

Directorate:	Children, Young People and Education
Unit/Section:	SEN & Resources
Grade:	KSJ
Responsible to:	Tribunal, Assessment and Placement Manager

Purpose of the Job:

The SEND Tribunals Manager is responsible for leading and managing the local authority's response to appeals made to the First-tier Tribunal (Special Educational Needs and Disability). This includes overseeing all case preparation, ensuring legal compliance, coordinating multiagency contributions, and representing the local authority at hearings where appropriate.

The role ensures that the local authority delivers timely, high-quality, child-centred responses to appeals, resolves disputes wherever possible, and promotes early resolution to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND and their families.

Main duties and responsibilities:

Strategic Leadership & Compliance

- Lead and manage the SEND Tribunals function, ensuring compliance with the Children and Families Act 2014, SEND Code of Practice 2015, Equality Act 2010, and all relevant statutory requirements.
- Develop, implement, and monitor effective policies, procedures, and quality standards for the Tribunals service.
- Provide strategic advice to senior leaders on trends, risks, outcomes, and areas for service improvement.
- Monitor legal developments, national guidance, and case law to ensure the local authority's practice remains up to date.

Case Management & Preparation

- Oversee the end-to-end management of all SEND appeals, ensuring timely registration, allocation, and processing.
- Ensure that all case statements, bundles, and evidence are prepared to a high standard, are legally compliant, and clearly set out the authority's position.
- Review draft Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), proposed amendments, and assessments linked to appeals to ensure quality and legal accuracy.
- Lead complex case discussions, including cases with significant risk, high parental dispute, or complex multi-agency factors.

Representation & Advocacy

- Represent the local authority at SEND Tribunal hearings where appropriate, providing clear, balanced, and evidence-based submissions.
- Coordinate expert witnesses, schools, health partners, social care, and other professionals to ensure consistent and coordinated representation.
- Provide coaching and preparation for staff and partners attending hearings.

Early Resolution & Family Engagement

- Promote and oversee early resolution approaches, including Mediation, Disagreement Resolution Services, and collaborative meetings with families.
- Ensure that communication with parents and carers is child-centred, timely, and empathetic.
- Analyse reasons for disputes and work with teams to reduce future areas of appeal.

Line Management & Team Development

- Manage staff within the Tribunals team, including Tribunal officers, senior tribunal officers and administrative support.
- Provide leadership, supervision, and support to develop expertise in SEND law, case management, and family engagement.
- Foster a culture of high performance, continuous improvement, and reflective practice.

Data, Reporting & Quality Assurance

- Maintain accurate data on appeals, outcomes, timescales, and Tribunal directions.
- Produce performance reports for senior leadership, including analysis of trends and service pressures.
- Use appeal outcomes and learning to drive improvements in EHCP assessment, review processes, and decision-making.

Partnership Working

- Work closely with educational settings, health partners, social care teams, and external specialists to gather robust evidence and ensure coordinated submissions.
- Build constructive relationships with parent/carers forums, advocacy services, and mediation providers.
- Represent the local authority at regional SEND networks and contribute to cross-authority benchmarking.
- Promote and contribute to oversight of early resolution approaches, including Mediation, Disagreement Resolution Services, and collaborative meetings with families.

Footnote: This job description is provided to assist the job holder to know what their main duties are. It may be amended from time to time without change to the level of responsibility appropriate to the grade of post.

Organisational Responsibilities

All corporate directors, directors and senior managers have an explicit responsibility to deliver the collective agenda of the Council. These are fundamental elements of their role not an addition and are summarised as follows:

Whole Council

- Seek to improve the lives of all residents in Kent and economy of Kent
- Act as corporate parent to the Council's looked after children
- Take an active role in promoting and ensuring the Council's responsibilities for safeguarding are met.
- Understand, communicate and contribute to the delivery of KCC's strategic aims
- Meet statutory obligations and promote and ensure compliance with policies and procedures and the Council's Code of Conduct (Kent Code).
- Advise elected members and support the democratic process
- Promote the Council brand and enhance the overall reputation of the Council
- Understand and monitor the measures of performance, including customer insight, which define successful outcomes for KCC services
- Maintain and ensure a relentless focus on the customer
- Act to support the Council-wide need to deliver services within budget, thereby avoiding an overspend that could damage the financial viability of the Council
- Overcome professional and service silos to achieve the County Council's objectives.

Integration of Services

- Focus resources where they have the biggest impact
- Deliver services that are flexible and adaptable
- Integrate services within KCC and work with partner agencies to ensure a seamless customer experience
- Fully and inclusively engage all staff in the delivery of services, demonstrating the Council's leadership values and competencies.

Embedding Commissioning and Engaging relevant markets

- Establish an outcome focused organisation
- Meet the financial regulations and standing orders of KCC
- Challenge the status quo and engage with the market to constantly improve
- Ensure all services are delivered effectively and efficiently
- Proactively and continuously seek to improve service delivery
- Proactively manage risk to avoid inertia whilst not exposing the Council to needless and avoidable challenge or loss

Managing Change

- Understand and support the Authority's overall change agenda

- Deliver required outcomes of service specific change on time and to budget
- Understand the quality of staff, support their development, nurture those with talent
- Identify the skills for the future and the level of staff through robust workforce planning
- Identify and deal with underperformance.
- Deliver to agreed budget and income targets.

Kent County Council

Person Specification: SEND Tribunal Manager

The following outlines the criteria for this post. Applicants who have a disability and who meet the criteria will be shortlisted.

Applicants should describe in their application how they meet these criteria.

	CRITERIA
QUALIFICATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Degree-level qualification (or equivalent experience).• Relevant legal, SEND, or management training desirable.• Commitment to ongoing professional development in SEND law and statutory processes.
EXPERIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Experience leading or managing SEND Tribunals, legal casework, or statutory SEND processes.• Experience managing staff and leading service development.• Experience working directly with families, including resolving conflict or managing challenging conversations.
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong analytical skills with the ability to interpret complex professional reports and legal documentation.• Excellent written communication, with the ability to draft high-quality legal submissions.• Confident and articulate communicator, able to represent the local authority in formal hearings.• Effective negotiation, conflict resolution, and problem-solving abilities.• Ability to manage competing pressures, meet statutory deadlines, and maintain accuracy under pressure.
KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Extensive knowledge of SEND law, including the Children and Families Act 2014, SEND Regulations 2014, SEND Code of Practice 2015, and relevant case law.• Strong understanding of multi-agency working, particularly education, health, and social care roles.
ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Able to travel to Tribunal venues when required.• Able to meet with and travel to/from schools when required.• Commitment to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people.• Commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusive practice.

KENT VALUES AND CULTURAL ATTRIBUTES	<p>Kent Values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are brave. We do the right thing, we accept and offer challenge • We are curious to innovate and improve • We are compassionate, understanding, and respectful to all
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are strong together by sharing knowledge • We are all responsible for the difference we make <p>Our values enable us to build a culture that is:</p> <p>Flexible/agile - willing to take (calculated) risks and want people that are flexible and agile</p> <p>Curious - constantly learning and evolving</p> <p>Compassionate and Inclusive - compassionate, understanding, and respectful to all</p> <p>Working Together - building and delivering for the best interests of Kent</p> <p>Empowering - Our people take accountability for their decisions and actions</p> <p>Externally Focused - Residents, families, and communities at the heart of decision making</p>