

Housing Lawyer

Salary Range: £52,282 - £59,895

Grade: Level 5/Zone 1

Location: 5 Pancras Square, London

Reports to: Senior Lawyer



About the role

We expect our legal staff to embody the characteristics and qualities of an O-Shaped Lawyer (detailed below) and to be active in reflecting these values across our teams and with our “client” services.

Camden is building somewhere everyone can thrive, by making our borough the best place to live, work, study and visit. Because, we're not just home to UK's fast-growing economy we are much more. We're home to the most important conversations happening today. Through our mission-led approach we're making radical social change a reality, so that nobody gets left behind. Here's where you can be part of a progressive legal team, exploring the art of the possible to unblock barriers and ensure Camden is a place that works for everyone.

Our 'We Make Camden' and 'The Way We Work' strategies set out a compelling vision for an organisation that moves beyond a bureaucratic approach to a way of working focused on relationships, embracing innovation and valuing people. Legal Services, and Corporate Services more generally, is in the process of adapting its model to support this shift. We are looking for a Lawyer to support the delivery of some of the Council's top priorities by delivering a high-quality customer-focused legal service. Our in-house legal team plays an essential part in the achievement of the objectives of Camden Council. As a service, we strive to provide a high-quality professional service that meets our client's expectations as well as ensure compliance with professional standards as an in-house legal practice. You will be a valued member of a lively, responsive, and supportive team delivering essential advice to clients and providing representation in diverse and interesting cases across the Council. We embody the values of the O-shaped lawyer of operating with openness, optimism and originality.

The O Attributes



Rather than keeping the organisation 'safe' we are part of a 21st century legal profession that is animated by principles of social justice and works to solve problems rather than provide advice or support compliance as its default. We are clear that it is not about either but about being able to do both.

We embed ourselves in our client services, forming strong collaborative relationships from the outset which helps us to act early and prevent unnecessary escalation. As a service, and as individuals, we are visible across the organisation and are trusted advisers for both senior officers and Members.

This role requires you to be comfortable working with a high degree of personal responsibility and independently when required. You will be encouraged to think creatively and contribute to re-shaping how we think about risk and governance for a 21st digital-era organisation. You will be thoughtful about a modern legal profession and its role in local public services, contributing to a dialogue about how it responds to the implications of 'We Make Camden' and 'The Way We Work'.

About you

Experience

You will have the following technical knowledge and experience:

1. Be qualified to practice in England and Wales as a Solicitor, Barrister, or Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives.
 - Excellent demonstrable detailed knowledge of the law and procedure including:
 - Excellent demonstrable knowledge of Housing Law and procedure in all relevant courts and tribunals to include Magistrates Courts and County Courts
 - Significant recent experience of effectively managing a caseload of Housing litigation matters and advising on Housing Law matters, preferably in areas relevant to local authorities such as but not limited to Homelessness, Possession, Closure Orders and Judicial Review.
 - Excellent demonstrable working knowledge of Local government law and procedure in the context of Housing Law.
 - Excellent demonstrable experience of providing effective and accurate advice in housing litigation matters and of conducting casework, specifically drafting complex legal pleadings for Housing Litigation Proceedings.
 - Excellent demonstrable recent experience of undertaking advocacy in courts in a broad range of matters. Good advocacy skills are an essential requirement for this role in order to represent the Council in Housing Litigation matters.
2. Excellent interpersonal and communication skills (written and oral) including literacy, tact and diplomacy and ability to advise competently on relevant legal matters
3. Experience of advising clients on complex and /or sensitive matters and meeting deadlines.
4. Excellent demonstrable IT skills to include familiarity with the Microsoft Office products (Outlook, Word, Teams, ideally Excel and Powerpoint).
5. Excellent skills in complying with in-house legal practice system requirements, to include, use of case management systems for effective file management (preferably iCasework), meeting time recording targets, file auditing, compliance and risk management practices
6. Experience of handling sensitive information under the Data Protection Act and the UK General Data Protection Regulation and ensuring confidentiality

You will have

1. Excellent professional confidence to lead on difficult and high-profile cases when appropriate
2. Excellent organisational skills able to manage a complex and varied workload with a flexible and innovative approach to work, ensuring that deadlines and court directed deadlines are adhered to
3. Ability to work on own initiative and with minimal supervision, to undertake research and be able to make accurate, considered judgements and decisions.
4. You will be an effective leader who is comfortable acting as an ambassador for legal services across the council, sharing good practice and encouraging innovation amongst colleagues, to include training/mentoring junior members of the team.
5. Excellent demonstrable ability to build partnerships and good working relationships both within the service, council and with third parties
6. Excellent flexibility and confidence to adopt new skills where required to meet renewed corporate or member priorities within your area. At times this may relate to high profile matters which have significant media and/or public attention
7. An ability to make accurate, considered judgements and decisions which supports the council to achieve its goals in a way which is legally compliant, risk - aware but not adverse.
8. An understanding and commitment to the Council's policies on valuing diversity, equality and inclusion.

The things you'll achieve

1. You will be a trusted advisor and provide comprehensive, high quality legal advice within the area of specialism for the role set out in the 'About You' above. You will advise services and senior officers on the best course of action, drawing on your experience of developing innovative and creative solutions within the law.
2. You will work both independently and in partnership with colleagues as part of a collaborative team in the delivery of the legal service and in respect of complex work or projects. You will build partnerships with officers (including Senior officers) within service directorates, to build good working relationships and you will provide high quality solution focused legal advice to officers across Camden.
3. You will be proactive in your approach, identifying areas for improvement within work processes or opportunities for earlier intervention in council projects and activities to ensure effective delivery of the Councils priorities
4. You will prepare and process a large volume of all casework related matters and find solutions for clients and members to achieve their goals and ensure compliance with the law. You will undertake effective case management to ensure relevant deadlines are met.
5. You will be an effective advocate for the Council and sole legal advisor on legal issues the council faces often on contested applications/matters. This could involve appearing in open court or in chambers on litigious matters as appropriate, making representations to the judge when appropriate
6. You will make sound judgments on case progression based on all the evidence and identify any areas of risk to client officers and the Senior Managers and to personally ensure that all time limits and steps are complied with ensuring the council achieves its goals in a way which is legally compliant, risk - aware but not adverse. You will be politically aware and bring any politically contentious matters to the attention of the Senior Managers.
7. You will be proactive in undertaking legal research and in particular in respect of new legislation, court practice and procedures. You will support the wider team by preparing briefing notes and delivering training to others about the implications of that legislation on Camden or clients.
8. You will feel confident having robust discussions with external clients and lawyers, who at times may be challenging, taking a lead on correspondence and negotiations with them
9. You will work closely with the Senior Lawyer, Principal Lawyers and Head of Legal Services, notifying them of any instructions or events that would result in a breach by the Council or an individual of any legislation, common law, order or rule or propriety or would constitute a course of action amounting to maladministration.
10. You will be flexible and confident adopting new skills where required to meet renewed corporate or member priorities within your area. At times this may relate to high profile matters which have significant media and/or public attention. You may also be required to undertake any other duties and requirements appropriate to the grading of the post including other areas across the service.
11. You will enable the effective decision-making process of the council by checking and preparing reports for, and attending committee meetings, working party meetings and other meetings (which may be held outside standard working hours) in order to provide legal advice as and when required. You will therefore be confident building relationships with elected Members and other senior stakeholders
12. You will be an exemplar of a legal services team which adopts best practice, making recommendations on any changes in policy or practice as and when appropriate. Proactive in your approach, you will seek out solutions rather than provide advice or support compliance as a default, acting as a role model for colleagues to adopt a similar way of working.
13. You will mentor more junior staff as and when required to assist them in developing skills.
14. You will be an active and compliant user of the team's case management and IT systems, ensuring you are using the system effectively to ensure proper records are maintained relating to all work undertaken. You will be an exemplar of time recording (and meet these targets), file compliance, risk management and other related good practice requirements of an in house legal service.
15. You will focus on the delivery of outcomes and the priorities of the Council as set out in ' We Make Camden'
16. You will undertake any of the responsibilities within this job profile for any other Council or other body which the Council has agreed to provide such services to.

Other important information...

People Management Responsibilities – No direct people management, however, you will mentor more junior staff as and when required to assist them in developing skills relevant to the team's area, work and direction of the Council. Being prepared to attend in the office to share learning and raise the visibility of the legal service.

Work environment

It will be hybrid working - you'll work from our main offices, 5PS, in Kings Cross and be expected to work at least two days a week in the office, occasionally this will be more as in accordance with the business needs or for example to attend departmental meetings. There are other Council offices, including the Town Hall where you will be required to attend for your work. Roles depending on their area of expertise may require extensive preparatory work for court and attendance at court/tribunals. Travel between premises may also be required to attend court and meetings. You attend committee meetings, working party meetings and other meetings in order to provide legal advice as and when required. You will be joining a wonderful team of lawyers and report to the relevant Senior Lawyer for the team. You'll also work closely with colleagues in client departments and other departments as appropriate and be expected to develop and maintain effective and constructive relationships with the following:

- Client Officer
- Chief and Senior Officers (both within the council and within other public bodies)
- Borough Solicitor, Head of Legal Services and Deputy Borough Solicitor, Principal and Senior Lawyers
- Court Officers
- Private Lawyers
- Counsel as required
- Councillors/members of the Public
- Other Local Authorities/Public bodies
- Professional and Technical Bodies

As the majority of teams deal with contentious or sensitive issues, there may on occasions be contact with distressed, agitated or aggressive individuals over the telephone or in the court environment.

Some posts at Camden are politically restricted, which means individuals holding these posts cannot have active political roles. For a list of all politically restricted roles at Camden click [here](#)

The application process

Application will be via the Council's online recruitment portal. Applicants would need to show how they meet the requirements for the role as set out on the page "About You" on the Job Profile. The closing date for applications will be midnight Sunday 17 November 2024. Your application in support should be no more than 2 pages (8000 characters).

Once the closing date for applications has been reached, there will be a short-listing exercise. Those who have been successfully shortlisted will be invited for interview and we are hoping to have interviews on Wed 20th November 2024 between 10-4pm so please keep this date free. We may have an overflow date of Friday 22 November 2024 between 10-4pm also.

The aim is to ensure this process is as supportive and streamlined as possible.

Who we are

Diversity & Inclusion

At Camden, we value and celebrate difference and encourage diversity in all respects. Our diverse workforce ensures we represent our communities to the best of our ability and enables us to make better decisions. Because of this, we particularly welcome applications from Black, Asian and those of other non-white ethnicities, those who identify as LGBT+, neurodiverse and disabled people.

Agile working

At Camden we view work as an activity, not a place. We focus on performance, not presenteeism. We create trusting relationships, we embrace innovation rather than bureaucracy and we value people. Collaboration is the Camden way, silo working isn't.

Asking for Adjustments

Camden is committed to making our recruitment practices as accessible as possible for everyone. This includes making adjustments or changes for disabled people, neurodiverse people or people with long-term health conditions. If you would like us to do anything differently during the application, interview or assessment process, including providing information in an alternative format, please contact us on 020 7974 6655, at resourcing@camden.gov.uk

