

UNISON

Job Brief: Legal Services Coordinator – Legal Department

Introduction

UNISON is Britain's leading public services trade union, with over 1.3 million members working in the public services, private, voluntary and community sectors and in the energy services. We employ 1200 staff, approximately 370 at our national centre in Euston, central London, and the remainder in our 12 regions across the UK, including Northern Ireland.

UNISON is the leading Union in local government, the NHS, community and voluntary sector, education and children services and a range of private and public sector employers where we negotiate pay and terms and conditions of employment.

UNISON Legal Services conducts strategically important and often ground-breaking employment litigation on behalf of the Union and its members: successful cases include the challenge to the imposition of Employment Tribunal fees in the Supreme Court and Lock v British Gas in the ECJ.

Legal Services manages the following national functions:

- The provision and management of all the Union's Legal Services.
- Managing the external legal advice scheme that provides a comprehensive suite of legal services to members.
- Conducting in-house strategic litigation, such as the ET Fees Litigation at the Supreme Court.
- Legal Complaints and feedback.
- HR policy and staffing matters, including defending litigation.

The Legal Services Coordinator is a member of the Legal Services team based at the UNISON Centre, Euston Road.

The Role

The Legal Services Coordinator provides administrative support to the Legal Services Team. The Legal Services Coordinator also supports the team with managing the Union's comprehensive Legal Services Scheme and assisting team members with the other varied work of the department, including case management and litigation support.

UNISON's Objectives and Aims

The four key objectives determined by the National Executive Council are:

- i) Recruiting, organising, and representing members.
- ii) Negotiating and bargaining on behalf of members and promoting equality.

- iii) Campaigning and promoting UNISON on behalf of members.
- iv) Developing an efficient and effective Union.

The key aims of the Union as detailed in our Rule Book seek to:

- i) Extend and promote our influence in the workplace and in the Community.
- ii) Promote, safeguard and facilitate participation by all members in the Union's democracy, with special regard to fair representation for women, black members, disabled members, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members.
- iii) Provide effective standards of service in the areas of representation and advice, information to members on the work of the Union, the provision of financial benefits and the maintenance of educational facilities for members.

To further these objectives and aims the Legal Service Coordinator must have the following skills and abilities:

- Have excellent communication and numeracy skills.
- Work independently with responsibility for their work and be an effective problem solver.
- Have excellent knowledge of Microsoft packages, particularly Excel, and have strong organisational skills.
- Be a team worker and have a commitment to team working.
- Work under pressure and to deadlines.
- Manage their own workload in conjunction with the requirements of the team and be able to manage up.
- Able to innovate; improve and refine systems.
- Think pragmatically.
- Understand the role of trade unions and their structures.

They will be expected to:

- i) Provide comprehensive secretarial, clerical and administrative support within the Legal Services Team
- ii) Monitor and track progress of cases and referrals.
- iii) Maintain and co-ordinate electronic calendars, including their own in order to keep an overview of the work of the team and to provide timely reminders.
- iv) Maintain appropriate files and storage using electronic case management systems.
- v) Arrange meetings and travel.
- vi) Communicate with our members as well as with tribunals, courts, solicitors, barristers, and the Union's senior management including

- the General Secretariat and other bodies.
- vii) Deal with telephone enquiries and process incoming and outgoing post and email.
 - viii) Assist other team members with case management.
 - ix) Maintain strict confidentiality and discretion in relation to all aspects of the post.
 - x) Assist Legal Officers as appropriate.

Working Time

Working in the Legal team can be at times demanding and some attendance outside of the conventional working day may be required. UNISON is a strong supporter of the work/life balance ethos and has a cross Union flexible working policy.

UNISON

LEGAL SERVICES COORDINATOR

LEGAL DEPARTMENT

JOB DESCRIPTION

Grade: 7

Hours: 35

Location: UNISON Centre

Reports to: Head of Legal Services / Legal Officers as appropriate

Overall Summary

The Legal Services Coordinator provides administrative support to the Legal Services Team. The Legal Services Coordinator also supports the team with managing the Union's comprehensive Legal Services Scheme and assisting team members with the other varied work of the department, including case management and litigation support.

Key Tasks and Responsibilities

This is a specific post, and the duties will be drawn from the following:

Administrative/ organisational

- Provide comprehensive secretarial, clerical (including processing invoices for payment) and administrative support within the Legal Services Team.
- Providing other support as required to Legal Officers and the Head and Director of Legal Services
- Monitor and track progress of cases and referrals.
- Maintain and co-ordinate electronic calendars, including their own, in order to keep an overview of the work of the team and to provide timely reminders.
- Anticipating deadlines, to follow up on communication and progress work without being prompted.
- Maintaining and monitoring team calendars
- Maintain appropriate files and storage using electronic case management systems.

- Arrange meetings and travel.
- Assist in the organising of seminars and sector conferences.
- Such other tasks as are necessary for the running of the department.

Communication

- Communicate with our members (showing empathy where necessary) as well as with tribunals, courts, solicitors, barristers, and the Union's senior management including the General Secretariat and other bodies.
- Deal with telephone enquiries and process incoming and outgoing post and email. Liaise and co-ordinate, as appropriate, work with other sections/departments, regions, and outside organisations.

General

- Assist other team members with case management.
- Maintain strict confidentiality and discretion in relation to all aspects of the post.
- Assist Legal Officers as appropriate.
- Any other duties relevant to the overall responsibilities of the post

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.

PERSON SPECIFICATION AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Assessment code

A – Application AS – Assessment PI – Panel Interview

Factor level criteria and relevant job information	Level	Score
A predominately practical and procedural knowledge across a technical and specialist area of work and understand how their job relates to others		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good organisational skills and understands how to set up systems to track documents, referrals and cases. 	A,AS,PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands spreadsheets, basic statistics, and competent mathematical skills. 	A,AS,PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some knowledge of basic employment and personal injury law principles, litigation deadlines, and legal services offered by UNISON. 	A,PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent administrative skills and knowledge of Microsoft packages and required to be SharePoint super user. 	A	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding of the crucial principles of legal limitation deadlines; and recognises, prioritises and ensures compliance with legal deadlines ensuring that those deadlines are not missed. 	AS,PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assisting with the preparing of legal documents such as letters before claim, pre-action protocol letters, and preparing court documentation such as bundling and pagination. 	A,PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates and drafts precedent letters and documents. 	A	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands importance of applying policies and protocols. 	PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	AS,PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Assists 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.</u> 	AS,PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attends regular meetings with managers to track progress on cases and all other referrals, chase outstanding matters and managing up. 	AS,PI	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafts regular reports for NEC committees. 	A	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	A	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares documentation for example to obtain legal aid for members. 	A	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows procedures for prioritising case work and requisitioning and authorising payments. Uses report templates. 	PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing documents for formatting and spelling errors and correcting them. 	AS,PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answering phones and emails in a timely fashion. 	PI	
<p><u>Problem Solving/ Coordination / Administration</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintains a comprehensive and ongoing list of legal cases and all other referrals within the unit and tracking and reporting to the Head of Legal Services on outstanding matters at regular intervals. 	P,PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates innovation and suggests solutions on how to proceed with matters (cases and advice) to move things along. 	A, AS,PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain and review office systems at regular intervals – coordinating, drafting and updating protocols, precedent letters, client care letters, and systems. 	PI	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	AS,PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assesses queries before forwarding on and seeks further information from referrer if necessary. 	A,PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Point of contact within Legal Services for Subject Access Requests and coordinating responses for such requests. 	PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Electronic and paper filing and maintaining electronic files. 	A,AS,PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transfer emails to SharePoint or other internal system 	A, PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Manages team's SharePoint site. 	A,PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gather and send regular updates to NEC on Legal Services data and statistics. 	A,AS,PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring the various systems and protocols within UNISON Legal Services and identifying more efficient processes when needed. 	AS,PI	
<p>Exchange orally or in writing complicated or sensitive information with a range of audiences</p> <p><u>Communications/Co-ordination Internal</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contacting and chasing colleagues, arranging meetings and seeking information. 	A, PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with all departments in the Union including GSG, Regional Secretaries, national departments, regions and branches. 	PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To participate in unit meetings and any other meetings as directed by the unit head. 	A,PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To draft reports and external correspondence as required. 	A,AS,PI	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To deal with queries from members, branches, and staff. 	A, PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and liaise with team to arrange meetings and identify best dates. 	A, PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coaching colleagues on new and existing electronic systems 	A, PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Book catering/meeting rooms, 	A	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that the Legal Services calendar is up to date with details of team movements and annual leave. 	A, PI	
<p><u>Communications/Co-ordination External</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To speak to and liaise with external solicitors, barristers (including KCs), Court staff and Barristers Chambers. 	A, PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clarifying queries and providing information to colleagues and external actors (e.g., courts, lawyers, members etc). 	A, PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafts correspondence to members, Solicitors, Courts, Tribunals on behalf of the team; seeking solutions to problems, arranging meeting, and finalising any payments. 	A, AS,PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaises with barristers' chambers/ solicitors' firms about the payment of fees and arranging meetings. 	A, PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to liaise with other external suppliers including IT suppliers, insurers and lawyers. 	A, PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiating on venue costs, planning away days and seminars. 	A,	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with team and travel company and book travel and accommodation for team. 	A	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaising and co-ordinating, as appropriate, work with other sections/ departments, regions, and outside organisations. 	A, PI	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeking and taking detailed information from members on cases other anything else. 	A, AS, PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Order stationery and anything else for the team using the team's credit card, or other means. 	A, PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivering up documentation to court where needed. 	A, PI	

Physical Skills	Where there is some demand of precision and speed or considerable demand for precision		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close attention to detail, and skilled typing, formatting and cross referencing e.g., for High Court litigation. 	A, AS, PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Predominately desk-based role. 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Awareness of and the ability to use Information and communications technology. 	A, AS, PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Producing litigation documentation, bundles, scripts, publicity and seminar documents at speed. 	A, PI	
Initiative and Independence	Uses discretion and initiative, required to organise own workload		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has regular meetings with the Head of Legal Services/other Managers to track progress on cases and all other referrals and instigates and follows teamwork plans. 	A, PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and prioritising work in conjunction with the work of the team 	A, AS, PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An understanding of legal litigation deadlines to avoid negligence claims against the Union. 	A, AS, PI	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular use of Microsoft Outlook, SharePoint, Word and Excel, relevant legal case management system. 	A, PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organising various cycles of meetings internally and with external legal providers. 	A, PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafting agendas, writing up minutes and carrying out action points. 	A	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works on confidential matters relating to members and staff. 	A, PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists the Head of Legal to allocate cases and requests for advice by liaising with colleagues and members. 	A, PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment to team working and equal opportunities. 	A, PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-motivated and acts on own initiative in accordance with the requirements of the service. 	A	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refers critical faults and issues affecting colleagues – from IT matters, litigation issues to outages which may cause issues with a service. 	A, PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to work under pressure and to deadlines 	A, PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to manage their own workload 	A, AS, PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain memberships for Legal Services by ensuring payment and completing relevant paperwork with the Director/Head of Legal Services for obtaining annual practising certificates for Solicitors in the department with the Solicitors Regulation authority, and other membership bodies, such as SRA, ELA, ILS, APIL and others. 	PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure payment for Legal resources such Legal libraries (Apil, Lexis, Practical law) 	PI	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making arrangements for meetings and carrying out associated work or, as appropriate, liaison with other organisations or individuals making these arrangements. 	A	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understands the problems facing members. 	PI	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An awareness of UNISON's aims objectives and values and of equalities 	A, PI	
Recruit. Neg. Org & rep	Providing support for recruitment, negotiation, organisation, or representation of members		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updating membership information on collective claims, and ensuring case web, and case referrals are up to date. 	A, PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinates and facilitates legal updates for U-magazine / the Activist magazine in relation to UNISON's and other legal victories. 	A, PI	
Responsibility for Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervision or management of staff Coordinating a weekly Support Staff meeting to ensure office cover, and ensure deadlines are met. 	A, PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaison for setting up inductions and new starter information and requirements for new staff. 	PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training temporary staff, including ensuring confidentiality is maintained. 	PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follows up with team members on ongoing projects, and matters. 	A, PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally co-ordinating health and safety queries within the team. 	PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keeping the team calendar updated with regards to annual leave. 	A	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covering work of paralegals. 	A, AS, PI	
Resp. Resources	Some responsibility for material, financial or information resources.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintains departmental databases and filing system - recording new cases; maintains a spreadsheet of cases referred to Legal Officers and all other referrals and following up deadlines, and tracking case referrals. 	A, AS, PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requisition and payment of invoices, and tracking and chasing and maintaining payment information in spreadsheets 	PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some monitoring and assessing external disbursements and reviewing it against previous expenditure on similar matters and in relation to current budget position. 	A, PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain memberships for Legal Services by ensuring payment and completing relevant paperwork with the Director/Head of Legal Services for obtaining annual practising certificates for Solicitors in the department with the Solicitors Regulation authority, and other membership bodies, such as SRA, ELA, ILS, APIL and others. 	A, PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure payment for Legal resources such Legal libraries (Apil, Lexis, Practical law) 	A, PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making arrangements for meetings and carrying out associated work or, as appropriate, liaison with other organisations or individuals making these arrangements. 	A, PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Archiving files and maintain database of closed files. 	A, PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nominated organisation contact for Solicitors' Regulations Authority, Employment Lawyers' Association and Industrial Lawyer's Association. 	PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaises with barristers' chambers/ solicitors' firms about the payment of fees and arranging meetings. 	A, PI	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Orders stationery, publications and replacement office furniture and equipment. 	A, PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In charge of the office credit card for purchase 	A, PI	
Physical Effort	<p>The job makes moderate physical demands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Types with accuracy and speed for work often at short notice. 	A, AS, PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Considerable part of the day spent word processing and producing documents at speed. 	A, AS,PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares and proofreads documents and checking reports 	A, AS,PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting up and coordinating webinars 	A, PI	
Mental Effort	<p>The job makes moderate demand on mental effort.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Works to urgent/fixed legally mandated deadlines 	A, PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strict requirement for attention to detail of court forms, court documents and legal letters. 	A, AS,PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	A, PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafting of documents, and agendas, taking minutes at meetings, dealing with conflicting priorities, 	A, AS,PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-ordinating and chasing work deadlines for the team. 	A, PI	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining the Legal Services SharePoint page and ensuring efficient ways of working within the team. 	A, PI	
Emotional Effort	The job makes some emotional demands. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Handles calls daily including cold calls. 	A, PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deals with agitated and distressed members / members of staff, some who demonstrate mental health problems. 	A, AS, PI	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides help and advice on legal services scheme and how to access services – often in urgent situations. 	A, PI	
Working Conditions	Some exposure to disagreeable, unpleasant or hazardous environmental working conditions or people related behaviour		
TOTALS			