London Borough of Redbridge
Social Care Lawyer

About Redbridge

Redbridge is home to 311,000 residents, more than 350 local voluntary and community organisations and thousands of businesses. We are among the fastest growing parts of the country and the third most diverse London borough. Our communities are attracted by a mixture of excellent schools, relatively affordable housing compared to other parts of London, high quality open spaces and rapid transport connections into the heart of the city.

Our population is getting both younger and older - driving increased demand in both adults and children's services. A growing population has placed huge pressure on a housing stock built for a different era. The pace of change to meet these challenges is phenomenal.

Alongside our values of **Collaboration, Honesty, Excellence and Fairness**, we have an ambitious strategic delivery plan to make Redbridge a great place to live.

Job Title:	**Social Care** Lawyer		
Accountable To:	Principal Lawyer		
Grade:	LBR13	**Salary:**	£to add inc. London Weighting
Direct Reports:	No direct reports – postholder maybe required to supervise junior members of the team with their workload.	**Total Staff & Budget:**	This post has no direct budget responsibilities

Role Purpose

The **Social Care** Lawyer is responsible for providing high quality legal advice, representation and professional support in all aspects of children's safeguarding legislation. Reporting to the Principal Safeguarding Lawyer, the postholder manages a varied caseload of children's and some Judicial Review matters. They will serve as a key source of expertise and knowledge in this discipline.

The role provides expert legal advice to Council directorates, senior officers and Members, supporting informed decision making and ensuring compliance with current legislation and case law. The postholder is expected to provide legal advice and assistance at meetings of relevant committees, conduct litigation in the Courts and Tribunals and to undertake advocacy where appropriate.

The role contributes to the effective operation of Legal Services by maintaining professional standards, supporting service improvements, sharing legal knowledge and assisting with the development of junior colleagues where required. The postholder is expected to keep abreast of developments in law & practice, adopt modern working methods and undertake any other duties commensurate with the level of the post.

Job Context

Redbridge is a modern council delivering for its residents in the heart of London. It is a vibrant and diverse borough with exciting and ambitious plans.

Legal Services forms part of the Assurance Directorate and provides professional legal advice and representation to the Council across a wide range of functions and services. The Safeguarding Team supports departments throughout the authority by delivering legal solutions that protect the Council's interests, manage risk and facilitate effective service delivery.

The postholder will advise officers on legal matters affecting the Council and represents the authority in court proceedings and tribunal matters. The role requires the ability to manage competing priorities, work independently on complex cases and maintain strong working relationships with internal clients, external legal representatives, courts, government bodies and other stakeholders.

The postholder works under the direction of the Principal Safeguarding Lawyer and contributes to the delivery of a professional, efficient and responsive legal service aligned to the Council's strategic priorities and governance arrangements.

Key Accountabilities

Advising on Legal Issues

1. To provide legal advice, guidance and practical assistance over the whole range of the Council's Children's Services cases; on Local Government Administration and Judicial Review Proceedings.
2. Advising officers and managers and members on legal implications, risks and options to support effective decision making.
3. To identify, advise and manage legal and financial risks.

Conduct of cases

4. To assist the Principal Safeguarding Lawyer in legal process reviews to ensure efficient and effective working practices e.g. assisting in the revision of policies protocols precedent and practice notes.
5. To prepare and conduct a full range of children's services cases, including those raising complex or major issues. This includes advising on evidence, procedure and trial conduct; reviewing documents; evaluating evidence; and drafting court applications and related documents as required.
6. To handle child protection cases as required expeditiously by evaluating evidence, formulating reports and drafting proceedings.
7. To act as an advocate on behalf of the Council, where rights of audience permit this.
8. To prepare briefs to Counsel and cases for the Opinion of the Counsel.
9. Under the direction of the Principal Safeguarding Lawyer, instruct Counsel and/or legal advisers and attend conferences as required.
10. Where appropriate, prepare witness statements, pleadings, instructions to Counsel and other legal documentation.
11. Maintain accurate records and effectively use IT systems and approved digital research tools for these purposes.
12. Ensuring that all work is appropriately prioritised to meet deadlines and targets and comply with timetables and re-prioritise work as required to deal with urgent matters in the team
13. To ensure all key dates are diarised in the team diary so that the Court and Tribunal timetables are met and that professional standards are maintained, at all times.

Supervision

14. Provide support and guidance and mentoring to junior members of the team, as required.
15. To deputise for the Principal Lawyer on request in respect to issues connected with the functions of this post.

Update and Review

16. To provide a fast, accurate, efficient and reliable professional service on the application of new legislation, case law developments, procedural and practice changes affecting all Directorates that are serviced by this team.
17. Undertaking research to assist in the preparation of briefing notes on changes, as appropriate.

Servicing Appropriate Committees

18. To provide legal advice on reports and decisions relating to the Council's Cabinet, Committees and other associated working groups, as required.
19. Attend meetings and committees and working parties, as required.

Professional Development

20. Maintain and participate in continuous professional development, by keeping abreast of changes in law
21. Maintain professional compliance in line with CILEX, SRA or other relevant professional body
22. Maintain high standards of professional conduct.

Financial Responsibilities

23. Advising the client, identifying risk and ensuring that the Council's financial processes are adhered to in respect of any money coming to or being paid by the Council. Advising on the relevant fees where applicable or otherwise taking such professional advice in order to deliver all allocated transactions.

24. To ensure the cost effective and professional conduct of pending or actual legal proceedings and disputes instituted by or against the Council.

25. Advising on the relevant tax implications and fees where applicable or otherwise taking such professional advice in order to deliver allocated transactions

26. Ensuring good record keeping of data and reporting (to include costs orders) following determination of cases.

Flexibility

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 grading level and competence.

Person Specification

		METHOD OF ASSESSMENT (AIT)	WEIGHTING
Qualification & Experience	• Practicing Solicitor/Barrister or CILEX	A	3
	• Advocacy experience	AI	3
Knowledge & Skills	• Excellent knowledge of the law, practice of social care cases, preferably in a local government context, in a relevant discipline.	AI	3
	• Conducts a case load within their area of expertise without supervision and works independently	AI	3
	• Analysing complex legal issues and understanding risk in relation to legal matters within the remit of the post.	AI	3
	• Substantial knowledge of relevant legislation, experience of childcare cases and legal procedures, preferably in a local government context	AI	3
	• Experience of serving committees in a Local authority or similar organisation.	AI	2
Engaging with others	• Effective communicator with clear verbal and written skills.	AI	3
	• Ability to advise and negotiate with internal and external stakeholders.	AI	3
	• Ability to work closely with and establish positive relationships with officers of the Council.	AI	3
	• Works as part of a team, offering support, guidance and mentoring to junior staff members as required.	AI	2
Achieving Results	• Able to be proactive in managing cases to ensure optimal outcomes are achieved for the client and managing client issues to deliver the results required	AI	3
	• Able to ensure the service provided meets the targets set by the Principal Lawyer	AI	3
	• Working within the budget set for legal services	AI	3

Values and Diversity	• Knowledge and understanding of the commitment to the Council's equal opportunities policies and the ability to put into practice in the context of the post	AI	3
Adaptability	• Flexible approach to tasks, works under pressure and acquires new skills	AI	3
Special conditions:	•		
Signature of Employee:	**Name:**		

Method of candidate assessment: A = Application form I = Interview T = Test. Weighting: 3 = most important, 2 = least important