

Hertfordshire County Council Job Outline



JOB TITLE: Trainee Solicitor
GRADE: H7 - H9
REPORTS TO: Head of Commercial and Property Law
DEPARTMENT: Resources
TEAM: Legal Services

Purpose of the Job

A comprehensive two year training programme providing a wide variety of legal practice, advocacy, professional skills, support and advice to develop the trainee into a highly skilled solicitor by the end of the contract.

Please note that we are seeking individuals who will undertake the full two year training period and will not make an application for time to count as the trainee gains most benefit from completing the two year period and this is a two year fixed term appointment.

Legal, Democratic and Statutory Services

Legal Services is part of the Resources Department. Legal Services provides a legal service to all departments of the County Council, undertaking a very wide variety of legal practice.

Trainee Solicitors work under close supervision, but they have their own workload and as their training progresses we expect them to take on more responsibility. We aim to give Trainee Solicitors the widest possible experience. At the end of your Traineeship you will have a good grounding not only in local government law, but also in environment law, property law, litigation (in the Magistrates, County and High Court), and commercial law. We will also provide an overview of the law relating to adult and children social care (both child protection and education). We pay for Trainee Solicitors to attend the Professional Skills Course.

We have a successful track record in producing high quality solicitors. The variety of experience we can provide, together with the strong professional training and support all of our trainees receive, means that our newly qualified solicitors are highly respected and highly sought after when they embark on the next stage of their career.

We have a staff development scheme and a Career scheme for Trainees in place to ensure regular assessments of performance and possible development needs.

There are three groups for Legal Services, and within each group there are two teams. The groups are:-

Environment and Dispute Resolution Group

The Environment Law team provides legal advice to the Environment Department in respect of environment, highways, planning and rights of way matters including in particular on legal agreements, statutory orders, common land, waste disposal, minerals, waste planning, deemed planning permission and strategic planning matters.

The Dispute Resolution Team provides expertise in civil and criminal litigation to all departments across the County Council (including Trading Standards) and Stevenage Borough Council (as part of our shared legal service) has an expertise in employment and housing law.

Commercial and Property Law Group

The Commercial Law Group is a centre of expertise to all Departments of the Council, on contract matters (including drafting of contracts & advising on contract terms). In addition, the Group provides legal services on bespoke matters such as advice on capital finance regulations, pensions, intellectual property and on commercial and quasi-commercial ventures, contracts and public procurement issues.

The Property Law team provides property legal services for all departments of the Council including sales, purchases, leases, lease renewals and easements. The team regularly deals with title investigations, landlord and tenant notices, rural estates and the property aspects of commercial ventures and projects.

Adults and Children Law Group

The Adults Children and Education team provides legal advice and legal representation in relation to Adult Social Services (including community care, mental health, issues of mental capacity and Deprivation of Liberty), Children's Social Services and Education. The Adults Children and Education Team provide a Help Desk to give legal advice to schools and academies.

The Childcare Litigation team provides legal advice and legal representation to Children's Services on child protection and adoption matters. The Childcare Litigation team also provides a Help Desk to give legal advice on general child protection queries and initial case referrals.

The duties and responsibilities listed above describe the post as it is at present. The post holder is expected to accept any reasonable alterations that may from time to time be necessary.

Equality and Diversity

Hertfordshire County Council is determined to take action to ensure that our belief in diversity and equality of opportunity is integral to everything we do. It will inform every area of activity; from the way we provide services to the way we employ our staff. It is a central responsibility of all councillors, managers, staff and partners. The council's equality policy 'Putting People First' is available on HertsDirect, on the internal intranet 'Compass' or from your line manager.

Criminal Background Check

Safeguarding children and adults is of utmost importance to Hertfordshire County Council. The Council requires employees to abide by legislation and best practice to enable Hertfordshire to achieve this. This role has been identified as requiring a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check Standard Disclosure. You must therefore ensure that any relevant criminal record check application forms are completed and returned as requested by the Council, as this is deemed a contractual requirement of employment. In addition, you consent to allow the Council to retain a copy of the disclosure certificate within your personal file.

As you require a standard DBS check, you must sign up to and maintain registration with the DBS Update Service whilst employed by the council (costs will be refunded by the council). In line with the requirements of the Update Service you will be required to maintain your personal information.

If you fail to disclose any caution, reprimand or conviction which is later identified on your criminal background check you may be subject to disciplinary action and the Council will review your criminal background record periodically during your employment to identify any changes in circumstances that may be detrimental to your employment.

Please note that additional information referring to the check is in the guidance notes to the application form. If you are invited to interview you will receive more information.

Health and Safety

It will be the duty of every employee while at work to take reasonable care for the Health and safety of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work.

Person Specification

You will be educated to degree level, minimum 2:1 and it would be desirable for the applicant to have a minimum of 12 months relevant legal work experience. In addition you must have passed the Legal Practice Course and have well developed legal skills.

You will have excellent oral and written communication skills with the ability to forge and maintain relationships with a wide range of parties which will include Client Departments, Government Departments, Counsel, the Courts and other relevant external agencies. The way that you communicate in writing, orally and face to face

should be clear, concise and understandable. You must have the ability to work on your own initiative as well as work as part of a Team. You must be willing to learn and embrace new challenges and opportunities and be able to deliver work of the highest calibre within short timescales. You will need to be well motivated with good time management skills and the ability to plan and organise a demanding workload.

You will be required to travel to locations in or around Hertfordshire as part of this role to attend County Council offices and meetings.

Please provide a supporting statement which includes examples and evidence of when you have demonstrated the attributes listed below.

You will be expected to address each point separately and in the order listed.

If you do not complete a full supporting statement in the requested format, your application may be rejected.

1. Educated to degree level (minimum 2:1) and have passed the Legal Practice Course
2. Excellent oral and written communication skills
3. Ability to build and develop professional contacts and relationships in order to provide a responsive and efficient service to clients.
4. Ability to work on your own initiative and as part of a team
5. Willingness to learn and to embrace new challenges and opportunities
6. Good time management skills and the ability to work under pressure and within short timescales
7. Relevant legal work experience