

Role profile

Job Title:	Contracts Lawyer	Grade:	13 - 15
Department:	Legal Services	Post no.:	63122
Directorate:	Resources	Location:	Perceval House

Role reports to:	Principal Lawyer
Direct reports:	None
Indirect reports:	Student, Paralegal, Solicitor Apprentice, external legal providers delivering legal services to the council, legal services staff

Job description

Recruitment practices to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and/or vulnerable adults apply to this post in addition to the requirement to obtain a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Purpose of role

To advise on and deal with all legal matters relating to public procurement law, contract law, Council governance requirements and other legal matters affecting the Council. You will work independently and manage a high case load, ensuring that decisions are made in accordance with the Council's Constitution and the Contract Procedure Rules. You will also have a key role in ensuring the Council achieves best value in its commissioning activities.

You will be responsible for advising senior leaders, including at the Joint Contracts Board, and advising on corporate policies relating to procurement.

Core responsibilities

- Provide highly technical, specialist advice on the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, and the Procurement Act 2023.
- Advise on issues relating to the Data Protection Act 2018, the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

- Advise on governance requirements including the Contract Procedure Rules and exceptions from the rules.
- Ensure decisions are taken in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
- Ensure the Council achieves legally safe and highly commercial outcomes in its procurements.
- Advise clients on the risks of legal challenge under procurement legislation and/or by way of judicial review and advise them how to mitigate risk.
- Train and supervise Solicitor Apprentices and Trainees. Create a supportive learning environment and ensure they can complete their qualification.
- Direct the work of the Paralegals, providing training and support.
- Draft a wide range of works, services, goods and concession contracts and procurement documents.
- Advise on the procurement strategy for a range of procurements including high profile, negotiated procurements.
- Advise on corporate policies relating to procurement.
- Attend negotiations with contractors where there is a dispute or to finalise terms; ensure highly commercial outcomes for the Council.
- Attend committees, working parties and other meetings with councillors and cabinet members.
- Instruct counsel as necessary, arrange case conferences and attend to counsel at hearings as required.
- Manage a high case load, ensuring deadlines are met.
- Represent the Council in meetings with other authorities, government departments and other bodies.
- Review cabinet and other reports, draft the recommendations and write the legal implications.
- Keep up to date with changes in the law and legal practice, and bring this to the attention of relevant client departments.
- Identify training needs of clients and provide appropriate training.
- Assist in the recruitment of junior staff in the Contracts team.

- Assist the Legal Services management team in the development and promotion of high standards.
- Deal personally with complex or politically sensitive matters.
- Advise the Director of Legal & Democratic Services if there are legal risks resulting from client decision making; escalate concerns appropriately.
- Manage own professional development.
- Be responsible for the promotion and implementation of all the Council's policies and procedures including equalities and diversity, health and safety, security and the use of personal data.
- Undertake other duties and responsibilities of a similar nature as may be required from time to time.

Additional responsibilities – Grade 14

Conduct straightforward legal work without supervision

Conduct complex legal work with minimal supervision

Supervise solicitor apprentices, newly qualified lawyers, legal assistants and paralegals in their work

Recruit members of the team

Train solicitor apprentices; create a supportive learning environment and ensure they can complete their qualification

Have high levels of relevant expertise and knowledge to work independently

Draft and advise on complex decision reports

Additional responsibilities – Grade 15

Lead and direct complex matters and projects

Advise on unusual/non- standard problems/issues and offer alternative options

Advise on complex governance issues

Attend Joint Contracts Board and advise on strategically important corporate procurement issues

Advise on politically sensitive issues

Lead and manage projects aimed at improving standards within Legal Services and corporately.

Key performance indicators

- Time recording targets
- Assessment against objectives in annual appraisal
- Customer satisfaction measured through client satisfaction questionnaires
- Ad hoc file reviews to measure quality and timeliness of legal work
- Contribution to and delivery of efficiencies
- Contribution to Council Plan outcomes.

Key relationships (internal and external)

- Director of Legal & Democratic Services
- Heads of Legal
- Principal Lawyers
- Senior Lawyers
- Legal and Services staff
- Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
- Executive Directors and their management teams
- Managers and internal clients
- All relevant partner organisations for whom and with whom the Council does business including other local authorities
- Elected Members
- External firms of solicitors and barristers
- Council-owned companies directors and professional advisers
- Government departments & agencies, national & regional bodies and network groups.

Authority level

- Shared responsibility for the delivery of effective procurements
- Recommendations and legal implications for officer decisions, individual cabinet member decisions and cabinet decisions.
- Responsibility for the progression of Solicitor Apprentices to ensure they meet learning objectives.

Person specification

Community and partnership working are essential for all roles as are a commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and ensuring Health and Safety at Work for everyone working at Ealing Council.

Recruitment practices to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and/or vulnerable adults apply to this post in addition to the requirement to obtain a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Essential knowledge, skills and abilities

1. Knowledge and understanding of the law and procedure relating to the functions of a local authority, all aspects of contracts and procurement law, and data protection legislation.
2. Ability to negotiate and draft complex legal agreements.
3. A clear and systematic approach to problem solving, including the ability to research new law and policy effectively and to apply that research to meet the client's needs.
4. Ability to identify key issues and the best way forward for the council, in complex legal scenarios.
5. Ability to communicate complex or key legal issues and advice clearly and effectively, both in writing and orally.
6. Ability to foster and build partnerships and relationships, work collaboratively within and across departmental boundaries, and achieve corporate and departmental objectives through and in partnership with others.
7. ICT literate with the ability to use all Microsoft Office applications including Excel, Outlook and Word, as well as legal ICT applications such as case management systems.
8. Ability to work autonomously with clients and to provide them with practical, professional and straightforward advice, delivering solutions to complex problems.
9. Able to prioritise a significant caseload, meet deadlines, make decisions and provide clients with clients with timely and cost effective legal support.
10. Ability to allocate work, supervise and mentor junior staff, including Solicitor Apprentices, Trainees and Paralegals.

Essential qualification(s) and experience

1. The postholder must be an admitted solicitor, barrister or legal executive with a minimum of 5 years PQE.
2. Proven experience of working in a local authority setting is essential.

Values and behaviours

Improved life for residents	Trustworthy	Collaborative	Innovative	Accountable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is passionate about making Ealing a better place • Can see and appreciate things from a resident point of view • Understands what people want and need • Encourages change to tackle underlying causes or issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does what they say they will do on time • Is open and honest • Treats all people fairly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambitious and confident in leading partnerships • Offers to share knowledge and ideas • Challenges constructively and respectfully listens to feedback • Overcomes barriers to develop our outcomes for residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tries out ways to do things better, faster and for less cost • Brings in ideas from outside to improve performance • Takes calculated risks to improve outcomes • Learns from mistakes and failures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages all stakeholders to participate in decision making • Makes things happen • Acts on feedback to improve performance • Works to high standards

