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**Post Specification**

**Organisational**

**Support**

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| **Date** | **November 2024** |
| **Post Title** | Principal Legal Officer |
| **Job Family Role Profile** | OS17 |
| **Final Grade** | Grade 17 |

**To be read in conjunction with the job family role profile**

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| **Purpose of this post**  |
| To provide and participate in the provision of a comprehensive legal service to Cumbria Commissioner Fire and Rescue Authority (the Fire and Rescue Authority), the Office of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner (OPFCC), and Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) across a broad range and variety of legal work.The post holder is the principal legal officer and will be expected to provide effective, timely and reliable legal advice on a range of issues of the highest level.  |
| **Key job specific accountabilities** |
| **General** * Provide legal advice and other relevant legal services to support strategic planning, policy formation, projects, corporate governance, decision making and scrutiny, and provide representation at various boards, working groups and external bodies as required by the role.
* Advise on and execute all legal documents on behalf of the Fire & Rescue Authority, CFRS, and OPFCC.
* Be an active member of the OPFCC/Fire & Rescue Authority Executive Team and the CFRS Senior Leadership Team. Contribute to the strategic direction of all organisations and support the delivery of corporate objectives.
* Prepare and deliver reports and briefings for the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, the Principal Officers in CFRS, the Executive Team and Senior Leadership Team.
* Provide expert advice and support to the Chief Executive of the OPFCC in their capacity as Monitoring Officer for the Fire and Rescue Authority and the OPFCC.
* Oversee and advise were necessary on Data Protection, Freedom of Information (FOIs), Environmental Information Requests (EIR), security of and access to information to ensure that the principles of openness and transparency are weighed against any requirement for confidentiality and/or security of information, whether written, oral, electronic, or otherwise.
* To act as Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) for the Fire and Rescue Authority.

**Employment and civil litigation*** Provide expert advice and assistance to the Fire and Rescue Authority, CFRS and OPFCC in respect of complaints and misconduct cases. This may include presenting complaints/misconduct cases at a disciplinary hearing.
* Provide oversight and review of matters relating to professional standards to ensure the Fire and Rescue Authority, CFRS, and OPFCC maintain high standards.
* Responsible for managing and defending claims, such as civil claims and employment tribunals made against the Fire and Rescue Authority and OPFCC, including instructing and liaising with Counsel, drafting Tribunal papers and applications, advocacy, identifying relevant documents and preparing Tribunal bundles. In addition, provide expert legal advice to support HR, the Executive Team and Principal Officers.
* Manage civil claims/employment tribunal proceedings made against the Fire and Rescue Authority and OPFCC, assessing the evidence and advising on the merits of the claim/tribunal proceedings.
* Work closely with the Legal Services team (provided by Cumbria Constabulary) to ensure that the provision of legal support in terms of complaint matters meet the requirements of the OPFCC.

**Commercial** * Provide accurate and timely expert legal advice on a wide range of commercial agreements including advising on the Fire and Rescue Authority and OPFCC contracts, procurement and tendering procedures. There will be a particular requirement to negotiate, draft, advise upon, check and approve commercial agreements, including PFI, service and supply.

**Property*** Provide expert legal advice on various commercial property law matters in respect of purchase, sale or lease of property/land owned by the Fire and Rescue Authority and OPFCC, including negotiating, drafting and approving agreements, working collaboratively with the Joint Head of Estates.

**Other*** Responsible for managing and working collaboratively with other legal representatives when outsourcing specific legal tasks or services to external firms.
* The accountabilities outlined above cannot totally encompass or define tasks, which may be required of the post holder. They may, therefore, vary from time to time without materially changing either the character or level of responsibility and these factors are reflected in the grade applied to the post.
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| **Please note annual targets will be discussed during the appraisal process** |
| **Key facts and figures of the post** |
| **Budget Responsibilities** | The post holder will not have budgetary responsibility but there must be an awareness of financial implications in their work and the need for efficiency.  |
| **Staff Management Responsibilities** | The post holder will have line management responsibilities for the CFRS Information Governance and Complaints Officer, ensuring all requests for information, including FOI, EIR and Subject Access Requests are dealt with in accordance with legislation. This Officer is also responsible for managing complaints from members of the public and other requests for information such as insurance claims. |
| **Other** | The post holder will work closely with the Chief Executive of the OPFCC and Monitoring Officer for the Fire and Rescue Authority, the Principal Officers and the Chief Finance Officer (Section 151 Officer) to ensure they receive the advice and support required for effective decision making.The post holder will work closely with Cumbria Constabulary’s Director of Legal Services to ensure that the OPFCC receives advice and support on complaints matters generally (e.g., complaint reviews, complaint handling).The post holder is responsible for managing all aspects of legal work relating to the Fire and Rescue Authority, CFRS, and the OPFCC and will be expected to develop their knowledge and skill in order to progress a complex and diverse caseload. The post holder will be expected to keep abreast of changes in law that will impact on the organisations so that the day-to-day provision of legal support meets their requirements.The highest standards of ethics and integrity must be maintained throughout. The post holder will comply with and work within organisational policy, Health and Safety legislation, Police Staff Terms and Conditions, Employment Legislation, the Data Protection Act and the Human Rights Act. The post holder will ensure policies are adhered to and non-compliances are dealt with by taking appropriate action. |
| **Essential Criteria - Qualifications, knowledge, experience and expertise** |
| **Knowledge, Experience and Expertise** * Practising Solicitor or Barrister.
* Proven experience of working across a broad range of legal law matters that are relevant to be able to carry out the functions and responsibilities of the role.
* Experience of operating at a senior level within an organisation, e.g., involvement in policy making and decision making.
* Substantial experience of researching and interpreting complex areas of law and then providing pragmatic advice/guidance.
* Able to communicate and present information effectively, orally and in writing to suit a range of different audiences.
* Resilience and ability to deliver when working to competing deadlines.
* Ability to present cases in courts/tribunals.
* Politically astute in a rapidly changing environment.
* Experience of commissioning and managing services delivered by external providers.

**Qualifications** * Educated to degree level in law or a relevant subject or Graduate member of CILEX (or a demonstrable competence together with a willingness to undertake such training).
* Successfully passed Law Society Finals or Legal Practice Course or equivalent or Bar Vocational Course Examinations, and either (1) a period of recognised training (or equivalent), (2) pupillage; or met all of the necessary Chartered Institute of Legal Executive worked based learning outcomes and completed at least 3 years in qualifying employment required to become a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives (or a demonstrable competence together with a willingness to undertake this training).
* Qualified Solicitor holding a current practising certificate or Qualified Barrister or Qualified Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Legal Executives holding a current practising certificate (or demonstrable competence together with a willingness to undertake relevant training).
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| **Disclosure and Barring Service – DBS Checks** |
| * This post requires a Standard DBS check.
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| **Job working circumstances** |
| **Emotional Demands** | * Moderate
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| **Physical Demands** | * Minimal
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| **Working Conditions** | * Minimal

The post holder will need to have ability to travel and attend meetings, courses, conferences and possibly the courts, both in Cumbria and out of Cumbria, occasionally for longer periods (including overnight stays) when required.Ability to work flexible hours/out of normal hours during busy/critical periods. |
| Important working relationships  |
| **Internal**

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| OPFCC Chief Executive (Monitoring Officer) | Line Manger Advice/Guidance and joint working |
| Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner  | Advice/Guidance and attending meetings to represent the PFCC in his capacity as the OPFCC and/or the Fire & Rescue Authority |
| Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive | Advice/Guidance and joint working |
| Chief Finance Officer (OPFCC and the Fire and Rescue Authority) | Advice/Guidance and joint working  |
| Information Governance and Complaints Officer | Line Manager and ensure they receive the advice and support that they require to meet legal obligations |
| Joint Head of Estates  | Advice/Guidance and joint working |
| Senior Leadership Team (Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service) | Engage at senior level to ensure they receive the advice and support that they require for effective decision making  |
| HR Department (Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service) | Ensure they receive the advice and support that they require for effective decision making |
| Members of staff of the OPFCC | Advice/Guidance and joint working |

**External**

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| Director of Legal Services and the Legal Services team (Cumbria Constabulary) | Work closely to ensure that the OPFCC receives the advice and support that it requires in terms of employment tribunal proceedings/civil claims made against the OPFCC. |
| Partner agencies (i.e., Local Councils) | To act as the principal legal officer for the Fire and Rescue Authority, Fire and Rescue Service and OPFCC. |
| Other Solicitors | Exchange of information and joint working |
| Barristers  | Instructing to act for the OPFCC / Fire and Rescue Authority  |
| Insurers  | Provision of Information  |
| Home Office (and other relevant national organisations such as the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, the National Fire Chiefs Council) | Professionally represent the Fire and Rescue Authority, Fire and Rescue Service and OPFCC, negotiating the best for the fire and rescue service and the OPFCC. |
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| Other factors |
| The post holder will participate in a wide range of legal services activities and may be expected to appear and present cases in court on behalf of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner and the Fire Principal Officers as authorised to ensure that the interests of the organisations and staff are protected.The post holder will be expected to:* Provide effective, efficient and reliable expert legal advice on a range of complex legal topics at the highest level.
* Assist the Chief Executive of the OPFCC in their capacity as Monitoring Officer for the Fire and Rescue Authority and the OPFCC.
* Ensure that value for money is achieved when outsourcing any legal work on behalf of either the OPFCC or Fire and Rescue Authority.
* Keep abreast of changes in law to ensure the smooth running of the organisations.
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| **Organisational Chart – Direct Reports**  |
| Chief Executive (OPFCC) Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive (CFRS)Legal Officer Director of Legal Services (Cumbria Constabulary)Information Governance & Complaints Officers (CFRS) |