

ROLE PROFILE FOR SENIOR COUNSEL – CONTRACTS & DISPUTES

About the National Church Institutions (NCIs)

The National Church Institutions comprises a wide variety of teams, professions and functions that support the mission and ministries of the Church of England in its vision to be a church, centred on Jesus Christ, for the whole nation - a church that is simpler, humbler, bolder.

We Include. You Belong.

Our Belonging and Inclusion Strategy aims for everyone in the National Church Institutions (NCIs) to feel that they belong and are valued for who they are and what they contribute. Together, our people contribute in different ways towards our common purpose, whichever NCI they work in and whatever their background.

Living out our values in all that we do, we:

- Strive for **Excellence**
- Show **Compassion**
- **Respect** others
- **Collaborate**
- Act with **Integrity**

We believe our commitment to belonging and inclusion fuels our progress and drives us forward. The NCIs are a safe, inclusive workplace for people of all backgrounds and walks of life. We welcome applications from people of all faiths and of no faith. We want to encourage applications from a diverse group of people who share our values. Even if you have never thought about working for us before, if you have the skills and experience, we're looking for then we would like to hear from you.

About the department

The Legal Office is the in-house provider of legal services to the national policy-making and governance institutions of the Church of England (the National Church Institutions, "NCIs"), the largest of which are the Archbishops' Council, a national policy and strategic decision-making body, and the Church Commissioners, a substantial endowment fund with assets valued at £11.1bn (2024) which has positioned itself at the forefront of Responsible Investment and which supports the mission of the Church. The Legal Office also advises the General Synod, which is a legislative assembly.

We are a small, inclusive team currently comprising twelve legally qualified staff, with two paralegals and three support staff. Our professional backgrounds are diverse, with members coming to us from private practice in law firms, the Bar, from government, and from regulators.

Our work requires the provision of advice on diverse and intellectually stimulating points of law at the intersection of public and private law. The work is high quality, intellectually stimulating, and rewarding. We are a collegiate and supportive team, and we are proud of the work we do.

What you'll be doing

As a member of the Legal Office Advisory Team, you will be providing legal services to the National Institutions of the Church of England, focused on contracts and disputes.

You will be joining us at an exciting time for the organisation and the role will offer you the opportunity for genuine career growth and development in a supportive environment, including interaction with some of the most senior stakeholders in the organisation. You will be able to take a leading and meaningful role in existing and new projects.

You will also be a member of the Legal Office's advisory team, undertaking as appropriate a wider range of duties as a legal adviser within the National Church Institutions.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- Able proactivity and autonomously to supervise and coach a team in drafting and reviewing contracts, to ensure effective legal compliance and due diligence.
- Providing, and supervising the provision of, timely, pragmatic and legally sound subject matter expertise into national projects including contractual risk reviews, and drafting and amending terms, and negotiating terms with counterparties (both standard and bespoke).
- Assisting the Deputy Official Solicitor to review and develop the Church's approach to nationally significant strategic litigation, including appeals to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council and the senior courts, and reporting at Board level.
- Assisting the Deputy Official Solicitor in the management of disputes casework including the instruction of and liaison with external counsel.
- Supporting and coaching colleagues in the development and roll out of training and knowledge management.

Other advisory and legislative work

- Provision of advice to the Church Commissioners, the Archbishops' Council, the Church of England Pensions Board, their boards, committees and staff on legal and procedural issues arising out of their work. Some of these activities are legislative or regulatory in nature.

Your job description is intended to reflect your main tasks and areas of work but is not exhaustive. Changes may occur over time, and you will be expected to agree any reasonable changes to your job description that are commensurate with your banding and in line with the general nature of your post. You will be consulted about any changes to your job description before these are implemented.

About You

The Church of England is for everyone, and we want to reflect the diversity of the community the Church serves across the whole country. Therefore, while of course we welcome all applications from interested and suitably experienced people, we would particularly welcome applicants from UK Minoritised Ethnicities (UKME)/Global Majority Heritage (GMH) and other under-represented groups.

Essential

Knowledge/Experience

- A barrister or solicitor with significant (ideally at least 7 years') experience of drafting, reviewing and advising on a broad range of supply and service contracts.
- Proven experience of dispute resolution and civil procedure (you will not need to undertake courtroom advocacy in this role)
- Proven experience of advising in highly complex, sensitive and contentious matters
- Proven experience of drafting complex legal documentation
- Proven experience of effective leadership and coaching colleagues to deliver organisational objectives

Skills & Abilities:

- A highly effective communicator and in particular:
 - able to present legal concepts and arguments orally and in writing clearly, confidently and concisely to lawyers and non-lawyers alike
 - able to draft documentation in clear and plain English
- Strong powers of legal analysis and proven experience of providing appropriate legal advice on complex, sensitive and contentious issues directly to members and other key stakeholders, and the ability to quality assure own work
- Ability to build effective relationships with senior stakeholders
- Ability to absorb and manage detail
- Ability to interpret and apply the law in context, constructing clear, fair and workable legal procedures
- Ability to acquire an understanding of legal principles in new areas of legal practice quickly and proactively
- Ability to deal sensitively yet objectively with people from a range of backgrounds and theological positions, sometimes in circumstances when they feel under threat
- Sound IT skills

Qualifications & Training:

- A barrister or solicitor qualified to practise in England and Wales

Desirable

- A working knowledge of charity law and grant agreements in a charitable context
- A working knowledge of data protection law
- Knowledge of employment law and HR would be a plus
- Ability and willingness to work proactively and without unnecessary formality
- Advanced IT skills
- Proven record of building a reputation for trust and impartiality
- Preparedness to develop additional legal and personal skills

Vacancy Summary

JOB TITLE:	Senior Counsel – Contracts and Disputes
NCI ENTITY:	Church of England Central Services
DEPARTMENT:	Legal Office
GRADE:	Band 2 Market Rate Salary
SALARY:	£93,000
WORKING HOURS:	35
PRIMARY OFFICE LOCATION:	Church House, Westminster SW1P 3AZ
HYBRID WORK ARRANGEMENTS:	2-3 days per week in the office
SUITABLE FOR FULL HOMEWORKING:	☐
HOMEWORKING REQUIRED:	☐
CONTRACT TYPE:	Permanent
IS A DBS CHECK REQUIRED? IF YES, WHICH LEVEL	☐ Select level of DBS Check required
IS A FAITH-BASED GOR APPLICABLE FOR THIS ROLE?	☐
ORACLE POSITION CODE:	8104695
COST CODE:	50191
PARENT POSITION:	Deputy Official Solicitor to the Church Commissioners