

Job title: Investigator

Team / department:	Operations –Resolution Centre
Reports to:	Team Leader
Salary / Grade:	£29,175 (with potential to go up to £31,713 pa dependent on performance and only after passing probation. Increases are not automatic or guaranteed after passing probation, all increases are based on performance)
Contract type:	Permanent
Location:	Edward House, Birmingham
Working Hours:	37.5 hours per week. Applications are welcome for full-time and part-time working. There must be a minimum of 22.5 hours per week over 3 days for this post.
Work Pattern:	The organisation operates flexible working with its hours of operation being from 7.00am to 21.00pm Monday to Friday. You can work your contracted hours within these times, however these are agreed on appointment and dependant on your role. The telephones are currently open between 08:30 – 17:30
Checks:	All staff will be expected to undergo a basic criminal records check

Job description

Background

The Legal Ombudsman is an independent service that helps to resolve issues between the public and members of the legal profession through impartial investigation and balanced reasoning. When we look into a complaint, we look at the facts and weigh-up both sides of the story.

Last year we helped to resolve over 6,500 legal services issues between members of the public and their lawyers. We not only help to get resolutions to complaints from the public; we also help providers improve their communications, service levels and complaint handling processes to prevent the need for complaints in the first place.

Our aim is to provide a complaint handling service that is fair, accessible, easy to use and which focuses on resolving complaints informally and quickly.

Job summary

The Legal Ombudsman has a statutory mandate to resolve disputes with minimum formality. We receive complaints covering any legal area, with varying degrees of complexity and from a diverse range of people. Being able to analyse detailed information, get to the heart of the matter and explain to people with differing degrees of understanding is key.

An investigator's role is to act as the principal point of contact for consumers who have a complaint about a member of the legal profession. If a complaint is accepted in for investigation, an investigator will then attempt to resolve the complaint, informally or through a written report. It is essential to have excellent verbal and written communication skills.

An Investigator will use a range of skills to assess if a complaint is in jurisdiction and achieve a fair outcome. These include negotiating and agreeing appropriate outcomes and, if appropriate, remedies with the parties. Investigators will also need to use their judgement to decide on the approach in order to reach an appropriate conclusion to the complaint. Excellent telephone, customer service and negotiation skills are critical, alongside strong analytical, written communication and IT skills.

Investigators are expected to effectively manage a caseload of complaints at various stages of the complaints process, working with stretching targets and balancing competing demands. They work independently, but are part of a team managed by a Team Leader. Each team also contains a number of Ombudsmen who support the Investigators by providing advice, guidance and direction on cases where required.

Key responsibilities (core)

- Accurately gather and record appropriate information about complaints received by various communication methods (telephone, letter, email).
- Where required, give accurate, good quality information and guidance to people who contact us to help them make a complaint to their lawyer, to us, or to signpost them elsewhere when we cannot help.
- Identify and make reasonable adjustments for individual communication needs.
- To discuss complaints with complainants and service providers effectively on the telephone, and use negotiation and influencing skills to achieve appropriate outcomes.
- Assess and decide whether complaints lie within the jurisdiction of the Ombudsman and write reasoned recommendations for this.
- Summarising appeals to an Ombudsman to review a decision that a complaint is out of jurisdiction.
- Manage parties' expectations about the process, timeframes, and what will be needed from them.
- Plan proportionate investigations on cases across a range of different complexities, identifying the appropriate scope of the case, what information is needed, and gathering evidence needed to investigate the complaint given its scope.
- Analyse and evaluate evidence and comments from the parties to reach a proportionate and fair view of the service provided and identify opportunities to achieve an agreed outcome.

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- Recognise cases where an agreed outcome is unlikely to be achieved or is not appropriate and make recommendations to both parties, and ultimately to the Ombudsman for decision.
- Write clear, accurate and concise letters and case decisions
- Manage a portfolio of cases at different stages of our business process effectively
- Meet performance expectations on answering telephones, responding to enquiries and progressing complaints by milestone, whilst working as part of a team to support delivery of organisational performance.

Main working relationships:

Internal

- Investigators
- General Enquiry Team
- Team Leaders
- Operations Managers
- Ombudsmen
- Corporate Staff

External

- Complainants and their representatives
- Lawyers and others providing legal services
- Voluntary sector and advocacy organisations
- Staff of the Approved Regulators
- Staff of other Ombudsmen schemes
- Other external entities (e.g. court clerks; Land Registry, Criminal Cases Review Commission, Home Office)
- Translators & interpreters

General

Observe the requirements of the Legal Ombudsman's policies including the Health and Safety, Data Protection, and the Equality and Diversity Policies.

Personal and professional development is encouraged.

Person specification

Qualifications:

Essential

- Five GCSE Grades A - C or GCSE O Level passes (or equivalent), ideally English Language.

Skills and experience:

Analytical	<p>Ability to critically examine information and issues to arrive at well-reasoned and appropriate conclusions that stand up to scrutiny, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrable ability to apply sound reasoning to reach logical conclusions• Strong analytical skills, including getting to the heart of an issue through effective scoping• Demonstrable adaptability and resourcefulness in resolving complaints• Experience or demonstrable ability of gathering, critically assessing and analysing information to draw logical conclusions based on evidence
Impactful	<p>Ability to use communication skills to influence a diverse range of people, building consensus and understanding through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experience of providing a service to a diverse range of people over the telephone and in writing.• Experience of, or demonstrable ability to, deal confidently and authoritatively with people in challenging and sensitive situations.• Demonstrable collaborative approach to work, and ability to work effectively as part of a team• Demonstrable report writing skills and ability to communicate with clarity and brevity using plain English
Constructive	<p>Ability to successfully navigate changing and sometimes challenging environments to respond to service users' needs and achieve personal and organisational goals through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experience of using negotiation and persuasion skills to achieve appropriate outcomes• Demonstrable telephone skills• Demonstrable ability to negotiate and influence parties to complaints to find appropriate outcomes
Approachable	<p>Creates an open and reassuring culture to earn the trust of others and generate confidence in the case-handling process through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrable ability to empathise, build trust and confidence through appropriate and professional communication• Able to adopt an open and appropriate communication style that fosters genuine understanding and makes the service inclusive and

	<p>accessible, treating people with courtesy, dignity and respect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to demonstrate the Legal Ombudsman's values and behaviours and contribute to a positive organisational culture, in particular approaching situations with enthusiasm, positivity and integrity • Works effectively in a team and positive in both sharing knowledge and delivering and receiving timely and constructive feedback
Open-minded	<p>Approaches problems and new ideas without prejudice to generate fair solutions that maximise the potential of available resources, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrable ability to find pragmatic or creative solutions to intractable problems • Ability to identify and suggest improvements to ways of working • Acts with neutrality and objectivity, and is willing to reconsider conclusions in light of new information or ideas • Able to reach logical conclusions based on a balanced analysis of evidence.
Professional	<p>Strives for excellence in individual and team endeavours to meet expectations and deliver a high quality service through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrable ability to deliver on promises and meet agreed deadlines in a performance driven organisation • Ability to pursue personal and organisational goals with energy and determination • Experience or demonstrable ability to manage and effectively progress multiple priorities; working to and meeting deadlines • Shows commitment to and pride in high quality customer service delivery • Demonstrable personal resilience • Strong IT skills to support effective caseload management • Maintains customer confidentiality, handles sensitive information appropriately and exercises discretion and sensitivity at all times.