 WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL	<h2>Job Description</h2>		Job Reference
			<Insert the post number>
Job Title	SEND Tribunal Officer		
Service	Children's Services: Education & SEND	Team	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Service
Location	Shute End / Hybrid Working		
Reports to	SEND Practice Manager		
Responsible for	Assistant Tribunal Officer		
Grade	Type of position:		Date
10	Permanent Full Time		September 2024
<p>This job description has been designed to indicate the general nature and level of work required of the post to indicate the level of responsibility. It is not a comprehensive or exhaustive list and the line manager may vary duties from time to time which do not change the general character of the job or the level of responsibility entailed.</p>			
<h3><u>Service Purpose</u></h3>			
<p><u>Special Educational Needs (SEND) Team</u></p> <p>The SEND Team ensures that Wokingham Borough Council fulfils its statutory duties in relation to legislation around the assessment of children and young people's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).</p> <p>The SEND team delivers new statutory assessments within the 20-week timeframe. It manages the annual review process and updates Education, Health and Care Plans (EHC Plan) as required. The team monitors outcomes for children and young people with SEND in who are in receipt of an EHC Plan and support commissioned by WBC. They collect data related to the number and type of requests for EHC needs assessments and the type of provision required to meet the needs of children and young people with SEND to support WBC in their SEND sufficiency duties.</p>			
<h3><u>Purpose of the role</u></h3>			
<p>The SEND Team acts on recommendations made through the multi-agency SEND Panel. This includes decisions that can be appealed by parents/carers and young people to the First-tier Tribunal (SEND), such as whether to carry out statutory EHC Needs Assessments, issue an EHC Plan following assessment, or make amendments following an annual review of an EHC Plan.</p> <p>Working within the SEND Service, the post holder will be responsible for managing all SEND appeals registered by the First-tier Tribunal (SEND). This will involve managing the entirety of the SEND appeals process, from the point of receipt to representation of the Council within a SEND tribunal hearing, if/when required. The post holder will also be expected to deliver a comprehensive analysis of the range of information and reports available and the Council's position in each appeal, identifying and managing reputational and financial risk, and will be the primary point of contact with key stakeholders including parents/carers, young people, colleagues within Education, Health and Care, and the First-tier Tribunal itself.</p> <p>The SEND Tribunal Manager will also manage all pre-action Judicial Review case management, preparing responses and ensuring that deadlines are adhered to and risk is managed on behalf of the Council.</p>			

Main Accountabilities

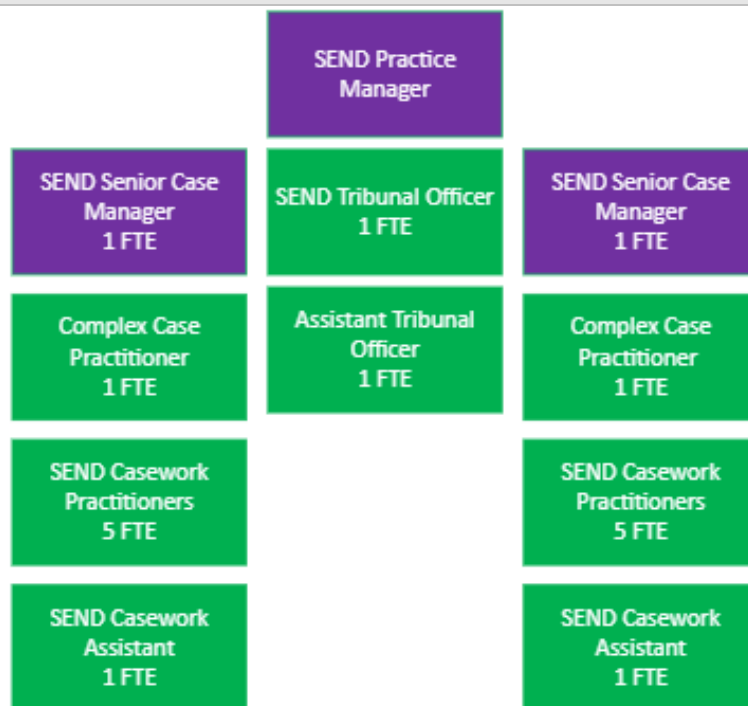
The SEND Tribunal Manager will manage all SEND Tribunal appeals from registration to completion, including representing WBC's position within a Tribunal hearing, strict adherence to all judicial deadlines, and ensuring that any post decision, final Order statutory deadlines are met.

1	<p>Providing detailed and robust responses to all appeals and complying with Tribunal Orders and Directions to ensure that all judicial deadlines are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completing initial appeal responses detailing WBC's position in the appeal. • Gathering, collating and providing evidence to the First-tier Tribunal within judicial deadlines. • Comprehensive, expert analysis of complex information to support WBC's position within an appeal and make recommendations to SEND Panel where required. • Working with families and legal representatives to reach early resolution, particularly with the use of Working Document process. • Completing bundling and appeals related administrative tasks where necessary. • Responding to Cost Applications on behalf of WBC. • Producing cost comparisons and providing decision – making panels with clear rationales with regards to where the LA has a defensible position. • Managing all correspondence and directions activity on behalf of WBC with legal counsel with regards to progressing with an appeal and completing any actions required.
2	<p>Managing and representing the Council through attendance at First-tier Tribunal (SEND) legal hearings, including Case Management Hearings and Judicial Alternative Dispute Resolution (JADR) hearings.</p> <p>This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying, supporting, and preparing witnesses and other professionals involved in Tribunal proceedings. • Supporting professionals in preparing witness statements. • Presenting complex legal arguments to a Judge and defending the Council's position where other parties are often legally represented.
3	<p>Decision making and financial responsibility (agreed with the Head of Service) within a SEND Tribunal legal hearing.</p>
4	<p>Managing all SEND related pre-action Judicial Review proceedings, preparing responses and coordinating WBC's response with counsel where appropriate, and ensuring risk is managed and timelines are adhered to.</p>
5	<p>Providing expert knowledge on the: SEND Code of Practice 2015, Children and Families Act 2014, Case Law Rulings and SEND Regulations to support the effective deliver of the SEND Service and help to make informed decisions on how to proceed or defend its position within the Tribunal arena.</p> <p>Working with the SEND Management team, providing expert knowledge on the legislative framework to inform decision making at a senior level.</p>
6	<p>Prioritise, plan and organise all aspects of live appeals to ensure the delivery of those aspects of the service for which responsible.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is completed on time and to the quality and standards required. • Changes to priorities are accommodated. • Service is delivered to organisational requirements and reflects customer and stakeholder requirements, within organisational constraints. • Professional and legal compliance is assured. • Delegating appropriate tasks to an Assistant Tribunal Officer, ensuring that they are meeting their deadlines and working with All parties collaboratively and in a timely manner.
7	<p>Undertake / support consultation procedures. Identify issues, resolving as appropriate and escalating complex problems if necessary.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities are undertaken according to relevant guidelines / regulations / procedures. • Customer / stakeholder views are available to inform recommendations. • Data and measurements are accurately recorded. • Liaising with schools with regards to their consultation responses to ensure that they are legally compliant and robust. • Create legally compliant guidance on responding to consultations for educational settings to adopt across the Borough.
8	<p>Collate process and analyse complex information. Ensure all required records and information are maintained correctly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information / applications are processed according to procedure. • Information is managed efficiently and accurately. • Data is recorded and stored in compliance with national standards and can be shared, as appropriate, with other agencies. • FOI's relating to Tribunals are responded to in a timely and accurate manner as and when required. • Data management is maintained relating to the Tribunal appeals and written papers as required for service managers, councillors or other such bodies are produced.
9	<p>Prepare and present results / responses / reports / recommendations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate, complete, and relevant information / reports are provided for internal and/or external use. • Issues are clearly summarised, progress and implications are reported. • The council's position is clearly stated.
10	<p>Provide expert advice, guidance and support to colleagues, service users and partner agencies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert opinion, advice, support and interpretation are provided on the legislative process and framework, including decisions on whether council opposes the Tribunal appeals. • Escalated or complex issues are managed effectively. • Queries / complaints and complex issues are effectively managed through to a satisfactory conclusion or escalated as necessary. Appropriate action is taken to reach resolution, representing the views of the service. • Policies, procedures, and controls ensure that the area of responsibility is compliant with all relevant legislation, codes, regulations, guidelines, standards and best practice. • Clear record of actions, circumstances and decisions are provided. • Information, advice and support are accurate, timely and constructive. • Problems are identified. • Issues are managed through to a satisfactory conclusion or escalated if appropriate. • Risk to the Council / customers is minimised.
11	<p>Implement a risk management programme and advise on issues affecting Council service areas in relation to SEND Tribunals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all stakeholders are aware of and comply with relevant regulations and procedures. • Business threatening situations are recognised, planned for and managed or escalated as appropriate. • Potential risk, including financial, is identified and mitigation is planned. • Systems and governance are in place to and respond promptly to critical events. • Continuous effective service is provided.
12	<p>Develop and lead a comprehensive training and reporting programme related to SEND Tribunal activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce reports on all Tribunal related activity, including expert analysis on trends and outcomes, including recommendations to inform best practice. • Present reports and Tribunal related updates to Heads of Service, the SEND Assurance Board and the Council's Senior Leadership Team as required. • Lead on the financial analysis of Tribunals with the service's lead finance partner to identify and manage risks associated with appeals. • Using Power BI to develop and manage oversight of a comprehensive Tribunal dashboard to support performance management.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and deliver training to key stakeholders, including SEND Team, educational settings as well as parent/carer events to raise understanding of the Tribunal process.
13	<p>Line management of the Assistant Tribunal Officer, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High quality, regular supervision • Training and upskilling as required • Ensuring the performance of the Assistant Tribunal Officer is in line with service standards and expectations, including strict adherence to legal deadlines and a focus on quality and consistent communication with key stakeholders, notably parents and carers, educational settings and the First-Tier Tribunal itself.
Supervision Received	SEND Practice Manager.
Supervision Given	Assistant Tribunal Officer – 1 FTE, responsible for supporting the SEND Tribunal Manager in the oversight and management of appeals.
Contacts & Working Relationships	SEND Team, Professional Services (such as educational psychologists), health and social care colleagues, educational settings, legal counsel, parents/carers, children and young people, elected members, DfE advisors, Ofsted.
Management of resources or budget	<p>Decision making and financial authority for the Council's HNB agreed with the Head of Service for tribunal hearings as required.</p> <p>The financial consequence to the Council for this post is significant and the SEND Tribunal Manager will be expected to lead in financial risk analysis and forecasting with the Finance Team, in line with appeals to the First-tier Tribunal (SEND).</p>
Special Factors	<p>Enhanced DBS required.</p> <p>Ability to travel to a variety of locations in borough to develop relations with educational settings and attend/deliver training to key stakeholders.</p>

Organisation Chart



Person Specification

Focus on describing the qualifications, skills, knowledge and experience an individual will require to successfully undertake the role. These should be split between essential and desirable.

Qualifications	Essential	Desirable
Education to degree level or equivalent.	E	
Law Degree, Para legal, CILEX or LPC qualification or working toward		D
Technical Skills.	Essential	Desirable
The ability to collate and interpretate complex case material and form considered judgements, using and interpreting statute and case law as it applies in the SEND context	E	
Ability to develop a comprehensive risk and performance reporting framework, and the analytical ability to deep dive and consider causation and effect in relation to the SEND Appeals and Mediation Pathways.	E	
Ability to gather and collate insight and translate into impactful learning & development interventions for the wider SEND service, Families and Schools	E	

Proficient in use of Microsoft office packages, with enhanced ability in using MS Excel to integrate data and MS PowerPoint to present findings	E	
Ability to specify Business Intelligence usage requirements to a technical audience and work collaboratively to develop dashboards and reporting systems		D
High level negotiation, persuasion and influencing skills	E	
Knowledge	Essential	Desirable
Maintains a high level of legal knowledge as it applies to SEND including the ability to confidently translate Part 3 of the <u>Children and Families Act 2014</u> , <u>The Special Educational Needs and Disability Regulations 2014</u> and <u>SEN and disability case law</u> into working practice.	E	
Knowledge of resolution best practice and methods to deescalate and achieve win-win scenarios	E	
Experience	Essential	Desirable
Significant experience in a SEND operational role as a senior practitioner, Manager, or Tribunal specialist	E	
Experience of representing local authorities within Mediation and/or SEND Tribunals, including at hearings.		D
Experience in managing others to deliver high performance and standards and achieve targets set		D
Completed by:	Jamie Conran - Head of SEND	Date: September 2024