



Response to Request for Information

Reference FOI 001218
Date 12 June 2017

Legal Services

Request:

I am a student currently undertaking a Masters in Legal Practice and would be grateful if you would be able to assist me with my FOI request below:

1. How much is the legal services department training budget?
[We do not have a budget, this is with Workforce Development for the whole council.](#)
2. How many fee earners are employed in the legal services department? [31](#)
3. How many paralegals (or of equivalent title) are employed in the legal services department? [None.](#)
4. How many legal executives are employed in the legal services department? [8](#)
5. How many solicitors are employed in the legal services department? [23](#)
6. How many legal apprentices are employed in the legal services department?
[None.](#)
7. What is the salary range of paralegals employed in the legal services department? [N/A.](#)
8. What is the salary range of legal executives employed in the legal services department? [£34,538 - £39,177](#)
9. What is the salary range of solicitors employed in the legal services department? [£41,967 - £45,694](#)
10. What is the salary range of legal apprentices employed in the legal services department? [N/A](#)
11. Can you supply me with a copy of the job descriptions for each of the following roles:
 - 11.1 Paralegal;
 - 11.2 Legal executive;

11.3 Solicitor; and
11.4 Legal apprentice.

Please find attached job description for Legal Executive/Assistant and Solicitor (Generic). We do not have job descriptions for Paralegal or Legal Apprentice as there is no one recruited in these posts.

12. Can employees in the legal services department work from home and/or agile work and what is the policy for this?
Yes. There is an agile working policy in place, see attached.
13. What employee benefits are available for working in the legal services department, for example and including but not limited to: pension schemes, healthcare, flexi-time? Flexi time and superannuation scheme.
14. Is the legal services department an ABS, shared-service and/or in-house department? No
15. Does the legal services department sell services to external clients? No.

**CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL**

JOB DESCRIPTION

POST DESIGNATION: Legal Executive Assistant

DEPARTMENT: Legal Services

DIVISION: Governance

RESPONSIBLE TO: Lead Lawyer

GRADE:

Purpose and Role

1. Under the direction of the Head of Service and the Solicitor/Lead Lawyer to be responsible for the provision of legal services to the Council, the West Midlands Pension Fund, Wolverhampton Homes and other approved partner bodies.
2. The responsibilities of the Teams are:-

Social Care and Education

- The provision of corporate and propriety legal advice
- Legal advice and advocacy for Social Care,(children young people and adults) and Education

Governance and Regulatory

- The provision of corporate and propriety legal advice including governance
- Legal advice and advocacy for planning, highways, environmental services, trading standards, local licensing, Licensing Act, housing disrepair, education, leisure, and employment.
- Preparation of Statutory Orders.
- Information and intellectual property advice.

Economic Regeneration Property and Projects

- The provision of corporate and propriety legal advice
- Conveyancing, property and business law related legal services.
- The provision of legal advice in connection with major projects.
- Contracts and agreements including superannuation admission agreements.

Litigation and Contracts

- The provision of corporate and propriety legal advice.
- Commercial and general litigation including debt recovery; possession of land and property; insurance claims.
- Anti-social behaviour orders.

Key Tasks and Responsibilities_

1. To provide the efficient and cost effective delivery of legal services in the Team within a culture of customer focus, continuous improvement, service excellence and employee motivations and development.
2. To provide support to the teams:-
 - in preparing , revising and finalising documents/reports
 - managing communications, correspondence via (phone e-mail, post voicemail)
 - assisting in the arranging and co-ordination of team/departmental meetings
 - being responsible for c-coordinating private law matters
 - Ensuring effective communication within the Team.
3. To maintain knowledge of current and developing trends in the areas of legal services for which the post holder is responsible and to ensure that the Team benefits from that knowledge.
5. To instruct external Solicitors and Counsel when authorised by the Head of Service.
6. When authorised under the Local Government Act 1972 and the County Courts Act 1984 to appear as an advocate on behalf of the Council in Courts, Tribunals, Enquiries or other hearings as appropriate.
7. To undertake all preparation in connection with the appearance of the case holder as an advocate at court hearings and or advocates/professional meetings
8. To be accountable for the preparation of cases as instructed by and to assist the case holder.
9. To advise on and prepare documentation relating to the acquisition, disposal and management of land and properties.
10. To advise on and prepare documentation relating to contractual arrangements entered into by the Council.
11. To advise on information and intellectual property matters.

12. To promote and comply with the Council's Equal Opportunities and Health and Safety Policies and the Data Protection Act 1998.
13. To act in accordance with the Council's Constitution and other Codes of Conduct.
14. The post holder must recognise that Corporate Parenting is the collective responsibility of the council to provide the best possible care and protection for children who are looked-after.
15. To undertake any other duties appropriate to the grade of the post, subject to any reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010.

**CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL
PERSON SPECIFICATION**

Post Designation: Legal Executive Assistant

Criteria	Essential	Desirable	How Identified
Qualifications	Completion of Level 3 Certificate in Law and Practice	Completion of 2 or more papers of the CILEX Professional Diploma in law Level 6	Certificates
Training	As per CILEX course	Any legal qualification	Application Form/Interview
Experience	Demonstrable proficient performance in carrying out legal duties and contributing to the delivery of high quality legal services	Extended legal experience gained in local government or solicitors firm	Application Form/Interview
Special skills and knowledge	Depending on entry segment: Effective written and oral communication skills. Good analytical and risk management skills. Time management skills and ability to meet deadlines. Ability to appreciate and implement good practice management standards. Experience of using IT. In a legal environment.	Knowledge of local government law and/or practice.	Application Form/Interview
Personal Qualities	Able to work as a team member demonstrating flexibility and confidence.		Application Form Interview
Interest and Motivation	Desire to provide legal services within a culture of customer focus, continuous improvement and service excellence. Desire to expand knowledge and skills.		Interview

Commitment	Shows commitment to personal development through keeping up to date with changes and developments in the law in the relevant areas.		Application Form Interview
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CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title:	Solicitor Legal Services (Generic non Children's Services)
Directorate:	Corporate / Governance
Service:	Legal Division
Grade:	8
Location:	Civic Centre
Reporting to:	Lead Lawyer

Job Purpose and Role

Under the direction of the Head of Service and the Lead Lawyer to be responsible for the provision of a range of legal services across the Council, the West Midlands Pension Fund, Wolverhampton Homes and other approved partner bodies.

The Role can be deployed across any of the following areas of work:

Governance and Regulatory

- The provision of corporate and propriety legal advice including governance
- Legal advice and advocacy for planning, highways, environmental services, trading standards, local licensing, Licensing Act, housing disrepair, education, leisure and employment.
- Preparation of Statutory Orders.
- Information and intellectual property advice

Economic Regeneration Property, Projects and Contracts

- The provision of corporate and propriety legal advice
- Conveyancing and property related legal services
- The provision of legal advice in connection with major projects.

Litigation and Governance

- The provision of corporate and propriety legal advice
- Commercial and general litigation including debt recovery.
- Possession of land and property; insurance claims.
- Anti-social behaviour order.

- Contract and agreement including superannuation admission agreements.

Social Care and Education

- The provision of corporate and propriety legal advice
- Legal advice and advocacy for Social Care, (children young people and adults) and Education

Key Tasks and Responsibilities

- To provide the efficient and cost effective delivery of legal services in the Team within the culture of customer focus, continuous improvement, service excellence and employee motivations and development.
- To make an effective contribution to the organisation and performance management of the Division, Service Cluster and Council including:
 - Assisting in the preparation and monitoring of Service Plans and Balanced Scorecards.
 - Implementation of Employee Performance Review Scheme
 - Ensuring effective communication within the Team
- To maintain knowledge of current and developing trends in the areas of legal services for which the post holder is responsible and to ensure that the Team benefits from that knowledge.
- To undertake legal work with supervision from the Head of Service and/or Lead Lawyer commensurate with the post holder's skills and experience.
- To instruct external Solicitors and Counsel when authorised by the Head of Service.
- To prepare reports for and attend meetings of the Council, the Executive Scrutiny Board and Panels, Standing Bodies, Schools Appeals Panels and any other relevant Member and/or Officer groups.
- To appear as an advocate on behalf of the Council in Courts, Tribunals inquires or other hearings as appropriate.
- To undertake all preparation in connection with his/her appearance as an advocate.

- To be accountable as an Officer of the Court for the Conduct of cases.
- To act in accordance with the Council's Constitution and other Codes of Conduct.
- To participate in staff development, appraisal and training as appropriate, including continuous professional development.
- To comply with the Council's agreed policies and procedures including but not limited to Health and Safety and Equal Opportunities Policies, the Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act, Financial Management Regulations and other relevant Council and Government Regulations, Directive and City wide priorities.
- To undertake any other tasks, duties and responsibilities as directed and appropriate to the grade and role of the post subject to any reasonable adjustments under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as incorporated into the Equality Act 2010.
- To participate in the wider development of the service and contribute to service improvement as required.
- The City of Wolverhampton Council is committed to Corporate Parenting. Corporate Parenting is the collective responsibility of the Council to provide the best possible care and protection for children who are looked after.

City of Wolverhampton Council

Personnel Specification

Knowledge

- Qualified Solicitor/Barrister (with current relevant practising certificate) or shortly to be admitted
- Demonstration of CPD as required by the Law Society or Bar Council. May have additional training in relevant areas of law. Production and presentation of training material
- Working knowledge of one or more areas of law to be undertaken. May have working knowledge of local government law

Skills

- Able to deal with high volume of advocacy
- Effective written and oral communication skills
- Good analytical and risk management skills
- Time management skills and ability to meet deadlines
- Ability to appreciate and implement good practice management standards
- Experience in using IT in a legal environment
- Proven ability to conduct litigation before Magistrates, County Court/High Court and/or Crown Court

Personal qualities

- Able to work as a team member demonstrating flexibility and confidence

Interest and Motivation

- Desire to provide legal services within a culture of customer focus, continuous improvement and service excellence
- Desire to expand knowledge and skills

Commitment

- Shows commitment to personal development through CPD and Employee Performance Review
- High level advocacy skills or drafting and negotiating skills as appropriate enabling the post holder to deal with complex cases evidenced by the post holder's learning and development record and a portfolio of work undertaken
- Able to take on a limited amount of legal work of the level undertaken by Lead Lawyer



Agile Working Protocol

Revised March 2017



**Stronger
Economy**



**Stronger
Communities**



**Stronger
Organisation**

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The City of Wolverhampton Council recognises the need to develop modern working practices to enable employees to maximise their performance and productivity whilst maintaining a good work life balance.
- 1.2 In addition, new technologies are making it easy to access information remotely, work from a variety of locations, whilst promoting a more joined up service and presenting new opportunities. To ensure that the Council's Vision, Values and Goals become a reality they must also continue to attract, develop and retain high quality staff.
- 1.3 Agile working across the council will empower employees to work with their manager to find new and better ways of working in order to maximise productivity whilst also ensuring that a modernised working environment for employees will deliver service improvements for the customer.
- 1.4 Agile working is the term used to describe how employees can work flexibly from any location, whether it is from a council building, within the community, at client sites or by varying degrees of home working and regular hot-desking.
- 1.5 It is accepted that not all roles in the council can be categorised as totally flexible but there is still scope in many cases for some form of agile working. The different ways in which agile working can be undertaken is dependent on the demands and needs of the role, the individual's preferences and circumstances and the service an employee is engaged in. It can be possible, with careful planning for employees to carry out their duties from a variety of different locations.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 An agile approach in the workplace provides employees with an option on how and when they carry out their role and provides an opportunity for the organisation to optimise resources that will ensure that the needs of the service user are priority whilst contributing to efficient delivery of services.

3.0 Benefits

- Provide a long term solution to accommodation availability and efficiency
- Retention of key employees who otherwise may consider leaving due to work life balance issues
- Provides for effective remote working on specific pieces of work or projects requiring focused concentration without distraction

- Reduced travelling time for peripatetic employees needing to access systems from a base

4.0 Scope

- 4.1 This agile working protocol sets out a framework for the workplace of the future and enables employees and managers to carry out their roles whilst maximising effectiveness and efficiency. It provides for and ensures a fair and consistent approach to support and maintains an agile workforce culture.
- 4.2 The protocol will enable managers and employees to understand and apply the basic principles of agile working and give appropriate consideration to specific roles.
- 4.3 The protocol covers the appropriate provision of both secure and reliable information systems that can be accessed remotely so that improvement and efficiencies around updating systems and retrieval of information can be made.

5.0 Principles of agile working

- Agile working will be maximised as part of any future change or restructure and managers will think creatively about how services can be delivered embracing agile working.
- In order for agile working to become successfully embedded within teams, a formal, mutual agreement must be reached between the staff member and manager with regards to the logistics of the agile working arrangement.
- When considering the practicalities of agile working and in particular during initial discussions between manager and employee, both parties must be mindful that some options may not be operationally practical.

A decision will be made regarding an employee's role and which work style is appropriate for this role.

- There must be no compromise of health and safety, information governance, security of equipment or quality of service delivery when agreeing to an agile work style.
- Office space and areas if roles are designated as 'mobile' will be accessed by all, rather than being allocated as a personal space or desk allocated to an individual.

- Managers will recognise that employees irrespective of their agreed work style need rest periods and downtime. Employees have a right to privacy out of hours and to be able to separate their working and home lives.
- Employees will take greater responsibility for managing their time effectively in return for greater flexibility.
- The management of outcomes will underpin the move to and adoption of agile working. Managers will ensure work programmes are planned and agreed and all team members are clear about how performance will be managed.
- ICT/equipment is a critical element of successful agile working therefore the council will ensure that employees are provided with the most appropriate tools to support agile working. The digital transformation programme will ensure the approach is consolidated.
- Once an employee's work style has been agreed /identified, both the employee and their line manager will agree to the terms. Decisions will be made on expected work outputs, arrangements for communication and diary management.
- Housekeeping rules are paramount to the success of agile working and clear guidance will be produced for managers and employees to cover such items as time management, open calendars, making contact etc.

6.0 Allocation of roles to work styles

6.1 An agile working environment not only relies on an effective ICT infrastructure but also on staff engagement to ensure the successful adoption of this new way of working. In this respect, a huge culture shift must be achieved via the use of appropriate change management techniques; a key component in successfully embedding the agile working principles across the Council.

6.2 For existing staff, managers will need to review and assign work-styles to each role. Role profiles will be able to provide some guidance for the manager and employee to enable an appropriate decision. Once employees are made aware of their confirmed work style any immediate concern should be discussed between the employee and their line manager

The recruitment process will need to accommodate such discussion for new appointments.

6.3 Employees may also be able to request a change of work style as part of their performance review. This protocol does not cover contractual changes to working hours which is dealt with under a request for flexible working.

7.0 Agile work styles

7.1 In all cases a work style will be determined by the Head of Service and will be dependent on both the needs of the service and the demands and needs of the role.

7.2 Office based/fixed Employees who:

- Spend most of their time working at a fixed desk in a base location
- Require particular equipment or furniture to carry out their role or work effectively
- Are rarely away from their desk other than for meetings with office colleagues
- Do not have an option to work from home (determined by the head of service) on a regular basis

Examples of an office based employer might be a PA or Payroll Assistant

7.3 Mobile Employees who:

- Spend most of their time working on the move, accessing information, assessing customers, carrying out inspections, regulatory activity.
- Will come in to the base office for specific planned reasons or meetings
- May have the option to work at home when planned and with agreement of their manager

Examples of a mobile worker might be an Enforcement Officer or Social Worker

7.4 Semi-mobile Employees who:

- Spend most of their time working in the base office location.
- May also spend time attending meetings with partners or clients at other sites.
- May occasionally be able to start and finish their working day according to their diary commitments
- May have the option to work at home when planned and with agreement of their manager

Example of a semi mobile worker might be an HR Advisor or Solicitor

7.5 Home based

Employees who

- Spend the majority of their time working at home.
- Come into the office rarely and in some cases for training to use or obtain resources
- Can be managed remotely

An example might be a Benefits Assessor or other role where processing of data is possible through remote technology.

7.6 Non Office Employees who

- Rarely if ever use office space or office equipment due to their role
- Come into the office rarely and in some cases only for training or to use resources
- Can be managed remotely

An example of a non office based employee might be a Street Scene Operative or Car Park Attendant

7.7 *Employees must note that the ability to work from home is not a substitute for sickness or childcare or similar carer responsibilities. It is the staff member's responsibility to ensure adequate provision is in place, should they be able to work from home.*

8.0 House- keeping rules

8.1 Hot Desk

There are varying definitions of a hot desk, however in respect of agile working the council has determined that a hot desk refers to a designated work space for any employee to use at any time. Where applicable, designated banks of hot desks should be used by visiting staff, or alternatively individuals should approach a team member to ask if they may work from a free desk within that team zone.

Team 'zones' refer to a designated area where staff work when at their base.

Employees must remember that if designated mobile they have the option to work at any location and managers must ensure staff feel comfortable when 'touching down' at temporary locations, desks and zones.

8.2 Clear desk

All workstations will be subject to the clear desks and workstations policy. Personal lockers and limited team storage for working papers will be provided.

All employees should ensure that the desk/workstation they have used remains free of documentation, personal belongings and is left clean and tidy at the end of use/end of the day.

8.3 Reasonable adjustments

The Council will of course continue to support reasonable adjustment requirements, as recommended by an Occupational Health specialist and agreed with the manager where this has been deemed necessary. This may include specialist chair, adjustable desk/workstation and/or other equipment. However, these arrangements do not automatically exclude employees from working in an agile way. Each situation will need to be considered on a case by case basis.

Further guidance on housekeeping rules and standards can be accessed on the [Agile Working Portal](#).

9.0 Management considerations (risk)

9.1 The Health and Safety

The Health and safety at Work Act 1974 (HSWA) places specific duties on employers, self-employed people and employees; with employers having a duty to protect the health, safety and welfare of their employees.

In addition, employees and managers who, even occasionally work from home have individual responsibilities under Health and Safety regulations. Employees must complete a Workstation Assessment at home which must then be authorised by their manager

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg226.pdf>

9.2 Personal Safety

Employees must **never** arrange for meetings to take place at home with service users.

9.3 Information governance

Managers and employees must complete the e learning mandatory training and are personally responsible for the security of all data held in paper and electronic form. They should comply with all relevant legislation, policies and procedures irrespective of the work style that they are allocated to.

10.0 Performance management

- 10.1 Managers will need to discuss with employees the basis of any agile working arrangement and this will include agreed working pattern, expected work outputs, arrangements for communication and robust diary management.
- 10.2 Regular supervision must take place between the manager and the employee to discuss workloads, outputs, outcomes and maintain structured discussion and feedback.
- 10.3 Employees must report to the office as requested by managers for any work-related meetings, home working reviews, absence review meetings or to conduct supervision. Diaries must be open and up to date in real time.
- 10.4 Where an employee's performance is not acceptable, the manager can withdraw the employee from agile working arrangements as part of a performance action plan to support necessary improvements.
- 10.5 Any type of agile working arrangement needs to be reviewed regularly to ensure that both service and individual needs are being met.

11.0 Time Management Arrangements

- 11.1 The Working Hours Policy will continue to be relevant to all work styles.
- 11.2 An employee's diary should be kept up to date at all times and a timesheet completed and accessible on a shared drive by the employee's manager.
- 11.3 Accounting periods and flexi day request will remain the same for all work styles.

12.0 Travel expenses

For mobile workers, the designated base for the purpose of travel claims will be the office base. When travelling directly from home to meetings and vice versa, home to work and/or work to home mileage must be deducted.

13.0 Risk and insurance

- 13.1 Council's insurance will cover third party and employer liability risk and cover council equipment in the workplace and at home but will not cover the home or any equipment provided by an employee. A home based worker must inform their insurers that they are home based working if it is not part of their home cover.

14.0 Resources and facilities

- 14.1 Managers, employees, ICT and/or Facilities Management will work together to determine what equipment is required in order to perform the job role whether working from the home, in the field or remote location. ICT will provide the technical expertise and advice on what IT equipment should be purchased and supplied, the cost of which will be met by the service area.
- 14.2 Facilities Management can recommend specifications for suitable furniture and employees are responsible for ensuring that their home is set up for home working. Any additional costs for furniture the employee wishes to purchase will be met by the employee.

15.0 Managers

Service and Team Managers' responsibilities are:

- To be responsible for their own and team member's adherence to this protocol
- To regularly review the agile working arrangements for employees within their area of responsibility, in line with the protocol
- To ensure that all employees within their area of responsibility understand the agile working protocols
- To ensure the agile working concept of managing by outcomes has been fully explained to all employees within their area of responsibility and appropriate methods to monitor output have been mutually agreed.
- To ensure maximum flexibility, openness and constructiveness in relation to discussions and agreements about agile working with employees within their area of responsibility, whilst remaining focused on the needs of the service.
- To ensure all employees are aware of their responsibility to adhere to agile working housekeeping rules.
- To ensure all employees are aware of their responsibility to adhere to the existing council policies and undertake training linked to agile working.
- To ensure all the necessary actions in relation to process have been completed in order to facilitate agile working.

16.0 Employees

Individual employee responsibilities are:

- To ensure they are familiar with the agile working protocols.
- To comply with all conditions and guidance within the agile working policy for example regarding confidentiality, data protection, health and safety, working hours etc., in a reasonable, constructive and appropriate manner.
- To have joint responsibility with their manager in agreeing their level of agility and how they will carry out their role in a more agile way.
- To ensure flexibility, openness and constructiveness in relation to discussions and agreements about agile working with their manager, whilst remaining focused on the needs of the service.
- To adhere to the agile working housekeeping rules
- To adhere to the existing council policies and undertake training linked to agile working.
- To liaise with their manager for advice or clarification as required.
- To ensure all the necessary actions in relation to process have been completed in order to facilitate agile working.

17.0 Associated Policies and Procedures

17.1 Governance

- Data protection
- Confidentiality
- Working hours policy
- Flexible working policy
- Managing Attendance

17.2 ICT

- Email
- Network
- Internet

17.3 **Health and Safety**

- H&S Policy
- Display Screen Equipment
- Lone working

18.0 **Equality**

18.1 The Council has a duty to monitor the application of the policy in relation to protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. This is reported annually in the Council's Equality Monitoring Report.