

Paralegal - Childcare JOB DESCRIPTION

Smith Partnership is a leading law firm in the Midlands. A forward thinking and progressive firm employing around 200 staff throughout 5 offices.

Job Title:	Paralegal - Childcare
Department:	Childcare
Hours:	Full time - 35 hours
Location:	Stoke
Reporting to:	Senior Associate

Main Purpose:

To support and manage a varied and challenging caseload from initial instruction right through to representation, to ensure high levels of client care and service in all areas of childcare law.

Job Content – Main Duties, Tasks, and Responsibilities:

- To prepare and produce, under appropriate solicitor supervision, bundles of documents for legal proceedings.
- To assist with the preparation, collation and distribution of documents and information, as appropriate.
- Assisting solicitors with preparation for hearings, managing evidence, and ensuring compliance with court directions
- Under appropriate solicitor supervision, to complete all relevant legal aid forms.
- Under appropriate solicitor supervision, take initial instructions and prepare statements for clients.
- Under appropriate solicitor supervision, to instruct Counsel and prepare straightforward briefs.
- Client contact point for new cases/allocation and when team is at court.
- Liaising with clients and key stakeholders keeping them informed as appropriate of case.
- Work with key external stakeholders as necessary.
- Ensure accurate records are kept and updated as necessary utilising the case management system meeting deadlines as required.
- Attending clients/visitors on telephone and in office when required and deal appropriately with their enquiries.
- Dealing with bills, invoices and payments (when required).
- To attend Court and sit behind Counsel/Solicitor Advocates as appropriate ensuring notes are taken.
- Assist with the instruction of experts.
- Attend PLO / PPM meetings with clients (Legal Help) – Supported and supervised
- Compliance with LAA audits
- Drafting statements, chronologies, court bundles, instructions to counsel and the applications under the Children Act 1989
- Attending meetings with fee earners and taking notes;
- Understanding and working within safeguarding frameworks.

- Closing files – following internal procedures in a timely manner.
- Completing outline C2 applications to court on all issues for fee earner and serving, requisitioning cheques and paying court fees
- Setting up, monitoring, claiming and paying DNA and drug and alcohol testing
- Administrator for LAA online service – point of contact for all LA / FE queries
- Completing all LAA applications, extensions of scope and limits, prior authority and billing as above for checking by fee earner
- Team Diary management, including setting up client appointments, entering and monitoring key dates, arranging assessments by experts and conferences with Counsel.
- Support to the team with client contacts, instructions, follow up, statement preparation and checking.
- Case management - File set up, full conflict checks, liaison with counsel and experts, getting costs quotes/time frames, arrange claiming and paying disbursements, on split fee experts;

GENERAL

- To promote the image of the firm at all times as a professional, effective and efficient provider of legal services.
- Ensure compliance with firm policies, regulatory requirements including SRA standards.
- To perform any task or duty under the reasonable direction of senior staff within the firm.

STAFF MANAGEMENT

- Responsibility to provide general advice and assistance to staff and managers – including training and development needs.

This is not an exhaustive list of duties and responsibilities, and the post holder may be required to undertake other duties, which fall within the remit of this role.

This Job Description covers the current range of duties and will be reviewed from time to time. Smith Partnership reserve the right to change the Job Description if the business requires it.

**Paralegal - Childcare
PERSON SPECIFICATION**

Requirement	Essential	Desirable	How assessed
Education & Qualifications			
Educated to Degree level or equivalent experience	Y		A
CILEx qualification		Y	A
Commitment to ongoing professional development	Y		A/I
Experience			
Experience of working in a paralegal role, ideally within family or childcare law	Y		A/I
Experience in family law, child protection and / or childcare	Y		A/I
Demonstrable experience of managing a casework within family or childcare	Y		A/I
Experience of fee earning role		Y	A/I
Experience of Legal aid portal		Y	A/I
Professional Knowledge and Skills			
Understanding of safeguarding principles and multi-agency working	Y		I
Strong understanding of the Children Act 1989 and other relevant procedures	Y		I
Experience of using a case management system.	Y		I
Desire to build and develop client relationships, with an interest in business development.	Y		A/I
Excellent verbal and written communication skills	Y		A/I
Excellent planning and organisation skills	Y		I
Personal Attributes			
Strong analytical and problem-solving skills.	Y		I
Ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines.	Y		I
Empathetic approach, with the ability to work with vulnerable clients and handle sensitive and sometimes emotionally charged situations.	Y		I

The logo for Smith Partnership Solicitors is a red square with the text "SMITH PARTNERSHIP" in white, bold, uppercase letters, and "SOLICITORS" in a smaller, white, uppercase font below it.

SMITH PARTNERSHIP

SOLICITORS

High level of attention to detail and organisational skills.	Y		A/I
Ability to work collaboratively with team and wider stakeholders	Y		I

This job description may be amended at any time in consultation with the postholder.

Line manager's signature: _____

Date: _____

Postholder's signature: _____

Date: _____