

Tribunal Lead Job Description



Job Title: SEND Tribunals Lead	Service Area: Education: Learning, Inclusion and Achievement	
Directorate: Children and Young People Directorate	Post Number: 10024687	Evaluation Number: LBNJE 7845
Grade: PO7	Date last updated: June 2025	
Accountable to: Principal SEND Officer		

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

We are committed to and champion equality and diversity in all aspects of employment with the London Borough of Newham. All employees are expected to understand and promote our Equality and Diversity Policy in the course of their work.

PROTECTING OUR STAFF AND SERVICES

Adherence to Health and Safety requirements and proper risk management is required from all employees in so far as is relevant to their role. All employees are expected to understand and promote good Health and Safety practices and manage risks appropriately.

Overall Purpose of Job

1. To provide key leadership, representation and case management support to ensure that the Council discharges its responsibilities effectively in relation to statutory appeals to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SENDIST), which is part of her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service (HMCTS).
2. To contribute to the development of policies and plans for/related to the statutory SEN Service and practice and ensure these are implemented to deliver continuous improvement and to take into account the needs of all sections of the community and to promote equality and social inclusion in all our education settings in the borough, supporting learners with SEN and EHC Plans. To ensure children's needs are met locally and children are placed locally wherever possible and appropriate.
3. Provide advice on learning/case law from previous lower and upper tier tribunals in order to limit the local authority's exposure to risk of appeals, litigation and judicial review/complaints to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO).

4. To ensure that learning from Tribunals, litigation and judicial review/complaints to the Local Government Ombudsman is disseminated across local area services and embedded into practice within the SEND 0-25 Service.
5. To contribute to the development of policies and plans for/related to the statutory SEN Service and practice and ensure these are implemented to deliver continuous improvement and to take into account the needs of all sections of the community and to promote equality and social inclusion in all our education settings in the borough
6. To provide expert legal support and advice to the casework team in the resolution of complex casework, ensuring that local authority professionals build strategic links with schools, parents, 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.
7. The post holder will also lead, motivate, and provide formal line management and supervision To the senior Tribunal officers

Key Tasks and Accountabilities

Key tasks and accountabilities are intended to be a guide to the range and level of work expected of the post holder. This is not an exhaustive list of all tasks that may fall to the post holder and employees will be expected to carry out such other reasonable duties which may be required from time to time.

1. To support the Council's vision to enable every resident under 25 to be safe, happy and cared for, with positive activities to secure their long-term wellbeing.
2. Lead on complex casework, providing effective mediation, drawing on strong negotiation and influencing skills across a range of complex SEND issues to ensure an efficient and effective provision.
3. To provide strategic support and training to the SEN Team and the individual SEN Case Officers to ensure that their statutory responsibilities are fulfilled within the relevant legislation and meet the required statutory and local key performance indicators.
4. Make effective use of the supervision that you both deliver and access from your manager. Use these sessions to provide oversight of areas including staff wellbeing, performance, practice development, budget monitoring and case work, driving quality, consistency and compliance with legislation. Provide, within supervisory relationships, both challenge and support, ensure that objectives are agreed and reviewed throughout the year and provide an environment in which open and honest feedback is provided in a timely way.
5. To contribute towards, and take responsibility for the Team Manager element of the Quality Assurance programme of work to drive the continuous improvement of practice within the service.
6. To ensure value for money, high customer satisfaction, and that strong and collaborative relationships with partners and agencies are at the core of what we do, and robust performance management and monitoring systems are in place.
7. To act as the main point of contact for any operational enquiries that require escalation and a response/resolution from management. This includes case queries requiring a senior member of staff to make decisions, complaints from schools/families/partners, members enquiries and LGO investigations.

8. To develop and implement systems for the monitoring, reviewing and evaluating the teams' work to ensure that services are appropriate and effective and desired outcomes are achieved.
9. To ensure that all tribunals, mediations and resolutions Team staff are completing mandatory training and understand their roles and responsibilities related to safeguarding, modern day slavery, diversity etc accordingly.
10. To ensure effective risk management practice, through the development of excellent inter-agency collaboration and communication and monitoring of practice, paying particular attention to risk factors related to appeals with high cost and budget implications
11. To ensure a robust and holistic induction package and plan is in place for new starters joining the tribunals, Resolutions and Mediations Team and undertake the relevant performance management.
12. Create and maintain accurate recording of data relating to the appeal process and analyse this data to identify trends and inform strategic change.
13. Coordinate and collate information to support the local authority where there is dispute about special educational needs provision and/or placement.
13. Advise on and attend resolution meetings with parents and other practitioners 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.
14. Prepare cases for tribunal, liaising with Legal Services, SEND 0-25 service and multi-agency practitioners, and represent the Local Authority in a legal environment. This includes the preparation of evidence for the Local Government Ombudsman.
15. Support colleagues to prepare chronologies and any other necessary paperwork, arrange and chair conferences with witnesses and perform other duties in relation to First Tier Tribunals and Appeals. Ensuring all documentation linked to SEN appeals is distributed appropriately and within specified timescales.
16. Arrange and identify appropriate representation from the SEND 0-25 Service and other local area services at different meetings with parents, schools and other providers as appropriate, including chairing them as required.
17. Ensure mediation and problem resolution is an active feature at an early stage in caseworkers' engagement with families to reduce tribunal numbers.
18. Present the Local Authority's cases at the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal and defend appropriateness of the proposed service provision for an individual child/young person.
19. Engage with schools and other agencies to develop an awareness and understanding of best practice in relation to assessment and planning and person-centred approaches.
20. Maintain oversight of the work of the team responding to queries on the procedural implementation of the SEND Code of Practice, identifying opportunities for service improvement and sharing these with professionals across the 0-25 service. Work with team managers to identify, manage and resolve any practice concerns. Provide and present high quality and evidence-based performance reports as required.
21. Ensure team members receive regular supervision, manage performance and support team development through annual performance review of directly supervised / line-managed staff.

11. Model and uphold the council's customer standards through things including putting yourself in resident and colleague's shoes, displaying courtesy, and displaying a positive and solution focused mindset, being as helpful as possible as soon as possible.
12. Provide relational leadership, offering reflection, challenge and support, to ensure consistency of high practice standards. Share and promote best practice through the dissemination of statutory guidance and the learning from appeals and disputes.
22. Take responsibility for ensuring 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.
23. Use management information and data to contribute to policies to help improve efficiency and effectiveness of the service and to ensure consistency of decision making through EHC assessments, plans and annual reviews.
24. Implement Newham Council's equal opportunities policies fully, and to work actively to overcome and to prevent discrimination in any part of the project.
25. To ensure value for money is being achieved and maintain accurate records which enable accurate financial monitoring. Be a strong advocate for the effective use of public funds.
26. The post holder may be required to work evenings, weekends and occasional public holidays, in order to meet the requirements of the service.

Personal Specification



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IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

The criteria listed in this Person Specification are all essential to the job. Where the Method of Assessment is stated to be the Application Form, your application needs to demonstrate clearly and concisely how you meet each of the criteria, even if other methods of assessment are also shown. If you do not address these criteria fully, or if we do not consider that you meet them, you will not be shortlisted. Please give specific examples wherever possible.

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QUALIFICTIONS:

To hold a relevant qualification (e.g., teaching, law, social work, childcare, psychology).

Or

Considerable experience of case management of SEND tribunals, complaints or mediation.

Application Form/
Professional qualification
certificate

KNOWLEDGE & EXPERIENCE:

Substantial relevant experience of working in the service area / related profession field, with evidence of work responsibilities appropriate to the role and evidence of appropriate professional expertise.

Extensive knowledge of current legislation, research, policies and guidance and its implications for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Extensive knowledge and proven track record of successfully applying SEND Law and SEND Code of Practice.

Extensive knowledge of, and proven ability of working successfully in, the SEN appeals process to Tribunal.

Extensive knowledge of the types of special needs and disabilities that effect children’s education and an ability to develop this knowledge.

Extensive knowledge of the issues faced by children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities and their families.

Significant experience of successfully managing conflict and disputes, and remaining solution focused, and person-centred, in difficult situations.

Significant experience of effectively negotiating resolutions.

Significant experience of providing support, advice and guidance to education settings and families on special educational needs and disabilities

Knowledge and experience of contributing to the development of services, policies procedures and practices.

Application Form/Interview/Test

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<p>Experience of supervising or line management of staff.</p> <p>Significant experience of promoting the effective use of public funds.</p>	
<p>SKILLS AND ABILITIES</p> <p>Excellent interpersonal skills. Proven ability to negotiate and persuade and build and maintain effective working relationships at all levels. Proven ability to communicate with, engage with children, young adults, carers, partners and stakeholders, in complex situations.</p> <p>Excellent written skills to produce high quality appeal reports and legal case responses.</p> <p>Excellent advocacy skills and people management skills.</p> <p>High level analytical skills problem solving and decision-making skills.</p> <p>Good planning and organisational skills, with experience of working within general professional guidelines or organisational policy, to achieve service requirements.</p> <p>Proven initiative and judgement to identify and resolve problems</p> <p>Good ICT skills - both standard Microsoft applications and social care record and data systems.</p> <p>Good reporting and recording skills in accordance with expected statutory and internal processes.</p> <p>Proven ability to to work under pressure and manage conflicting and changing demands through good time management.</p>	<p>Application Form/Interview/Test</p> <p>Application Form/Interview/Test</p> <p>Application Form/Interview/Test</p> <p>Application Form/Interview/Test</p> <p>Application Form/Interview/Test</p> <p>Application Form/Interview</p> <p>Application Form/Interview/Test</p> <p>Application Form/Interview/Test</p> <p>Application Form/Interview/Test</p>
<p>OTHER SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS</p> <p>This post is subject to an enhanced DBS check.</p> <p>Willingness and ability to work occasional evenings and weekends to maintain service delivery.</p> <p>Politically Restricted Posts</p> <p>The Local Government & Housing Act 1989 imposes restrictions on political activities for certain categories of local government employees. In accordance with this legislation, this post is politically restricted and as such the post holder must refrain from being a candidate for election, an election agent or sub agent, an officer of a political party, or subcommittee of such a party or canvass, speak to the public at large, publish written or artistic work or display posters in support of a political party or subgroup of such a party.</p>	<p>Satisfactory clearance at conditional offer stage</p> <p>Application Form/Interview</p> <p>Application Form/Interview</p>