

Just
imagine

Your future in perspective

Whatever you're looking for in a career – influence, excellent training, rapid promotion, intellectual stimulation, attractive rewards, the freedom to use your initiative and explore new ideas – you'll find it at the Legal Services Commission. But that should come as no surprise. As an organisation that is helping to transform the way legal services are delivered in England and Wales, we have created an environment designed to develop your potential to the full.

You'll not only have access to first-class training resources, you'll have the opportunity to grow through exposure to challenges that are often complex and occasionally controversial. Above all, you'll belong to a team that is passionate about quality and committed to delivering results that make a real difference to other people's lives. Isn't it time you discovered more?

The core purpose of the Legal Services Commission is to help people get quality legal services that tackle real needs. This is our contribution to making the justice system fair, accessible and affordable to all, and to combating social exclusion.

The Legal Services Commission was created under the Access to Justice Act 1999 and replaced the former Legal Aid Board in April 2000. Today, we have around 1,700 staff working in 23 sites across England and Wales. We were also the first organisation to be awarded Beacon status on a multi-site basis.

So what is the Legal Services Commission?

Our impact is increasingly being felt in both the civil and criminal spheres. In 2000 we launched the Community Legal Service (CLS), creating local networks of suppliers and funders who identify and prioritise need and provide the widest possible access to legal information and advice. What's more, we are now exploring and funding new ways of delivering services that include:

- A Refugee Legal Centre in a London based charity set up to offer advice and representation to asylum seekers.
- A citizen link and video conferencing facility enabling people in East Yorkshire to access housing advice and casework assistance.
- An information advice point in the Luton & Dunstable Hospital.

The Criminal Defence Service (CDS) was created in 2001 to provide defence services to people accused or suspected of a crime through a new contracting system with quality-assured suppliers – a major departure from previous practice.

2001 was also the year that the Public Defender Service (PDS) opened its first four offices. Dealing exclusively in criminal defence work, the teams of solicitors and accredited

representatives provide completely independent advice to their clients. Committed to delivering high quality, value for money services to the public and to sharing best practice with the profession, the PDS is also passionate about attracting and training new recruits to deliver the highest levels of criminal defence representation. A further four offices have now been opened to match the demand for the service and to meet the needs of the continually growing caseload.

The revolutionary reform changes we've helped to implement are largely complete and we now need to deliver the benefits of the new machinery to the clients and the taxpayer. That will take imagination, rigorous thinking as well as an uncompromising commitment to achieving results and delivering first class customer service. Clearly, the Commission already has major achievements to its credit – but we anticipate even greater challenges in the years ahead. Clare Dodgson who joined us in 2003 as our new Chief Executive will help us meet them and is bringing her own exciting new agenda to the Commission.

So if you're looking for a career environment that will develop your professional experience – and will truly value your potential – it's time to get in touch.

Everything we do is based on a spirit of partnership. Our work wouldn't be possible without the extraordinary dedication of the solicitors, barristers, advice workers and other people who form part of our ever-expanding network of service providers. To deliver the maximum benefit to the greatest number of people, we will continue building strong relationships with these organisations in order to become a model of co-operation in our work with others.

Partnership is equally important within the LSC. Our skilled and dedicated teams have helped us create a supportive and vibrant culture where new ideas can be swiftly brought to life. We take great care to employ people with the right skills and competencies – and give each member of our team a development plan that stretches and challenges them. We also place a lot of emphasis on open communication within our organisation, encouraging the creative exchange of ideas and opinions at every level.

A new organisation, a new style of working

A passion for customer service underpins all our activities. There are many links in the chain that leads to someone getting help and we think that everyone we deal with deserves our best efforts. That means being open about the way decisions are reached, asking for information clearly and unambiguously, and making sure that customers understand the information they receive. Quite simply, we want all our customers to have confidence in us – and we want to be proud of the service we provide.

To this end, we rigorously promote quality, accessibility and value for money in the supply of legal services. Our Quality Mark, against which our legal service providers are assessed, is rapidly becoming a recognised and respected badge of competence, guaranteeing high standards of service and customer care from our network of suppliers. We are also committed to simplifying systems and reducing bureaucracy wherever possible. The fact is, we do more than just pursue change at the Legal Services Commission. We actively deliver it – refining standards of quality, implementing bold initiatives and working closely with the legal profession to shape the future of publicly funded legal services. And you could now be part of our future.

Our Vision for Customer Service

SERVICE WHICH GIVES OUR CUSTOMERS CONFIDENCE AND US PRIDE

In everything we do, we need to remember that ultimately our aim is to help people get better access to quality legal services.

There are many links in the chain that leads to someone getting help. We may come into contact with CLS partners, who plan and fund services, information providers, suppliers, colleagues in the Commission and many others. We should think of everyone we have contact with as customers deserving of our best efforts.

In practice this means that we will:

- Ask for information in ways that are clear and unambiguous.
- Give information that is relevant, timely and accurate.
- Be open about the way that our decisions are reached.

- Listen and respond to what people say.

We will tailor our information - whether spoken or written - to the knowledge and understanding of the people receiving it. We will only succeed in this by understanding their point of view.

We will make decisions we are confident are fair by reference to legislation and to guidance.

We will build our processes around the customer and check all our decisions against the yardstick of their impact on customer service. We will reduce to a minimum the inconvenience or cost to our customers of what we do.

We will strive for continuous improvement in working practices with a focus on service excellence, publishing clear standards and reporting our performance against them.

Our Vision for the Supply of Services

MAKING QUALITY LEGAL SERVICES HAPPEN - MAKING QUALITY LEGAL SERVICES ACCESSIBLE

Our goal is to improve the quality of all legal services. We will make the Quality Mark a recognised and respected badge of competence that assures high standards of service and customer care whether or not we fund the work that the provider does.

All our funding will go through contracts with quality assured suppliers who are focused on outcomes that are of benefit to their clients.

We will recognise our best suppliers through incentives and rewards. We will intervene less, simplify systems, reduce bureaucracy and create mutually supportive relationships. We will encourage suppliers and their representative bodies to take more responsibility for developing and improving standards of quality.

We will use our funding to ensure that people have access to a network of services that are provided in ways that best meet their needs. We will create innovative alternatives to face-to-face advice. We will develop the Public Defender Service as a small but important source of best practice from which everyone will be able to learn. We will manage spending through contracts and the consistent application of the funding code so that everyone can be reassured that money is effectively directed, controlled and used.

We will set the standard in promoting publicly-funded legal services as a career choice and work to ensure that suppliers can attract the high quality people they need to get the job done. We will regularly ask our suppliers to tell us what they think of our performance and act on the results.

Our Vision For People

ACCESS TO QUALITY LEGAL SERVICES - MAKING IT POSSIBLE THROUGH PEOPLE

We want people at the Commission to see that they are making an important difference to the lives of others.

We will ensure fair and equal treatment for everyone. We will value the variety of backgrounds, styles, perspectives, values and beliefs that people bring. We will treat everyone with dignity and respect.

We will establish a clear identity in the market place and use the very best recruitment and selection methods.

We will make sure that everyone knows clearly what is expected of them and how it contributes to our purpose, vision and business plans. Everyone will have regular formal and informal opportunities to discuss their performance

and personal growth within a flexible approach to roles and responsibilities.

We will make sure that everyone has a development plan. We will strive to develop the full potential of people, giving them the opportunities and resources to shape their learning.

We will provide a clear framework for career development that allows people to identify opportunities that fit their aspirations and capabilities and enables them to take advantage of those opportunities.

We will stretch and challenge people, supporting them in their work, and recognising and rewarding performance, the achievement of objectives and personal growth.

Our Vision for Partnership

CHALLENGING SOCIAL EXCLUSION THROUGH SERVICES THAT TACKLE REAL NEEDS

We aim to be recognised as a model of co-operation in our work with others to promote social inclusion, improve the efficiency of the justice system - civil and criminal - and generate solutions that deliver the maximum benefit to the greatest number of people.

Through partnership we will:

- Create a real understanding of the need for legal services and the priorities for meeting those needs.
- Reach out to the wider community and the people in need of help so that we can identify what will make a difference to their lives.
- Seek out funding from the widest possible range of sources and work with others to use that funding to best effect in the fight against social exclusion.

- Influence others and be open to influence so that funding, advice and action are coordinated and money is used to tackle the causes of problems and not just their symptoms.

- Build a network of identifiable and accessible service providers who can provide the right help at the right time and refer people on to a more appropriate service if issues or problems become more complex.

Our shared understanding of needs and priorities will play a key part in informing our decisions about the way in which we commit our money through contracts with suppliers. Because knowledge is critical in promoting both social inclusion and partnership, we will play a key role in educating people about the legal system and their rights and responsibilities.

These are interesting and challenging times at the Legal Services Commission. As an organisation driven by continuous change, our performance depends on our ability to recruit, develop and retain high calibre people – individuals who can make a real difference to the community and play a key role carrying the organisation forward. Join the Legal Services Commission and you can expect varied and stimulating work as part of a highly committed

team. More than that, you will benefit from a culture that actively promotes personal and professional development through effective training designed to meet your needs and ambitions. The result is an environment that offers you tremendous scope for career development and gives you access to the kind of resources and challenges that few other organisations can match. Whatever your level, you will benefit from a training and development

A culture of learning and opportunity

framework designed to support your personal and professional growth. In addition to an individual development plan tailored to your needs, you can take advantage of development centres, secondments and customised training courses. There is also a strong emphasis on mentoring and coaching within the Commission and – where appropriate – we will support study towards professional and vocational qualifications. In short, this is an environment where ‘continuous learning’ means exactly

what it says. It is also an environment shaped by a passionate commitment to equality of opportunity. You will be part of a forward-thinking organisation where cooperation, fairness and mutual support go hand in hand with the recognition and rewards you deserve. In a very real sense, our success will depend on your success. So if you have the talent to get ahead, we’ll give you all the encouragement and support you need to do so. It’s that simple – and that important.

Career opportunities

Achieving the Commission's objectives takes an extraordinary range of people and skills, and we can offer you career opportunities throughout England and Wales. Our regional network of offices now includes all the following locations:

- Birmingham
- Brighton
- Bristol
- Cambridge
- Cardiff
- Leeds
- Liverpool/Chester
- London
- Manchester
- Newcastle
- Nottingham
- Reading

Careers in the Regional Offices

With the exception of the London Office, which is more than double the size of the others, each regional office is responsible for around £100 million of fund expenditure, has a budget of c.£5 million and employs some 75 staff. Whichever team you join, you will contribute to front-line results by working with partners and providers to deliver our promise to the public. The opportunities within these offices are wide ranging, whether you're helping to identify the legal service needs of the region, ensuring the providers of legal services match our high quality standards or delivering operational and customer service support, you'll be making a vital contribution to the efficiency of our business.

Careers at Head Office

In addition to regionally-based roles, there's a whole range of career opportunities at our busy London head office. You could help us improve our systems or quality assessment processes, contribute to our policy development, assist with research or develop your professional skills in areas such as IT or Finance. In fact, whatever your individual strengths and ambitions, you'll almost certainly find a role to suit them – along with the training resources to develop your skills to the full.

Careers with the Public Defender Service

We also recruit a variety of professionals into the Public Defender Service. If you are looking for a career as a criminal defence solicitor, for instance, our exceptional training and development environment will give you everything you need to become an influential player in the field. We now have PDS offices in Birmingham, Cheltenham, Chester, Darlington, Liverpool, Middlesbrough, Pontypridd and Swansea – with further expansion envisaged for the future.

Recognition and Rewards

Whatever part of the Legal Services Commission you join, you will be part of an organisation that recognises your contribution and believes in rewarding you well. These are our current benefits, which are constantly reviewed to ensure we constantly offer the best package possible:

- A competitive salary that is regularly reviewed.
- An index-linked, final salary pension.
- A generous holiday allowance, starting at 28 days.
- Excellent training and development opportunities.
- Flexible working.
- An interest-free season ticket loan.
- A lease car scheme.
- A relocation package where appropriate.

Take the next step...

We hope that this brochure has given you an insight into what we do at the Legal Services Commission – and into the values and principles that influence how we do it. Ours is a unique and rapidly changing environment, and we are looking for talented and committed individuals to make their mark as part of our team. If that sounds like you, why not get in touch today? Simply contact: e-mail personnel@legalservices.gov.uk

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