

**UNISON**  
**PARALEGAL**  
**LEGAL DEPARTMENT**

**REF:**

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Grade:** 7

**Hours:** 35 per week

**Location:** Legal Department, UNISON Centre, NW1 2AY

**Reports to:** Head of Legal Services / Manager in the team

**OVERALL SUMMARY**

Reports to the Head of Legal Services or a Manager in the Legal Services team. Assisting solicitors with case management, litigation assistance and legal research. Provides comprehensive legal secretarial, clerical and administrative support within the Legal Services Team. Duties include monitoring and tracking progress of cases; maintaining and co-ordinating electronic calendars; setting up meetings, travel arrangements, dealing effectively with telephone enquiries and processing incoming and outgoing post and email. Understanding and ability to prioritise and ensuring compliance with legal deadlines. Requires a can-do attitude to respond to the rigours of the legal department and to use initiative to problem-solve. Maintains strict confidentiality and discretion in relation to all aspects of the post. Enthusiastic and experienced team member, with excellent word processing and communication skills and the ability to organise own workload and manage pressure and priorities. The Paralegal is part of the Legal Services Department based at the UNISON Centre, Euston Road.

The unit manages the following national functions:

- The provision and management of all of the Union's Legal Services, including the internal and external provision.
- Legal Complaints and feedback
- Strategic Litigation, such as the ET Fees Litigation at the Supreme Court
- HR policy and staffing matters, including defending litigation.

The post-holder must have the following skills and abilities:

- Relevant legal qualifications (see below)
- Excellent communication skills
- Excellent administrative skills
- Commitment to team working
- Ability to work under pressure and to deadlines
- Undertaking legal research
- Attending Court/tribunals and taking notes
- Ability to manage their own workload
- Understanding of the crucial principles of legal deadlines.
- An awareness of UNISON's aims objectives and values and of equalities

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**PERSON SPECIFICATION AND SELECTION CRITERIA**

UNISON is an equal opportunities employer, committed to providing equal opportunities regardless of race or ethnic origin, gender identity, family situation, sexual orientation, disability, religion or age. This person specification is designed to help members of interviewing panels' judge the qualities of interviewees in a systematic and consistent way and in accordance with UNISON's equal opportunities policy. It is given to all job applicants for information.

**Assessment code**

**A – Application AS – Assessment PI – Panel Interview**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Factor level criteria and relevant job information</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>A predominately practical and procedural knowledge across a technical and specialist area of work and understand how their job relates to others</b>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has relevant qualifications as a Legal Executive or a law degree or Graduate diploma in law and seeking to qualify as a Chartered Legal Executive solicitor or barrister.</li> <li>• Excellent administrative skills and knowledge of Microsoft packages.</li> <li>• Understanding of the crucial principles of legal deadlines; and recognises, prioritises and ensures compliance with legal deadlines ensuring that those deadlines are not missed.</li> <li>• Assisting with the preparing of legal documents such as letters before claim and preparing court documentation such as bundling and pagination.</li> <li>• Understands importance of applying policies and protocols.</li> <li>• Provides signposting and guidance to members and colleagues about UNISON's legal services, internal protocols and process, and facilities where members seek access to general and specialist legal information.</li> <li>• Assist solicitors in the team with case work and with referring cases to external solicitors and barristers, including cases that require immediate attention because of legal deadlines.</li> <li>• Attends regular meetings with managers to track progress on cases, chase outstanding matters and managing up.</li> <li>• Drafts regular reports for NEC committees.</li> <li>• Drafts responses to all communications on behalf of all members of the Legal Services team on a range of types of queries, legal or otherwise.</li> <li>• Prepares documentation for example to obtain legal aid for members.</li> <li>• Follows procedures for prioritising case work and requisitioning and authorising payments. Uses report templates.</li> <li>• Reviewing documents for formatting and spelling errors and correcting them.</li> <li>• Answering phones and emails in a timely fashion.</li> <li>• Undertaking legal research using Practical Law, Lexis Nexis, West Law or other appropriate tools.</li> <li>• Attending Court/tribunals and taking notes of proceedings.</li> </ul>		
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<b>Thinking Skills</b>	<p><b><u>Problem Solving/ Coordination / Administration</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintains a comprehensive list of legal cases within the unit and tracking and reporting to the Head of Legal Services on outstanding matters.</li> <li>• Maintain and review office systems at regular intervals - coordinating the updating of protocols, precedent letters, client care letters, and systems.</li> <li>• Reminding team in advance, and preparing report templates, agenda reminders for regular meetings and circulating agendas and drafting minutes and undertaking follow-up actions from meetings.</li> <li>• Point of contact within Legal Services for Subject Access Requests and coordinating responses for such requests.</li> <li>• Electronic and paper filing and maintaining electronic files</li> <li>• Transfer emails to SharePoint or other internal system</li> <li>• Gather and send regular updates to NEC on Legal Services data and statistics</li> </ul>		
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<p>Interpersonal and Communication Skills</p>	<p><b>Exchange orally or in writing complicated or sensitive information with a range of audiences</b></p> <p><b><u>Communications/Co-ordination Internal</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contacting and chasing colleagues, arranging meetings and seeking information.</li> <li>• Liaise with all departments in the Union including GSG, Regional Secretaries, national departments, regions and branches.</li> <li>• To participate in unit meetings and any other meetings as directed by the unit head.</li> <li>• To draft reports and external correspondence as required.</li> <li>• To deal with queries from members, branches, and staff.</li> <li>• Review team's diary to arrange meetings and identify best dates.</li> <li>• Liaise with team on maintaining their diaries, arranging team events and other matters</li> <li>• Book catering/meeting rooms,</li> <li>• Liaises barristers chambers/ solicitors firms about the payment of fees and arranging meetings.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Communications/Co-ordination External</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To liaise with external solicitors, barristers (including QCs), Court staff and Barristers Chambers. Drafts correspondence to members, Solicitors, Courts, Tribunals on behalf of the team; arranging meeting, and finalising any payments.</li> <li>• Where required, to liaise with other external suppliers including IT suppliers, insurers and lawyers.</li> <li>• Liaise with team and travel company and book travel and accommodation for team.</li> <li>• Liaising and co-ordinating, as appropriate, work with other sections/ departments, regions, and outside organisations.</li> <li>• Seeking and taking detailed information from members on cases other anything else.</li> <li>• Order stationary and anything else for the team using the team's credit card, or other means.</li> <li>• Delivering up documentation to court where needed.</li> </ul>		
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Physical Skills	<p><b>Where there is some demand of precision and speed or considerable demand for precision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Predominately desk-based role.</li> <li>• Awareness of and the ability to use Information and communications technology.</li> <li>• Attention to detail, and skilled typing</li> </ul>		
Initiative and Independence	<p><b>Working within recognised procedures and prioritising specific tasks.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has regular meetings with the Head of Legal Services/other Managers to track progress on cases and follows teamwork plans.</li> <li>• Regular use of Microsoft Outlook, SharePoint, Word and Excel, relevant legal case management system.</li> <li>• Commitment to team working and equal opportunities.</li> <li>• Self-motivated.</li> <li>• Ability to work under pressure and to deadlines</li> <li>• Ability to manage their own workload</li> <li>• Making arrangements for meetings and carrying out associated work or, as appropriate, liaison with other organisations or individuals making these arrangements.</li> <li>• Understands the problems facing members.</li> <li>• An awareness of UNISON's aims objectives and values and of equalities</li> </ul>		
Recruit. Neg. Org & rep	<p><b>Providing support for recruitment, negotiation, organisation, or representation of members</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refers situations where a member is requesting assistance over and above the agreed criteria and drafts requests to the Chair of Services to members for legal assistance in exceptional circumstances to extend membership to bolster strategic group claims designed to recruit and retain membership.</li> <li>• Coordinates and facilitates legal updates for U-magazine / the Activist magazine in relation to UNISON's and other legal victories.</li> </ul>		
Responsibility for Staff	<p><b>The job involves little or no direct responsibility for the supervision, direction or co-ordination of staff</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>		

<p>Resp. Resources</p>	<p><b>Some responsibility for material, financial or information resources.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recording new cases; maintains a spreadsheet of cases referred to Legal Officers and following up deadlines, and tracking case referrals.</li> <li>• Requisition and payment of invoices, and tracking and chasing and maintaining payment information in spreadsheets</li> <li>• Some monitoring and assessing external disbursements and reviewing it against previous expenditure on similar matters and in relation to current budget position.</li> <li>• Making arrangements for meetings and carrying out associated work or, as appropriate, liaison with other organisations or individuals making these arrangements.</li> <li>• Archiving files and maintain database of closed files.</li> <li>• Liaises with barristers chambers/ solicitors firms about the payment of fees and arranging meetings.</li> </ul>		
<p>Physical Effort</p>	<p><b>The job makes moderate physical demands</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Types with accuracy and speed for work often at short notice.</li> <li>• Considerable part of the day spent word processing</li> <li>• Prepares and proofreads documents and checking reports</li> <li>• Setting up and coordinating webinars</li> </ul>		
<p>Mental Effort</p>	<p><b>The job makes moderate demand on mental effort.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works to urgent/fixed deadlines</li> <li>• Observes/maintains strict confidentiality in relation to legally privileged matters and highly sensitive, confidential information involving claims brought against the union by staff and members.</li> <li>• Drafting of documents, and agendas, taking minutes at meetings, dealing with conflicting priorities,</li> <li>• Co-ordinating and chasing work deadlines for the team.</li> <li>• Maintaining the Legal Services SharePoint page and ensuring efficient ways of working within the team.</li> </ul>		

Emotional Effort	<p><b>The job makes some emotional demands</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handles calls daily including cold calls.</li> <li>• Deals with agitated and distressed members / members of staff, some who demonstrate mental health problems.</li> <li>• Provides help and advice on legal services scheme and how to access services – often in urgent situations.</li> </ul>		
Working Conditions	<p><b>Some exposure to disagreeable, unpleasant or hazardous environmental working conditions or people related behaviour</b></p>		
<b>TOTALS</b>			