

# Legal Services Manager

## > Operations > Support and Legal

### What's it all about

Leading, and empowering a team to effectively deliver first class legal services improving business and customer outcomes whilst minimising risk and spend.

You will be a voice to the business on legal matters, particularly in housing management issues and associated legal risk, building great relationships with the operational teams in the process. You'll take ownership of cases, working collaboratively to drive them to conclusion.

### How you'll make a difference

This is a pivotal role responsible for delivering legal services to operational colleagues in a consistent and effective way. You will empower your team to tackle legal referrals sensitively that where possible, allow residents to remain in their homes and live their lives well.

To this end you will have prior knowledge and experience to ensure your team are accountable and up to date when handling legal referrals. You will identify and mitigate business risk while remaining resident centric.

You will work collaboratively with operational teams to provide guidance, training and advice. This will empower them to understand wider legal implications and make informed management decisions.

### How you'll do it

- Monitor your team's caseloads to ensure performance indicators and are met. Lead on business reporting as required.
- Ensure cases are managed in accordance with practice management standards and procedures set for the team and report on compliance.
- Ensure a consistent, collaborative and visible service is being delivered during busy periods. Appropriately manage resources where staff are absent.
- Manage your own caseload of legal cases as required, providing specialist advice and to support the overall capacity of your team.
- Ensure high risk legal cases are flagged and prioritised. Anticipate risks to the organisation and propose mitigations.
- Work collaboratively with relevant teams on disrepair cases that present a risk to the organisation.
- Build and maintain relationships with third party panel solicitors. Ensure cases referred are managed in accordance with contract agreements and in line with NHG's values.
- Manage legal spend in accordance with budget and matrix manage operational teams in order to have ownership of legal spend. To this end, maximise cost effectiveness through an evaluation framework weighing up risk and deciding when to settle cases and when to utilise panel solicitors.
- Empower your team to be a specialist resource providing legal guidance to frontline teams, to develop their knowledge to support residents and safeguard NHG's position.
- Lead and mentor a team of paralegals to ensure assigned casework is managed effectively and to high quality.
- Identify career progression, support and training needs in your team and put in place appropriate training and learning plans.
- Swiftly address performance and conduct issues in line with NHG policy.
- Lead your team to design and deliver legal training to operational teams as required and in response to common themes and risks, including developing new and improving existing processes to allow the operational teams to self-serve

- Work closely with the operational, tenancy sustainment and safeguarding team and wider legal team, to be confident that legal escalation against residents takes place once all reasonable proactive engagement has been exhausted, always focusing on tenancy sustainment objectives.
- Forge excellent relationships with operational managers and act as a point of contact for senior staff. Adapt the service to the needs of their region.
- Be accountable for the preparation, drafting and response to all legal documentation, bundles, evidence and witness statements. Ensure your team delivers these to a high standard. This includes internal papers with recommendations for decision.
- Horizon scan and stay up to date with developments in the law to build on your already proven knowledge. Keep abreast of all legislative and case law updates. Disseminate information to relevant staff highlighting potential impacts on customers and NHG.
- Ensure you and your team represent NHG well in external settings such as court, multi-agency meetings, local authority engagement meetings, mediation and casework panels on tenancy and lease breach issues.
- Work in an advocacy role to the operational department. Offering counsel on legal matters to allow them to make informed management decisions and effectively manage their work.
- Ensure your team update required systems and reconcile data from various sources to provide a clear update on caseload and risk.
- Work with managers, heads of and wider operational teams to review risk and limit the instruction of external solicitors with cost focus in mind.
- Ensure your team provide visible support to the business, carrying out surgeries, training and advice drop ins regularly.

- Work in accordance with team procedures and policies to ensure sound working practices and effectiveness of the team.
- Deputise as required by the Head of Legal and Support.

## All about you

### Behaviours for success

Our values set out what we stand for. You'll need to show us how you match them and how you'll behave to ensure those are visible when carrying out your work.

- Compassionate
- Progressive
- Dependable
- Inclusive
- Empowered

For each value, we've created example behaviours to help you understand our expectations in more detail. This role is at **manager** level.

### Essential knowledge, experience and skills including qualifications and professional membership

Pending confirmation of legislative changes, this role may require a qualification to demonstrate competence. If not already qualified, there may be an expectation to study towards a professional qualification.

- Substantial knowledge and experience in dealing with housing litigation matters including possession, injunction, disrepair, breach of tenancy claims including anti-social behaviour, fraud and sub-letting, property disputes, leasehold management issues including breach of lease claims, tenancy succession and rent debt recovery and service charge disputes.
- Experience supervising others' work and managing a high functioning team.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills

- Ability to work independently and lead a team in a fast-paced environment
- Proven ability of exercising good judgment and discretion to identify and mitigate against significant risk
- Excellent project management and planning skills with the ability to prioritise own work and the capacity and capability of the legal team.
- Strong commercial awareness and excellent analytical and problem solving skills.
- Excellent organisational skills, accuracy and attention to detail
- Proficiency in using legal databases and Microsoft office suite
- Excellent research skills
- A track record of developing strong relationships within internally and third party stakeholders including panel solicitors
- Hold a valid Practising Certificate (or equivalent) to enable the person in post to (1) carry out Reserved Work as defined by the Solicitors Regulation Authority (2) be responsible for the supervision of members of the team who are not qualified to undertake Reserved Work.
- Substantial PQE working within a social housing legal department in private practice, a housing association or local authority and managing own legal caseload of similar cases is required.