

**Assurance**



## **Leader's Caseworker**

Job Description and Person Specification

January 2019

## Job Description

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Job Title:   | Leader's Caseworker   |
| Service Area:  | Assurance   |
| Function:  |   |
| Team:  | Leader's Office   |
| Post number:   |   |
| Grade:   | LBR08   |
| Hours/weeks:<br><i>E.g. 36 hours/52.14 weeks</i>   | 36  |
| Base location:   | Town Hall   |
| Reports to:<br><i>Job title</i>  | Head of Leader's Office and Mayoralty   |
| Responsible for:<br><i>Job titles of direct reports</i>  | <i>If there are no direct reports insert 'No direct line management but may be responsible for the supervision of trainee and work placement employees on occasion'</i>   |
| Role purpose and role dimensions:<br><i>Overview of the job</i>  | <p>To assist in the provision of an effective support service to the Leader and elected members.</p> <p><b>To take responsibility for dealing with the Leader's casework.</b></p> <p>To provide administrative support to the office of the Leader of the Council.</p> <p>Dealing with enquiries from local residents and from other authorities.</p> |
| Key external contacts:<br><i>Organisations</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MPs</li> <li>• GLA Member</li> <li>• Residents</li> </ul>  |
| Key internal contacts:<br><i>Job titles or groups of staff</i>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chief Executive, Directors and Chief Officers</li> <li>• Leader of Council and Cabinet Members</li> <li>• The Mayor</li> <li>• Members</li> <li>• Officers at all levels</li> </ul>  |
| Financial dimensions:<br><i>Budgetary responsibility &amp; amount. Equipment, cash, property etc. for which employee is responsible.</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>  |
| Key areas for decision making:   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying requests from Members and Residents that may seek to breach officer impartiality and referring to the Leader as appropriate.</li> </ul>  |
| Other considerations:<br><i>E.g. working patterns</i>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• None</li> </ul>  |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Key accountabilities and result areas:  | Key elements:   |
| Handle queries, casework, post and other correspondence for the Leader, dealing with confidential items sensitively.  | <p>This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Arranging meetings and making appointments.</li> <li>Assembling papers, including daily folders and briefing notes.</li> <li>Acting as channel of communication between a Political Group Leader/Deputy Leader and other Members and officers up to and including the Chief Executive.</li> <li>Undertaking general administration and research.</li> <li>Operating a brought forward system for pending items for the Leader and Deputy Leader of a Political Group.</li> <li>Handling highly confidential material.</li> <li>Drafting replies on general correspondence.</li> <li>Maintaining a diary for the Leader and Deputy Leader of a Political Group.</li> <li><b>Proof reading draft documentation to ensure that it complies with Council's procedures and practices.</b></li> <li>Assisting the Leader and Deputy Leader of a Political Group to answer enquiries from constituents by undertaking research and, where appropriate, drafting replies for them.</li> </ul> <p>In carrying out these duties it will be crucial for the postholder to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assimilate and sift a wide range of diverse information and documentation received, and establish the implications for the Leader and Deputy Leader and plan action accordingly.</li> <li><b>Establish 'early warning systems' in order to become alerted at the earliest possible opportunity to any changes in plan, itineraries etc and to respond accordingly.</b></li> <li>Assist the Leader to establish his/her day to day priorities, to be selective in determining those matters which need to be referred to the Leader and to deal personally with a range of matters and correspondence.</li> </ul> |
| Establish and maintain effective working relationships with Members, partners, Council officers at all levels, and various stakeholders such as Government Departments. | <p>This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Undertaking administrative and secretarial work.</li> <li>Arranging meetings of Members.</li> <li>Liaising with outside bodies upon which Members serve.</li> <li><b>Drafting replies across the whole range of the Council's activities.</b></li> <li>Providing a research facility for Members by way of the internet</li> <li>Dealing with enquiries from local residents.</li> <li>Dealing with enquiries from other authorities.</li> </ul> <p>Undertaking such other appropriate duties as may from time to time be assigned to the post.</p> <p>Making full use and acquiring dexterity in operation of computer facilities, technological developments and innovations within the service area.</p>  |
| General accountabilities and responsibilities   |   |
| Green Statement   | <p>This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seeking opportunities for contributing to sustainable development of the borough, in accordance with the <b>Council's commitment to making Redbridge a cleaner, greener place to live.</b> In particular, demonstrating good environmental practice (such as energy efficiency, use of sustainable materials, sustainable transport, recycling and waste reduction) in your job.</li> </ul>  |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Data Protection/Confidentiality                                    | <p>This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complying with the Data Protection Act 1998 – treating all information acquired through your employment, both formally and informally, in strict confidence and in accordance with Caldicott principles.</li> <li>Complying with the Code of Conduct, other practice guidelines and the rules <b>and protocols defining employees' access to and use of the Council's databases</b> and systems. Any breaches could result in disciplinary measures.</li> <li>Maintaining client records and archive systems in accordance with departmental procedure, policy and statutory requirements.</li> </ul> |
| Conduct and Whistleblowing   | <p>This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complying with the requirements of the Code of Conduct and maintaining high standards of personal conduct, honesty and integrity. You have a duty to raise any impropriety or breach of procedure to the appropriate level of management. Employees making such disclosures (whistleblowing) are protected and may make them without fear of recrimination.</li> </ul>  |
| Safer Working  | <p>This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. Where you work in such a post the Council will require a DBS Disclosure check and references will be taken up prior to interview.</li> </ul>  |
| Equalities   | <p>This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Complying with the Council's strong commitment to achieving equality of opportunity and outcomes in its services to the community and in the employment of people.</b> You are expected to understand, comply with and promote Council policies in your work, to undertake any appropriate training and to challenge any prejudice and discrimination.</li> </ul>  |
| Customer Care  | <p>This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complying with corporate and service area customer service standards and promoting the development of high quality, individualised and customer-led services.</li> </ul>  |
| Health and Safety  | <p>This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Being responsible for your own Health &amp; Safety, as well as that of colleagues, service users and the public. Employees should co-operate with management, follow established systems of work, use protective equipment where necessary and report defectives and hazards to management.</li> </ul>  |
| To contribute as an effective and collaborative member of the team | <p>This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Taking responsibility for continuing self-development and participating in training and development activities.</li> <li>Participating in the ongoing development, implementation and monitoring of the service plans.</li> <li>Supporting and contributing to value for money, service efficiencies and improvements.</li> </ul>   |
| Flexibility  | <p>This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The above-mentioned duties are neither exclusive nor exhaustive. From time to time you may be required to undertake responsibilities outside the normal remit of your Job Description as required by the line manager, and are broadly within your the grading level and competence.</li> </ul>   |

## Person Specification

| Job Title:   |   |           |           |
|--|---|-----------|-----------|
| <i>Method of candidate assessment: A = Application form I = Interview T = Test.<br/>Weighting: 3 = most important, 2 = least important</i> |   | A - I - T | Weighting |
| Minimum education/<br>qualifications:  | None  |           |           |
| Minimum experience/<br>knowledge/ skills:  | Experience of providing high level administrative support   | A I       | 3         |
|  | Experience in using relevant IT systems (Word, Outlook Modern.Gov, Caseworker, Excel etc)   | A I T     | 3         |
|  | Experience of working in a political environment  | A I       | 2         |
|  | Ability to work in a demanding environment and with minimum supervision   | A I       | 2         |
|  | Ability to communicate effectively at all levels, including with Council leaders, MPs, Government Agencies, Group Leaders, Members, and senior officers both orally and in writing. | A I T     | 3         |
|  | Ability to prioritise workloads.  | A I       | 2         |
|  | Demonstrable skills in administration, together with the ability to effectively manage a complex diary and to plan/organise events.   | A I       | 2         |
|  | Ability to exercise diplomacy and sensitivity when handling enquiries and co-ordinating responses.  | A I       | 2         |
|  | Knowledge and awareness of the issues involved when working within a multi-cultural community   | A I       | 3         |
| Minimum behaviours:<br>Customer service  |   |           |           |
| Communicating and influencing others   | Excellent written and oral communication skills and the ability to write clearly and concisely.   | A I T     | 3         |
|  | Ability to work under pressure and achieve tight deadlines  | A I       | 3         |
|  | Research skills and ability to extract relevant data and present it in a comprehensive form   | A         | 2         |
|  | Ability to employ tact, discretion and sensitivity  | A I       | 3         |
| Working together   | Ability to work flexibly within a team and to contribute to the team in terms of resolving problems and sharing workloads   | A I       | 2         |
|  | Willingness to participate in project work/new initiatives/Service Area Development.  | A I       | 2         |

|  |   |       |   |
|--|---|-------|---|
| Respecting & implementing diversity  | Ability to demonstrate an awareness of equality issues  | A 1   | 2 |
|  | <b>Commitment to the aims and objectives of the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy</b> and the ability to identify how they could contribute to achieving aims at work. | A 1   | 2 |
| Planning, organising & achieving results   | Ability to organise own workload and to prioritise tasks against tight and often conflicting deadlines.   | A 1   | 3 |
| Embracing Change   | Willingness to participate in developing the role and effectiveness of the <b>Leader's Office</b> by contributing new ideas.  | A 1   | 2 |
|  | Ability to respond pro-actively, flexibly and positively to the ever-changing pressures that Local Authorities face.  | A 1   | 2 |
| Leadership and managing people<br><i>(for those with line management responsibility)</i> |   |       |   |
| Strategic perspective <i>(for senior management posts)</i>                               |   |       |   |
| Special conditions:  | Required to undertake other duties as required including <b>covering holiday and sickness of Mayor's Office and Leader's Office staff.</b>                                |       |   |
| Signature of Employee:   | Name:   | Date: |   |

## GUIDANCE ON COMPLETING THE JOB DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

In drawing up or revising a job description and person specification managers should:

- a) agree or revise a list of key accountabilities and responsibilities with employee(s)
- b) draft a job description and person specification using the above templates
- c) agree the job description and person specification with employee (s)
- d) get the employee to sign and date the agreed job description and person specification

This would obviously not be appropriate where new post(s) are being created and this should be made clear **on the job description by inserting 'New post' in the grade section.**

Job descriptions and person specifications should be clear, precise and uncomplicated.

### Job Description

Lengthy description should be avoided. It is not necessary to list every job activity that might possibly occur in the job. It is important to identify the key accountabilities and results, which illustrate the full scope of the post.

The job description should therefore:

- use the attached template
- describe each key area of accountability succinctly that will allow a natural introduction to the key elements and will provide clarity in understanding the purpose of the job
- describe each element in a short sentence or two with sufficient precision to enable the reader to understand what is done and why it is done
- **avoid the "shopping list" syndrome, i.e. a lengthy list of tasks/functions**
- use sentences that start with an action verb e.g. manage, plan, initiate, prepare and use the present tense e.g. monitors expenditure by checking monthly summaries of orders placed to ensure adherence to budget provision
- focus on the significant or key features of the job, distinguishing between the tasks the individual actually carries out and those that he/she has set others to carry out, thus distinguishing between direct responsibility and managerial responsibility
- avoid detail of how activities are undertaken as these should be covered by an appropriate office procedure
- express performance standards using qualitative and quantitative information
- be written in clear, concise language keeping words to a minimum, avoiding duplication and acronyms
- not use language which may be viewed as discriminatory e.g. man management

The template includes space for six key areas of accountability: additional ones can be inserted but it is unlikely that any job cannot be encompassed within twelve key areas.

## Person Specification

The person specification should always be kept in the same document following on from the job description. It details the education, qualifications, experience, knowledge, skills, behaviours and other requirements necessary to do the job. These requirements must have a demonstrable link to the job description and they must also be objective, and measurable.

The person specification should therefore:

- use the attached template
- only include education/qualifications that are essential where the individual would not be able to operate in their profession without them, making it clear that equivalent qualifications e.g. those obtained abroad will be considered
- be explicit in the types of experience that are required, recognising that these may be acquired other than in paid work
- only specify length of experience where this is required to meet e.g. registration standards – quality, not quantity is the key
- include the type of knowledge essential for the postholder to perform the job such as certain legislation, industry specific knowledge
- indicate the specific skills and abilities required e.g. people management skills, interpersonal skills, numerical skills
- specify the level required for *all* staff in the six core behaviours, plus the two further behaviours for those who manage others, using the behaviour framework
- include, where necessary, up to a further four technical behaviours, using the behaviour framework
- for posts with access to children and vulnerable adults include specific criteria relevant to this area e.g. ability to understand the difficulties and pressures associated with caring for children/vulnerable adults and to demonstrate appropriate coping mechanisms
- only include items under special conditions that cannot be included under other sections e.g. requirement to travel between sites
- show, for each of the criterion, how it is to be measured

Care needs to be taken to ensure that criteria are not unnecessarily restrictive, excluding some people from applying. For example, if there is an occasional need to attend committee meeting in the evenings, careful consideration needs to be given as to whether this is an essential part of the job as it could otherwise be viewed as indirectly discriminatory towards women.