

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Senior Legal Assistant		
Directorate	Legal		
Reporting to	Lead Specialist Legal Childcare		
Grade	12		
Evaluation ref:	AG1018	Job ref:	Family RPG12
Role purpose			
To support the allocated solicitor in care cases and to carry a case load of other relevant types of cases. To support and train other legal assistants.			
Responsibilities			
<p>Main Responsibilities & Duties</p> <p>Provide support to the allocated solicitor in all childcare public law legal proceedings. This entails the following: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - undertaking legal research - drafting court applications - drafting briefs to counsel - redaction of documents - ensuring compliance with court directions in court orders to include requesting the necessary evidence and drafting letters of instruction. <p>Hold a caseload of cases to include pre-proceedings, discharge of care and private law. Carry straight forward care cases and deal with uncontested hearings, subject to capability, under the supervision of the allocated solicitor.</p> <p>Senior legal assistants are also expected to share the responsibility of the following tasks: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - support and train junior legal assistants - assist in managing the private law inbox and attending the court private law sub-group meetings - managing the case tracker - support management with the more complex cases such as judicial reviews etc. <p>Preparation and File Management</p> <p>For the purpose of proceedings and to support the allocated solicitor with the same, the following will be required: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - obtaining instructions from client department - preparing applications under the Children Act 1989 - completing standard documents - checking statements, care plans, local authority parenting and viability assessments for spelling and content. 			

JOB DESCRIPTION

- drafting initial thresholds, for consideration of the allocated solicitor, in public law proceedings.
- ensuring all the necessary evidence is gathered
- issuing court proceedings, in the appropriate court, having regard to the Family Procedure Rules.
- taking witness statements to the required evidential standard
- maintaining records any meetings attended with the court, counsel or other professionals
- liaising with client service and the courts where necessary.

Court attendance maybe required for the following: -

- to support counsel
- drafting documentation such as witness statements
- arranging and ensuring witness attendance
- clarifying court procedure for witnesses, that require it
- taking accurate notes of evidence and judgements, for the file.

For the purpose of holding pre-proceedings cases the following will be required under the supervision of the allocated solicitor: -

- attending PLO meetings
- assisting the social work team in respect of gathering the necessary evidence and assessments
- undertaking follow up work from PLO meetings, eg drafting letters of instruction and checking parenting and viability assessments etc.
- Arranging care planning meetings between the allocated social work team and the allocated solicitor.

Communication

Liaising with external solicitors, social workers, medical professionals and the police, eg answer and deal with enquiry calls in respect of the caseload.

Responding to requests in writing or by telephone, appropriately.

Building and maintaining effective relationships with the client department (Children's Services) on behalf of legal services and be accountable for the quality and level of services provided to them.

Research

Conducting research on points of law using the internet and law books as necessary, accurately as directed by the allocated solicitor.

Keeping informed and updated of the Children Act and other areas of law and procedure.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Systems and Procedures

Maintaining a record for key deadlines specifically those detailed on court orders and court attendance notes, etc.

Arranging meetings for professional officers.

Organising attendance of witnesses, experts and all required external bodies at court, having confirmed all the necessary documentation is provided.

Record all chargeable and non-chargeable work on a daily basis.

Contributing to and participating in the Service's modernisation initiatives and the continuous improvement of services.

Impact

Contacts & Relationships

To be line managed by a lead specialist solicitor / senior lawyer and to carry out tasks as allocated either by them or by the allocated solicitors.

To communicate effectively with the client department to identify any areas of concern and then to effectively use relevant sources to be able to answer a wide range of queries within deadlines.

Daily contact with other staff within legal services, particularly colleagues within the social work team and other services within Somerset Council.

Communicate with other solicitors and court personnel involved in proceedings.

Resources

The postholder does not have direct line management responsibility but will allocate routine tasks to junior legal assistants and will supervise the completion of these tasks.

	Essential	Desirable	
Knowledge			
A good knowledge of the law and care proceedings	X		

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Experience			
2 Years previous experience within a local authority as a legal assistant or the equivalent.	X		
Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications			
5 GCSE'S grades A*- C	X		
3 relevant A levels or alternatively the equivalent qualification via experience		X	
Skills			
Good communication	X		
IT proficient	X		
Good grammar and comprehension	X		
High level of organisation to support management	X		
A team player	X		
Working Conditions			
Understand, uphold and promote the aims of the council's equality, diversity and inclusion policies; health, safety and wellbeing of self and others and organisational values in everything you do. Equality and Diversity practice covers both interaction with staff, service users and communities and includes challenging discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity for all.			
Working Arrangements			
Somerset Council's dynamic Working Strategy will be applied to this position.			
Corporate Responsibilities			

Date: May 2025