

Role profile

Job Title:	SEND Complaints and Tribunal Officer	Grade:	Grade 10
Department:	SEND and Inclusion	Post no.:	64536
Directorate:	Children's Services	Location:	Perceval House

Role reports to:	Lead SEND Complaints and Tribunal Officer
Direct reports:	No direct reports
Indirect reports:	External consultants, interim/temporary staff, Social Care and SEND Training Consultants

Job description

Recruitment practices to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and/or vulnerable adults apply to this post in addition to the requirement to obtain a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Purpose of role

- To represent the Local Authority at the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal and defend appropriateness of the proposed service provision for an individual child/young person.
- To provide key leadership in case management of SEN 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).
- To develop practice across the SEND Assessment and Monitoring Team to reduce the Local Authority's exposure to risk of appeals to Tribunals, complaints, litigation and judicial review/complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman.
- To coordinate and draft responses to complaints, mediation, LGO enquiries and SAR requests

Key accountabilities

- To work directly with parents, schools, parental appointed legal representatives and other professional bodies within the statutory and legal framework related to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal process.
- To take the lead on complex casework, providing effective mediation, drawing on strong negotiation and influencing skills across a range of complex SEN issues between parents, schools and multi-disciplinary practitioners.
- To provide support and coaching to the SEND Assessment and Monitoring Team in the resolution of complex casework, ensuring that EHCP

Coordinators and EHCP Officers build strategic links with schools, education provider services and other agencies to deliver positive outcomes for children and young people and to limit the Local Authority's exposure to risk of appeals to Tribunals.

- To be a source of expert advice to the Council and SEN officers on all aspects of the SENDIST.
- To ensure all documentation linked to SEN appeals is distributed appropriately and within specified time restraints.
- To coordinate allocation and attendance processes linked to mediation and resolution of all disputes relating to the SEND tribunal process.
- To attend resolution meetings (Mediation) with parents and other professionals in an attempt to settle disputed issues without the need for formal legal redress wherever possible. This will include responsibility for negotiating changes to the EHC plans using tact and diplomacy through working with families experiencing emotional turmoil.
- To ensure mediation and problem resolution is an active feature at an early stage in caseworkers' engagement with families to reduce tribunal numbers.
- To prepare evidence and responses to complaints and enquiries including from the Local Government Ombudsman.
- To ensure that the computerised database information is accurate and up to date at all times and that action is undertaken as required to ensure production of accurate and timely information.
- To contribute to the development of multi-agency forums and groups focused on raising standards in the quality of education, inclusion, behaviour and attendance.
- To support the development of training and professional conference offers to practitioners in Ealing.

Key performance indicators

- All National Indicators, Performance Indicators and BVPI's relevant to the specific service area.
- Evidence of personal development as an innovative, enterprising and engaging leader.
- Achievement of annual service-specific recruitment and retention targets.
- Achievement of annual appraisal target - 95%+ of annual appraisals within service to be completed within cycle timescale.

Key relationships (internal and external)

- Staff at all levels within the Council including children's services, performance management, Human Resources and finance.
- Staff in the full range of external agencies with which the service has contact including the ICB, Hospital Trusts, Mental Health services including CAMHS, schools and police.

- Project Steering Groups and Programme Boards
- Members
- Partner consultancies

Authority level

- No funding levels authorised

Person specification

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Essential knowledge, skills and abilities

1. 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.
2. Extensive knowledge and understanding of the impact of SEND on children and young people's educational, health and social care outcomes.
3. Thorough knowledge of the services and agencies which may be involved in EHC assessments and EHC Plan delivery.
4. Extensive knowledge of the types of special needs and disabilities that effect children's education and an ability to develop this knowledge.
5. Extensive knowledge of the issues faced by children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families.
6. Ability to use ICT programmes effectively to capture data and monitor performance (e.g. Microsoft office; PowerBI; Excel).
7. Ability to interpret the local government agenda and apply to local services.
8. Excellent written skills to produce high quality appeal reports and legal case responses
9. Ability to identify the key evidence to support the SEND appeals process. The ability to meet tribunal deadlines.
10. Excellent negotiation skills and the ability to manage oral and written negotiations sensitively, appropriately and successfully.
11. A reflective and evaluative approach to professional performance and development.

Desirable

1. Knowledge of the Equality Act particularly in relation to children and young people with disabilities.
2. Extensive knowledge of other related legislation, including legislation governing Adult Social Care, the Children Act, and safeguarding processes

3. Ability to use the Synergy system.

Essential qualification(s) and experience

1. GCSE English Qualifications, including English and Maths (grade 4 or C and above).
2. Previous SEND case management experience, including significant experience of managing a high case load of complex cases.
3. Experience of communicating with children and their families and professionals concerning complex issues.

Desirable

- Significant experience of Appeals and Tribunals processes and guidance.
- Significant experience of successfully managing conflict and disputes in difficult situations.
- Extensive experience of multi-agency working and working alongside a range of stakeholders to drive multi-disciplinary strategic change.
- Professional qualification in Education, Social Care or Health or transferable professional qualification.
- Degree level qualification.
- Evidence of further education (e.g., BTecs; NVQs or A- Levels)

Values and behaviours

Improved life for residents	Trustworthy	Collaborative	Innovative	Accountable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is passionate about making Ealing a better place • Can see and appreciate things from a resident point of view • Understands what people want and need • Encourages change to tackle underlying causes or issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does what they say they will do on time • Is open and honest • Treats all people fairly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambitious and confident in leading partnerships • Offers to share knowledge and ideas • Challenges constructively and respectfully listens to feedback • Overcomes barriers to develop our outcomes for residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tries out ways to do things better, faster and for less cost • Brings in ideas from outside to improve performance • Takes calculated risks to improve outcomes • Learns from mistakes and failures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages all stakeholders to participate in decision making • Makes things happen • Acts on feedback to improve performance • Works to high standards