

Job Description

Post title	Principal Lawyer
Grade	SM1
Directorate	Operations
Team	Legal
Reporting to	Head of Legal [and to the Assistant Director Legal and Governance prior to the Head of Legal being appointed]
Responsible for	Allocated staff

Job Purpose

As a Principal Lawyer, the postholder will have a key role in the delivery of high-quality legal services to the North East Combined Authority. This role supports the Head of Legal in fulfilling their strategic and operational responsibilities, contributing to the effective governance and legal compliance of the North East CA.

Through strong leadership and professional expertise, the Principal Lawyer will help shape the future of legal services, enabling the organisation to deliver its priorities with confidence and integrity.

Duties and responsibilities

Listed below are the responsibilities this role will be primarily responsible for:

- Contribute to the strategic direction of Legal Services supporting cross-organisational service delivery.
- Lead and manage a legal team, ensuring effective work allocation, mentoring, and professional development, while promoting innovation and adaptability in legal practice.
- Provide high- quality legal advice on complex and often unprecedented matters across multiple areas of law and support the Assistant Director and Head of Legal in the delivery of the North East CA's objectives.
- Conduct and manage a caseload of varied and complex legal work, displaying a high degree of initiative.

- Deliver timely, accurate legal advice on complex and often unprecedented matters across multiple areas of law to senior officers and members, often in politically sensitive or high-pressured environments.
- Support organisation wide projects, often as part of a complex multi-disciplinary team, advising on constitutional matters and public and corporate governance issues.
- Assist in the drafting of policies and procedures as required and monitor relevant legislation and case law, providing advice and guidance in relation to the organisation and all corporate entities.
- Represent the North East CA in external forums and multi-agency meetings, and provide legal support to the North East CA, its committees, panels, boards and working groups ensuring decisions are legally sound and ethically informed.
- Attend meetings of the North East CA, its committees, panels, boards and working groups as required
- Prepare, negotiate and finalise legal proceedings, documentation, reports and correspondence.
- Advocate for the North East CA at courts, tribunals and inquiries.
- Keep up to date with relevant legislation, case law, codes of practice and policy, ensuring continuing competence.
- Support the professional development of staff through coaching and mentoring as appropriate.
- Monitor and contribute to the management of the Legal Services budget as required, ensuring efficient use and procurement of resources (including the use of external legal advisors)
- Ensure legal services are delivered cost-effectively, supporting the North East CA's financial sustainability through strategic planning, resource allocation, and performance monitoring.
- Maintain secure handling of sensitive legal documents and data, ensuring compliance with legal and organisational standards to mitigate financial and reputational risks.
- Deputise for the Head of Legal as required and support operational risk management, ensuring the service's work aligns with organisational priorities and delivers value for money.
- Manage client relationships across the organisation, handle partnering meetings as required and manage relationships with external stakeholders.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues across the North East CA and other stakeholders to support service delivery.
- Represent the Legal team in cross directorate project work as required and lead projects within the North East CA as required

Organisational responsibilities

- **Communication**

We communicate effectively with our peers, partners and local authorities and work collaboratively to provide the best possible outcomes. Communication between teams, services and partner organisations is imperative in providing the best possible service to the region.

- **Confidentiality**

All members of staff are required to undertake that they will not divulge to anyone personal and/or confidential information to which they may have access during the course of their work.

All members of staff must be aware that they have explicit responsibility for the confidentiality and security of information received and imported in the course of work and in using organisation information assets.

- **Health, Safety and Wellbeing**

We take responsibility for health, safety and wellbeing in accordance with the North East CA Health and Safety policy and procedures.

- **Performance Management**

We promote a culture whereby performance management is ingrained and the highest of standards and performance are achieved by all. You will contribute to the organisation's appraisal processes to ensure continuous learning and improvement and to increase organisational performance.

All members of staff will receive appraisals and it is the responsibility of each member of staff to follow guidance on the appraisal process.

The above is not exhaustive and the post holder will be expected to undertake any duties which may reasonably fall within the level of responsibility and the competence of the post as directed by their manager.

Values and Behaviours

Our values and behaviours are the things that are important to us, individually and as a team. They articulate the way we want to conduct ourselves. Combined, they work together to make us who we are and we use them to anchor all that we do. The North East CA values are:

- Strive for brilliance
- One team
- Drive sustainability
- Make it happen
- Be inclusive

Equalities and Diversity

We are committed to creating a fairer North East where everyone can thrive with aspirational jobs, new skills, and better homes. All employees are responsible for taking proactive steps to eliminate discrimination, advance equal opportunities and foster good relationships in every aspect of their work.

Special requirements of post

- **DBS**

This post is not subject to a disclosure.

- **Politically restricted**

This post is designated as a politically restricted post in accordance with the requirements of Section 1(5) of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and by regulations made from time to time by the Secretary of State.

Person Specification

Principal Lawyer

The following criteria will be used to shortlist at the application stage and will be further explored at the interview stage.

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications	Qualified and practising Solicitor or Barrister or Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives.	
Experience	- Substantial post qualification experience (at least 3 years) of one or more areas of law relevant to the specific post. - Experience of managing a varied and complex caseload. - Experience of advising senior clients. - Experience of mentoring and/or supervising legal professionals.	5 or more years post-qualification experience of one or more areas of law relevant to the specific post. - Experience of advising senior officers and members in a local government environment. - Experience of managing a team of legal professionals. - Experience of change management and service improvement.
Skills and Knowledge	- Ability to think strategically and develop long-term plans. - Excellent written and verbal communication skills with the ability to present complex information clearly and persuasively. - Strong interpersonal skills, with the ability to influence as well as to build and maintain relationships with a diverse range of stakeholders. - Strong analytical skills, with the ability to interpret information and provide strategic insights, leading to continuous improvement. - Proven leadership skills, with the ability to take responsibility and inspire confidence in clients and colleagues.	

	• Ability to adapt to changing circumstances and priorities. • Ability to manage own work and that of others to tight timescales and ensure effective use of staffing resources. • Detailed knowledge of public sector/local government law and decision-making • Knowledge of using case management systems. • Awareness of business development and client relationship management.	
Personal Qualities	• High level of integrity and professionalism. • Proactive and results orientated. • Resilient and able to work under pressure. • Commitment to continuous professional development. • Commitment to inclusion, diversity, equality and belonging.	