

Planning
Legal
Assistant

Salary Range: £37,716 - £42,392

Grade: Zone 3 Level 1

Location: 5 Pancras Square, London, N1C 4AG

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 Legal Assistant 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. 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. Excellent demonstrable experience of working in a legal environment.
2. Excellent demonstrable experience of a high standard of written and oral communication skills in a legal setting.
3. Under management supervision to work with the team manager other team members and other stakeholders including clients to help provide a high quality and comprehensive legal service on all aspects of law relating to planning highways and related areas This would include:-
 - (i) With managerial support advising / drafting / negotiating a range of less complex planning and highways agreements including simple s106 agreements dealing with this to include engaging with clients / applicants representatives as appropriate)
 - (ii) Drafting / managing service of straightforward legal notices relating to planning and highways this to include planning enforcement notices
 - (iii) assisting team manager / other team members in case managing all matters within the team including s106 agreements Planning Inquiries, Appeals, JRs and Injunctions;
 - (iv) With management support advising clients both in writing and orally on simple planning and highways issues;
 - (v) Having a working knowledge of basic principles relating to local government law and Council-decision making
4. Excellent demonstrable IT skills to include familiarity with the Microsoft Office products (Outlook, Word, Teams, ideally Excel and Powerpoint).
5. Excellent demonstrable experience of conducting legal proceedings, including preparation of applications, court papers and witness statements, advising on evidence and handling disclosure
6. 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
7. 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 organisational skills to ensure that deadlines and court directed deadlines are adhered to
2. Ability to work unsupervised where necessary and to seek advice and assistance where required.
3. You will be comfortable acting as an ambassador for legal services across the council, sharing good practice and encouraging innovation amongst colleagues
4. Excellent demonstrable ability to build partnerships and good working relationships both within the service, council and with third parties
5. Excellent oral and written communication skills
6. Excellent legal technical skills
7. A flexible approach to working and an ability to prioritise and organise urgent work
8. An understanding and commitment to the Council's policies on valuing diversity, equality and inclusion.

The things you'll achieve

Example outcomes or objectives that this role will deliver:

1. Effective preparation and conduct of cases from instruction to completion, undertaking legal research where necessary, drafting legal and other court documents
2. Where relevant to the role, to effectively represent the Council before court/tribunals and be responsible for appearing in court at first hearings, pre-trial hearings and generally in other less complex matters. To instruct Counsel in more complex matters, for example, where matters are defended or there are issues of litigation capacity.
3. To provide concise and clear advice to clients in writing and orally
4. To keep abreast of all relevant legislation, court practice and procedures
5. To work effectively and in partnership with colleagues and team members in the delivery of the service
6. You will undertake 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
7. You will work closely with the Senior Lawyer and Principal Lawyer, notifying them of any instructions or events that would result in a breach by the Council or an individual of any legislation, common law, standing order or rule or propriety or would constitute a course of action amounting to maladministration.
8. 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.
9. All Camden employees are expected to be flexible in undertaking the duties and responsibilities attached to their post and may be asked to perform other duties which reasonably correspond to the general character of their post and their level of responsibility.

Other important information...

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. Roles depending on their area of expertise may require extensive preparatory work for court and attendance at court. Travel between premises may also be required to attend court and meetings.

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 relationships will include the following

- Client Officer
- Senior Officers
- Court Officers
- Private Lawyers
- Counsel as required
- Councillors/members of the Public
- Other Local Authorities

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.

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 XXXX (please note, if there is an insufficient level of interest in this role by the closing date, the date may be further extended without notice to applicants. Please continue to check online). 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. We will aim to get back to applicants within two weeks of the closing date. If the closing date is XXXX, interviews will take place on either XXXX or XXXX. Please ensure these dates are available as we may not be able to accommodate requests for alternative dates. An in person interview before a panel will take place and will be in the form of question and answers, you may also be required to undertake a test. The interview will likely take place at 5 Pancras Square, London, N1C 4AG

