

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Deputy Principal Lawyer – Adult Social Care/Child Care		
Service	Legal		
Reporting to	Principal Lawyer – Social Care		
Grade	8		
Evaluation ref:	RP290	Job Family ref:	
Role Purpose			
The Deputy Principal Lawyer – [Adult Social Care / Child Care] provides high-quality, proactive legal advice and representation to Somerset Council, supporting the delivery of its statutory responsibilities and strategic objectives in [Adult Social Care / Children's Social Care] and Education. The postholder acts as a senior member of the Social Care Legal team, deputising for the Principal Lawyer as required, and contributes to the effective management, development, and continuous improvement of the service. The role involves leading on complex and sensitive legal matters, managing and supervising legal officers, and building strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders. The Deputy Principal Lawyer will play a key part in championing efficiency, best practice, and innovation within the team.			
Accountabilities			
Support and deputise for the Principal Lawyer – Social Care as required, contributing to the delivery and continuous improvement of the Social Care Legal team's services. Line manage legal officers within the [Adult Social Care / Children's Social Care] legal team, ensuring supervision, coaching, and quality assurance of a mixed caseload of [Adult Social Care / Children's Social Care] and Education matters. Maintain responsibility for a personal caseload of complex legal matters in [Adult Social Care / Children's Social Care] and Education, including advocacy where appropriate. Ensure all legal work is delivered to a high standard and within agreed timescales, supporting the Council and Service in achieving business objectives. Develop and foster effective working relationships with the Principal Lawyer, other lawyers in the Social Care Legal team, key stakeholders, and client departments. Acquire, develop, and share a comprehensive understanding of client business needs and objectives within the team. Liaise effectively and in a timely manner with support staff, building and maintaining synergy within the team.			

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Draft, review, and negotiate complex legal documents, contracts, and agreements relevant to [Adult Social Care / Children's Social Care] and Education.

Represent the Council in legal proceedings, tribunals, and hearings as appropriate.

Promote a culture of continuous improvement, innovation, and customer focus within the Social Care Legal team.

Knowledge / Experience / Skills

	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge		
In-depth knowledge of law and practice relating to [Adult Social Care / Children's Social Care] and Education.	X	
Understanding of the political and organisational context of local authorities.	X	
Knowledge of a specialist area of law relevant to the Council's functions.		X
Experience		
Substantial post-qualification experience as a solicitor, barrister, or legal executive.	X	
Experience of handling complex legal matters and providing advice at a senior level in [Adult Social Care / Children's Social Care] and Education.	X	
Experience of supervising or mentoring legal staff.	X	
Experience of working in local government or the public sector.		X
Experience of managing change or service improvement projects.		X
Qualifications / Registrations / Certifications		
Solicitor, Barrister (Supreme Court of England and Wales/English Bar) or Fellow of the Institute of Legal Executives or equivalent relevant qualification with relevant experience.	X	
Management or leadership qualification.		X
Skills		
Excellent analytical, drafting, and advocacy skills.	X	
Strong communication and interpersonal skills.	X	
Ability to manage competing priorities and work under pressure.	X	

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Working Conditions

Office-based with flexible and remote working in line with Somerset Council's Dynamic Working Strategy.

May be required to attend meetings or hearings at various locations.

Dimensions of the role

Line management responsibility for legal officers within the [Adult Social Care / Children's Social Care] legal team.

Responsible for leading on high-value, high-risk, or politically sensitive matters in [Adult Social Care / Children's Social Care] and Education.

Key point of contact for senior officers, elected members, and external partners in relation to [Adult Social Care / Children's Social Care] and Education legal matters.

May manage budgets or resources associated with specific projects or cases.

Working Arrangements

Somerset Council's Dynamic Working Strategy will be applied to this position.

Corporate Accountabilities

- Provide clear leadership to deliver the Council's strategic priorities and meet the Council's financial targets, as a member of the Directorates Senior Leadership Team.
- Update and advise Elected Members in respect of operational and policy issues in relation to the Legal Services teams.
- Lead Legal teams with a clear identity in terms of flexible and responsive ways of working, inclusive and diverse culture, and high level of employee engagement and wellbeing.
- Undertake representational and communication duties on behalf of the Council to promote and protect the Council's interests in matters concerning their specialist areas.
- Create, monitor, and review frameworks of performance measures and quality standards to be applied in the delivery of services.
- Function as an ambassador for the Council promoting, both internally and externally, the Council's vision, strategic aims, and values.
- Value the diversity of Somerset's communities ensuring equality of access and treatment in service delivery and employment.
- Function as a role model for Somerset's vision and values. Promotes a culture of continuous improvement that encourages creativity and innovation to ensure services are efficient and develop the potential and flexibility across the Council and its workforce including the motivation and development of employees within the Legal service teams.

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- Ensure that Legal services place a high value on customer responsiveness by demonstrating a commitment to meeting and involving the broadest range of direct and indirect service users, citizens, customers, communities, and businesses.
- Support the delivery of the Councils' key strategic aims and objectives ensuring understanding and commitment from staff from across the Legal service.
- Support Corporate and Directorate and service specific transformational change programmes with the aim of maximising efficiency, modernising services, and achieving better outcomes and opportunities for service users and customers.
- Ensure flexibility in reacting to the needs of the Council, its' customers and partners supporting a culture of continuous improvement.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, the Council's standards of conduct, organisational policy, and professional codes of conduct to uphold standards of best practise.
- Accountable for compliance with all relevant health and safety legislation and Somerset Council H&S policies.

Date: 23/01/2026