

Job Description

Job Title	SEND Tribunal Officer
Grade	PO10
Reporting To	SEND Manager
JD Ref	PC0218P

Purpose

Providing key leadership in case management of mediation and SEND appeal related cases to ensure that the council discharges its responsibilities effectively in relation to statutory appeals to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST).

Building strategic links with schools, education providers and other partner agencies to deliver positive outcomes for children and young people, and to limit the local authority's exposure to risk of appeals.

Working directly with parents, schools, parental appointed legal representatives/advocates and other professional bodies within the statutory and legal framework related to SENDIST.

Advising on learning/case law from previous lower and upper tier tribunals in order to limit the local authority's exposure to risk of appeals, litigation and judicial review/complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

Main Duties And Responsibilities

Behavioural:

- Enjoy, achieve, create impact, and thrive in the role and organisation.
- Live our values in the role and organisation.
- Contribute to the wider SEND service aspirations; identifying opportunities to achieve integrated working on a multiagency basis.

Communication, Engagement and Training:

- Coordinate allocation and attendance processes linked to mediation and resolution of all disputes relating to SENDIST.
- Attend resolution meetings with parents and other professionals to try to settle unresolved/disputed issues without the need for formal legal redress wherever possible.
- Work closely with internal and external stakeholders, including parents, young people, legal services, parental advocates, schools and colleges to deliver positive outcomes for children and young people (CYP) and to limit the local authority's exposure to the risk of appeals.

- Ensure mediation and conflict resolution is an active feature at an early stage in all engagement with families to improve relationships and reduce tribunal numbers.
- Develop an awareness and understanding of the issues in relation to assessment and planning and person-centred approaches by engaging with schools and other agencies.
- Lead on complex casework, providing effective mediation, drawing on strong negotiation and influencing skills across a range of complex SEND issues to ensure an efficient and effective provision.
- Prepare evidence for LGSCO complaints received, in coordination with the customer resolution and information manager and SEND manager, to ensure appropriate and timely responses are given with any clear learning points identified and shared to ensure service development.
- Present the local authority's position at SENDIST and provide clear evidence of the appropriateness of the proposed provision for an individual child or young person.
- Provide training to team members to ensure consistency of approach, sharing and promoting best practice through the dissemination of statutory guidance and learning from case studies.

Data Analysis and Decision-Making:

- Create and maintain accurate recording of data relating to the appeal process and analyse this data to identify trends and inform strategic change.
- Coordinate and collate information to support the local authority where there is dispute about special educational needs provision and/or placement.

Performance Management:

- Use management information and data to develop a framework and policies to help improve efficiency and effectiveness of the service and to ensure consistency of decision making through EHC needs assessments, plans and annual reviews.

Compliance:

- Adhere to and comply with all relevant corporate policies and procedures including Health & Safety, General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), Corporate Governance and Code of Conduct.
- Prepare cases for tribunals, by liaising with Legal Services and the SEND manager, to represent the local authority in a legal arena ensuring the required documentation is distributed within the specified time constraints.

Other:

- Make changes/amendments to education, health and care plans.
- Any other duties commensurate with the grade.

Role Specific Knowledge, Experience And Skills

Qualifications

- Educated to degree standard.

Desirable



- Teaching and or SENCO qualifications or evidence of professional development in education, teaching and SEND.
- Legal qualification.

Knowledge & Skills

- Detailed knowledge of part 3 Children & Families Act 2014, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Code of Practice 2015 and subordinate legislation.
- Detailed knowledge of the SENDIST Tribunal procedure.
- Understanding of SEND issues as they affect parents, children, young people and educational settings.
- Good oral and written communication skills.
- Good interpersonal and negotiating skills.
- Good report writing skills.
- Good organisational skills.
- Good IT skills.
- In depth knowledge and understanding of current SEN legislation and reform, statutory procedures and processes governing the provision of services for children with special educational needs.
- Knowledge and experience of legal or tribunal processes.
- Knowledge and understanding of the impact of SEND on children and young people's educational outcomes.
- Effective organisational and time management skills.
- Ability to draft and prepare correspondence and reports which are accurate in terms of content, grammar and spelling.
- Ability to analyse and interpret detailed and complex information and to use such information to benefit work objectives.
- Ability to quickly assimilate information and prepare to discuss informed decisions under short time constraints.
- Proven ability to communicate effectively in both written and oral form with a variety of audiences to ensure that key issues are identified and understood.
- Proven negotiation skills that achieve desired outcomes.
- Ability to work with minimum supervision, balancing using own initiative against the need to seek management guidance.
- Proven ability to work collaboratively as an effective wider team member to achieve service aspirations.
- Ability to identify work priorities and manage team workload to meet deadlines, ensuring objectives and targets are achieved with minimal disruption.
- Ability to demonstrate sensitivity and objectivity in dealing with emotive and confidential issues.

Desirable

- Good knowledge and understanding of the local authority's duties around SEND.
- Good knowledge and understanding of parents/children/young people's rights regarding SEND.
- Understanding of the role of other agencies (schools, health and social care) in meeting



ACCOUNTABLE



AMBITIOUS



**RESIDENT
FOCUSED**



PROFESSIONAL

SEND.

- Proven ability to anticipate problems and achieve workable solutions to complex problems and to ensure contingencies are planned for.

Experience

- Experience of working in a local authority/legal environment.
- Experience of representing the local authority at mediation and in tribunal hearings.
- Experience of communicating with children and their families concerning complex issues.
- Proven track record of complex case management in a multi-disciplinary environment.

Desirable

- Experience of working with a broad range of education, social care and health care professionals.

Additional Information

Ability to work flexibly to meet requirements of the service.

Ability to travel around the borough using public or private transport.

NOTE

The job role holder may be required to undertake other reasonable duties commensurate with the job role descriptor grade.

This job role descriptor will be reviewed regularly and may be subject to amendment or modification at any time after consultation with the post holder. It is not a definitive statement of procedures and tasks but sets out the main expectations of the Service in relation to the post holder's responsibilities and duties.

Elements of this job role descriptor and changes to it may be amended in light of organisational and service requirements.

Health & Safety Considerations:

- Work with VDUs (Video Display Unit) (>5hrs per week)

Approved By: Adrian Leach - Head of Service

Date Of Approval: 20.02.2024



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