

## JOB DESCRIPTION

<b>Post Title:</b> Corporate Complaints Manager	<b>Director/Service/Sector</b> Governance		<b>Office Use</b>
<b>Grade:</b> 10	<b>Workplace:</b> County Hall		JE ref:
<b>Responsible to:</b> Director of Corporate Governance,	<b>Date:</b> September 2019	<b>Manager Level:</b> Senior Manager	HRMS ref:
<b>Job Purpose:</b>  <p>To strategically be responsible for the management of all stages of the Corporate Complaints process across the Council, ensuring that statutory and organisational requirements are met, that complaints are investigated with appropriate thoroughness and impartiality, and that all complainants receive a full and timely response.</p> <p>To strategically work with the Director of Corporate Governance to ensure that the Council has a robust system for managing Corporate Complaints and that feedback and data is shared with the Executive Leadership Team on a regular basis so that performance is monitored appropriately. To manage the Corporate Complaints function.</p> <p>To provide data, presentations and strategic improvement plans to the Executive Leadership Team to ensure a cycle of continuous improvement was in place.</p>			
<b>Resources</b>	Staff	<p>The postholder will have full management responsibility for a small team of Complaints Managers/Officers. Having full oversight of complaints investigators (internal and external of the organisation); with responsibility for ensuring that they have an adequate knowledge base for the particular investigations that they undertake, and for quality assurance of their work.</p> <p>The postholder will have responsibility for the management of the Corporate Complaints team for the Council.</p> <p>The postholder will be responsible for designing and ensuring the quality of the delivery of training within the organisation about complaints policies and procedures to staff and managers at all levels.</p>	
	Finance	The postholder will manage the Corporate Complaints team budget which will include the employment of self-employed independent investigators and for other incidental expenses of complaints investigations.	
	Physical	The post holder spends a considerable amount of time in a sitting position, driving between sites for meetings or standing for long periods when delivering training sessions.	
	Clients	The postholder will have no direct responsibility for providing patient/client care but will have regular contact with service users, their representatives and family members who make complaints.	

	<p>The postholder will assist service users and members of the public during incidental contacts as required.</p> <p>The postholder will be responsible for arranging and co-ordinating the investigation of complex issues about possible failings in the standards of service expected to be provided to residents, and will need to have a clear understanding of the issues involved.</p> <p>The postholder will be responsible for liaising with corporate central government bodies on behalf of the Chief Executive Officer and the Director of Corporate Governance including the Local Government Ombudsman.</p>
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#### **Duties and key result areas:**

- The postholder will be the Council's expert adviser about national complaints policy and legislation and about best practice in handling complaints and will be expected to develop and maintain the Council's policies and procedures for the management of all Corporate complaints.
- The postholder will be expected to be an advisor to senior management on all complex complaints matters and will be expected to make most decisions about the management of individual complaints including liaison with complainants, their representatives, elected members and MPs.
- The post holder will be responsible for ensuring oversight and management of all complaints and that at all times complainants receive full and appropriate response to complaints which will, in some cases, involve highly-emotionally charged situations, risks to service users, major reputational threats to the organisation and potential legal proceedings.
- The post holder will work alongside the Head of Customer Services in ensuring that residents are given the highest level of customer service and support across the County.

#### **Policy & Service Development**

- The postholder will have organisational responsibility for keeping up-to-date with national policy and the development and implementation of local complaints policies and procedures in line with best practice. In addition, they will develop and influence policy and procedures in relation to the customer experience.
- In relation to complaints a knowledge of, and ability to interpret, the organisation's other policies and procedures and how their application may affect individuals or groups and make recommendations for improvement as required.

#### **Information Resources**

- Responsibility for making sure the organisational information held in relation to Corporate complaints meets the needs of the Corporate Complaints team and reporting requirements of the organisation.
- Records personally generated information in line with the Council's organisational policies and procedures.

#### **Research & Development**

- The postholder will be expected to analyse organisational wide data about complaints, and to carry out informal investigation of patterns in the complaints received, to identify common issues, themes and to escalate to the Executive Leadership Team the required complaints reviews.
- Undertakes surveys related to complaints as required.

#### **Freedom to Act**

- Freedom to provide Corporate Complaints responses as required.
- Interprets national policy in relation to complaints and ensures local policy and procedure is compliant.

### **Planning & Organisation**

- Identify the training needs of managers and staff in relation to complaints.
- Responsible for planning and implementing how complaints should be handled and responded to in relation to existing and any new national policy and best practice.
- Contribute to the development of service and organisational wide plans for cross service and cross organisational cooperation in respect of complaints.
- Taking forward strategic organisational plans for improvement to ensure any changes are implemented.

### **Communications and Relationships**

- Communication, in writing and face to face, with service users and their representatives (including legal representatives) about highly sensitive, contentious and complex issues.
- Developing and presenting complaints workshops to staff and managers including those from independent social care providers contracted to the Local Authority.
- Discussions with managers at all levels across the organisation, about specific complaints and about issues raised by complaints and areas of potential improvement.
- Liaison with managers to make sure lessons are learnt and any changes are implemented that arise out of complaints.
- Liaison with independent providers of social care services under contract over the handling of complaints.
- Liaison with partner organisations, including NHS Trusts, GP Practices and the Council, about complaints which cross organisational boundaries.
- Discussion with care regulators about the handling of complaints which raise regulatory issues.
- Liaison with the Health Service and Local Government Ombudsman about complaints raised with them.
- Contact with elected Councillors, about specific complaints and to report overall lessons from complaints.
- Contact with advice and advocacy services and with the North of Tyne Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).

### **Analytical Skills**

The postholder will need to:

- Determine how individual complaints should be handled, based on an assessment of the potential risks involved.
- Analyse and interpret data in relation to complaints either individually or collectively and liaison as appropriate with relevant managers about findings.
- Decide who is best placed to investigate particular complaints, taking account of the nature of the issues, the skills and experience of the potential investigators, and the degree of independence required.
- Deal with all decisions involved in ensuring that the final response to a complaint is full and accurate, and correctly represents the organisation's views.
- In all these cases, the postholder will be expected to discuss seriously contentious issues with Executive Directors, while making judgments about other issues which they can resolve themselves.

**The duties and responsibilities highlighted in this Job Description are indicative and may vary over time. Post holders are expected to undertake other duties and responsibilities relevant to the nature, level and extent of the post and the grade has been established on this basis.**

<b>Work Arrangements</b>	
Transport requirements:	Need to meet the travel requirements of the post to cover the geographical area of Northumberland County Council.
Working patterns:	The postholder will work predominantly regular office hours but will need to be flexible in their approach in order to facilitate occasional meetings with complainants outside of these times.
Working conditions:	<p>Open plan office environment and agile working which can be distracting when dealing with complex reports and confidential telephone calls regarding personal and/or distressing situations.</p> <p>The post holder will experience a variety of work conditions, due to the various locations and the geographical size of the organisation. The nature of the work involves office based work with the use of VDU equipment and occasional requirement for road transportation for travelling between sites.</p>

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

Post Title: Corporate Complaints Manager		Director/Service/Sector: Governance		Ref:
Essential		Desirable		Assess by
Knowledge and Qualifications				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Professional qualification at undergraduate degree level (level 6) within a relevant discipline or an equivalent portfolio of experience.</li><li>Appropriate management qualification or equivalent.</li><li>Excellent knowledge and understanding of complaints policy, procedures and other organisational policies and procedures relating to Corporate Complaints.</li></ul>		Masters level qualification in a relevant discipline		a a a/i
Experience				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Experience of working at a senior management level in a Corporate Complaints role</li><li>Experience of dealing with complex organisational wide complaints within a similar public sector organisation.</li></ul>				a/r  a/i/r
Skills and competencies				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Excellent planning and organisational skills</li><li>Excellent written and verbal communication skills.</li><li>Excellent understanding of the professional and ethical issues involved in providing and arranging health and social care.</li><li>Excellent analytical skills</li><li>Ability to transfer knowledge and skills effectively in training courses and in less formal settings.</li><li>Confident user of standard office software.</li><li>Standard keyboard use.</li><li>Good note taking skills.</li></ul>				a/i a/i/r i  a/i i/p  a a a
Physical, mental and emotional demands				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Calm, confident – able to defuse potentially difficult situations.</li><li>Tactful, empathetic and sensitive.</li><li>Non-judgmental.</li><li>Able to work with staff at all levels and with people from all backgrounds.</li></ul>				i i/r i/r a/r

Other		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flexible approach to working.</li> <li>• A DBS check is required for this role.</li> </ul>		a/i/r

Key to assessment methods; (a) application form, (i) interview, (r) references, (t) ability tests (q) personality questionnaire (g) assessed group work, (p) presentation, (o) others e.g. case studies/visits