

## Legal Services Manager (Litigation)

Our vision is to create communities where everyone has a safe home in a place where they're proud to live. We're big and we're local. Residents are at the heart of all we do and we use our size to influence positive change in the areas where we operate.

It's also about living our values which are at the **HEART** of what we do. All colleagues are expected to demonstrate a commitment to our values through their behaviours, actions and words on a daily basis. As a valued member of the Southern Housing Team, you'll embrace our Values to inspire others as well as yourself to be

- **H**onest
- **E**fficient
- **A**ccountable
- **R**espectful
- **T**rusted

### You'll demonstrate our HEART values in your behaviours. You'll:

- Be authentic, open, and transparent in your actions and words.
- Believe that by working together we accomplish more, and work hard every day to improve services, efficiency, and value for money.
- Take responsibility for delivering excellence and own your own actions.
- Embrace difference, and put our residents, colleagues and our partners at the heart of all you do.
- Do what you say you will and be relied upon to keep your promises.

And, of course, show commitment to our approach to Equality Diversity & Inclusion, Health & Safety, Compliance and Code of Conduct policies and practices within Southern Housing.

### The role

To provide high quality legal advice on litigation related matters in particular housing management and landlord & tenant contentious matters to Southern Housing and its Group partners. To draft legal proceedings, witness statements and pleadings as instructed and carry out advocacy (excluding trials) as required across all Southern Housing regions. To prepare and provide effective training as required on a variety of housing law issues to colleagues. Be a single point of excellence for one of 4 main areas of focus for this side of the team: Disrepair; Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB); leaseholder disputes and tenancy compliance.

Reporting to: Head of Legal Services (Litigation)

### The location

You'll be based at one of our main offices in either Farringdon, Croydon, Isle of Wight, Maidstone or Sittingbourne, with the option for working in a hybrid way when appropriate and as agreed with your manager.

### What you'll be doing:

- To provide legal advice and assistance housing management and landlord & tenant matters. To include conducting efficient and effective litigation to include but not limited to, anti-social behaviour injunctions; anti-social behaviour possession claims; committal applications; tenancy fraud possession claims; access injunctions; housing disrepair claims; prosecutions under the Environmental Protection Act; applications to the Court of Protection and money claims, briefing Counsel and/or conducting advocacy where appropriate in order to protect the interests of Southern Housing and its partners.
- To assist and provide advice on other contentious matters.
- To assist with instructing external solicitors for matters that cannot be dealt with in-house.
- To assist in developing the in-house legal provision to meet the needs of Southern Housing and its partners.
- To ensure that legal work is carried out in house where this is more cost effective including preparing and drafting all own pleadings to include but not limited to, notices of seeking possession; claim forms; particulars of claim; defences; reply to defences; part 20 counterclaims; injunctions; committal applications, witness statements; case summaries; lists of issues; chronologies and trial bundles. Ensure communication between instructing officers and the legal team is effective and efficient.
- To develop and implement processes and procedures to ensure the efficient and effective provision of housing management and other litigation services and advice on landlord & tenant law including the provision of witness support in particular to those witnesses involved with anti-social behaviour cases which includes out of office hours visits to their homes, if required.
- To comply with the approved processes and procedures, including maintaining data records and registers as required by the Director of Legal Services. Ensure sound data management, both in case management and in passing on key data to other departments in a timely fashion.
- To keep up to date with the constitutional, legal and regulatory framework within which Housing Associations operate. This also includes keeping up to date records in accordance with the Solicitors Regulation Authority's continuing competence requirements. To ensure that such knowledge is shared to encourage a knowledgeable and compliance focused culture.
- To support the junior legal team members and volunteers and provide general assistance to the legal team.

- Liaising with clients, suppliers and staff at all levels across the organisation. Build and maintain effective working relationships with external contacts and partners including updating colleagues in respect of changes in law.
- Ensure confidentiality, sensitivity and a professional approach in all activities.
- To provide cover for Head of Legal Services (Litigation) in their absence.

## **As a People Manager you'll:**

- Inspire, lead and be a role model, consistently demonstrating the Southern Housing culture and values.
- Manage, motivate, support, and develop those reporting to you, leading by example to ensure excellent services are provided in line with organisational policies.
- Champion resident focus and ensure those reporting to you put residents at the heart of all they do.

## **On your focus area you'll:**

- Provide support and guidance to the other lawyers on those of their cases.
- Be responsible for development and maintenance of templates and precedents for their designated work type reflecting lessons learnt.
- Be a single point of contact for the stakeholder team and for reporting and continual service improvement and alignment with stakeholder priorities.

## **What you'll need:**

### **Knowledge & experience**

#### **Essential**

- Qualified solicitor barrister or Chartered Legal Executive.

#### **Desirable**

- Experience of undertaking housing management litigation casework, particularly for housing associations or other public sector bodies.
- Experience of conducting litigation including advocacy.
- Experience of providing training to other lawyers and clients on housing law and litigation

- A thorough understanding of legal processes, Housing and Landlord & Tenant law Experience and understanding of cultural change management within a complex environment
- Experience of developing and implementing processes and procedures within housing management litigation or contentious property legal work
- Experience of developing talent and supporting and up-skilling junior staff
- Experience of conducting and advising on complex contentious litigation

## **Skills**

- Excellent IT skills in particular Microsoft Office suite and Outlook.
- Ability to present information in a variety of forms to a high standard, including excellent verbal and written communication skills.
- Excellent legal drafting skills

## **Abilities**

- The post holder will be party to highly confidential and sensitive data and the ability to maintain confidentiality is of the utmost importance.
- Conveys confidence in own ability, decisions and actions and takes personal responsibility for the consequences.
- Seeks feedback and learns from experience.
- Willing to admit mistakes.
- Is positive and upbeat.
- Talks positively about Southern Housing and its work.
- Engages with all aspects of work, team meetings, road shows.
- Considers impact of own actions on others.