |

Key deliverables

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| **1** | To provide representation in all types of proceedings, including complex matters on behalf of the client department. |
| **2** | To carry out advocacy in the Family Court in respect of (but not limited to) the following types of hearing: Case Management; Contested; Fact Finding – including non-accidental injury cases; Issues Resolution; Final – including those lasting 5 days or longer; Applications for an Emergency Protection Order; Applications for a Placement Order; Applications under Section 25 Children Act 1989 (Secure Accommodation); Deprivation of Liberty. |
| **3** | To robustly advocate in Court on behalf of the client department to achieve the best outcome in the case. |
| **4** | To identify evidential strengths and weaknesses in a case and advise the client department accordingly. |
| **5** | To advise the client department in respect of emergency or urgent applications and to provide representation at Court in respect of those cases, including out of hours cover where necessary. |
| **6** | To represent the client department at Advocates Meetings. |
| **7** | To draft third-party witness statements when required. |
| **8** | To prepare and deliver training to the client department on their area of expertise. |
| **9** | To advise on policy issues. |
| **10** | To provide advice to the client department as requested. |

*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** | Admitted Solicitor, Solicitor/Advocate, Barrister, Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives or equivalent qualification. |
| **2** | Good working knowledge of key childcare legislation, in particular The Children Act 1989, The Adoption Act 1976, The Adoption and Children Act 2002, The Children & Families Act 2014 and related delegated legislation. |
| **3** | Experience as a childcare specialist in local government or private practice, in the areas of key public childcare legislation, in particular The Children Act 1989, The Adoption and Children Act 2002, The Children & Families Act 2014 and related delegated legislation, statutory and non-statutory guidance and case law. |
| **4** | Proven advocacy skills in all tiers of the Family Court. |
| **5** | The ability to communicate, liaise and negotiate with other professionals, officers and Members. |
| **6** | The ability to carry a caseload without supervision. |
| **7** | The ability to work effectively under pressure. |
| **8** | The ability to design and deliver training to colleagues and client departments. |
| **9** | Some knowledge of local government legislation and an ability to adapt to changes affecting the Authority. |
| **10** | When giving legal advice; it is informed by appropriate legal and factual analysis and identifies the consequences of the different options. |

Job family

**Professional and Technical (Grade L)**

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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 and 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 city council assets, the development of policies and procedures and the strategic direction of the functions they support.

This element of the profile, taken from the job family descriptor for this grade, provides a general understanding of the level of work and demands required.

**Role characteristics**

At this level job holders report to a Director and are responsible for the development and implementation of strategy relating to several functions within that service. Posts carry significant responsibilities for finance and a range of other non-financial assets and job holders will make autonomous decisions and lead the management of change throughout their area of influence within the service.

**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 thorough understanding of external legislative and societal change. Also by a deeper understanding of the city council operational structures which both support and depend upon the job holder’s actions and advice. Roles will be professional experts, providing expert professional leadership across a number of functions.

**Thinking, planning and communication**

Job holders will use their professional expertise to deal with highly complex, pressing issues including service level change initiatives and risk management. They will also look well ahead and take a long-term, strategic view of their project and service delivery objectives over several years into the future, shaping their service’s composition, approach and operating procedures in accordance with wider goals mandated by the service directorate.

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

**Decision making and innovation**

The limitations to job holders’ decision making will be only the broad policy and practice guidelines that exist at both a corporate and even national/professional level.

At this level of autonomy, job holders will be the final arbiter of many escalated technical and professional disputes and problems. They will report to a Director and will devise and implement strategic plans and policy in relation to several functional areas.

**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.

Roles will focus on the needs of whole classes of people - whether external service users or partners and will be responsible for critical day to day decisions with legal and reputational dimensions and the development of directorate level policy and functional procedures.

In addition, such roles are likely to have very high levels of responsibility for such elements as finance (very substantial budget management), information assets (council-wide systems) or premises (of extremely high value and critical operational importance).

Roles will have full line management responsibility over several functional areas with differing specialties and employee profiles.

**Impacts and demands**

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

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.