

Assistant Democracy Manager – Grade 13 (Temporary Position for 2 years)

Job purpose

At Kirklees we want to be innovative and creative in the way we work with our citizens. The landmark work of the Kirklees Democracy Commission reflects our ambition. This role is part of the Governance and Democratic Engagement function which is responsible for the breadth of activities that support our 69 councillors individually and collectively and co-ordinates and supports the Council's governance and decision making structures.

As the Assistant Democracy Manager you will be responsible for the provision of professional advice and support to ensure that the Council's governance activities are engaging, transparent, robust, understood and comply with legislative and audit requirements.

This role is based within [Corporate Services in the Democracy Service](#).

Find out more about [working for Kirklees](#).

Key areas of responsibility

The postholder will:-

- Manage the Council's end to end education appeals function in line with the legislative requirements and the School Admissions Appeals Code and the Admissions Code.
- Provide day to day management, supervision and co-ordination of the work of the School Appeals Clerk and business support staff, to ensure adequate administration arrangements in support of the education appeals process are in operation.
- Manage, supervise and co-ordinate the work of the Democracy Officers, including training and development.
- Provide a comprehensive, high-quality and efficient support and advice service in relation to the effective discharge of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny functions. This would include the provision of scrutiny committee support and the undertaking of scrutiny reviews that are well-evidenced, objective and impartial. This will involve identifying and engaging key witnesses and evidence and producing reasoned, well-written reports with practical recommendations.
- Provide governance support to Councillors and Committees and deputise for the Democracy Manager and Principle Governance and Democratic Officers where required.
- Support the Democracy Manager in the review of working practices and systems operated within the team, having regard to the impact of legislation, new technology and good practice across the sector.
- Undertake any other duties identified by the Democracy Manager and work flexibly and undertake such other duties and responsibilities commensurate with the grading and nature of the post.

Knowledge

The role demands a significant amount of knowledge across a range of functions in order assist in the management of the council's governance landscape. Such knowledge facilitates the provision

of timely and professional advice to senior politicians and senior officers in order to manage legislative risk and protect the reputation of the Council.

The post holder will require specialist and detailed knowledge of the education appeals process in line with the legislative requirements and the School Admissions Appeals Code and the Admissions Code. They will be required to liaise with the Ombudsman, Pupil Admissions, Schools and parents as well as providing support to Panel Members and provide advice and guidance to the staff supporting the school appeals function.

The postholder will also require a detailed knowledge of the political environment within Kirklees and an understanding of how to resolve competing political demands and priorities effectively. This includes an appreciation of the varying roles of councillors in terms of the posts that they hold and the responsibilities they undertake, the formal and informal Kirklees governance landscape and the processes and procedures that support decision making and the scrutiny of those decisions

Interpersonal and communication skills

Interpersonal and communication skills account for a significant part of the role, at a strategic and operational level through day to day dealings and dialogue with senior politicians and senior officers. By the very nature of the role the post holder works at the councillor / officer interface and in particular within a political environment. This can include public meetings such as Cabinet, Scrutiny, private / informal meetings such as Director Group and one to one meetings with senior councillors of all political persuasions.

The post holder will be the governance lead, expert and first point of contact for the school appeals function. School Appeal hearings require a high level of interpersonal and communication skills in order to ensure the impartiality of the process. Each appeal is different and the post holder needs to be able to respond to unforeseen circumstances quickly and effectively.

The post holder will also be required to provide detailed responses to enquiries and investigations by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman and the Education Funding Agency and to advise and recommend further action to senior management in cases of disputed decisions. They will manage enquiries, Freedom of Information Act requests and Subject Access Requests from appellants, legal representatives, MPs and Councillors in relation to ongoing and retrospective appeals.

The post holder will undertake the recruitment and training of members for appeal panels in line with the requirements of the School Admissions Appeals Code and develop and maintain good working relations with them.

All of the above involves interpreting complex constitutional and procedural advice to the public, councillors and officers in a format that is understandable and accessible.

Work environment – work demands, physical demands, working conditions and work context

The postholder will be subject to:

- strict statutory deadlines and requirements in relation to the Council's democratic processes and deadlines relating to School Appeals and financial reporting periods;

- Periods of mental attention, for up to several hours a day on a daily basis, whilst carrying out complex work requiring attention to detail and accuracy, including publishing agendas to statutory deadlines and administering school appeal hearings;
- Subject to a number of conflicting demands, which will include requests from councillors, senior officers, citizens and partners and you will have to prioritise your work accordingly.

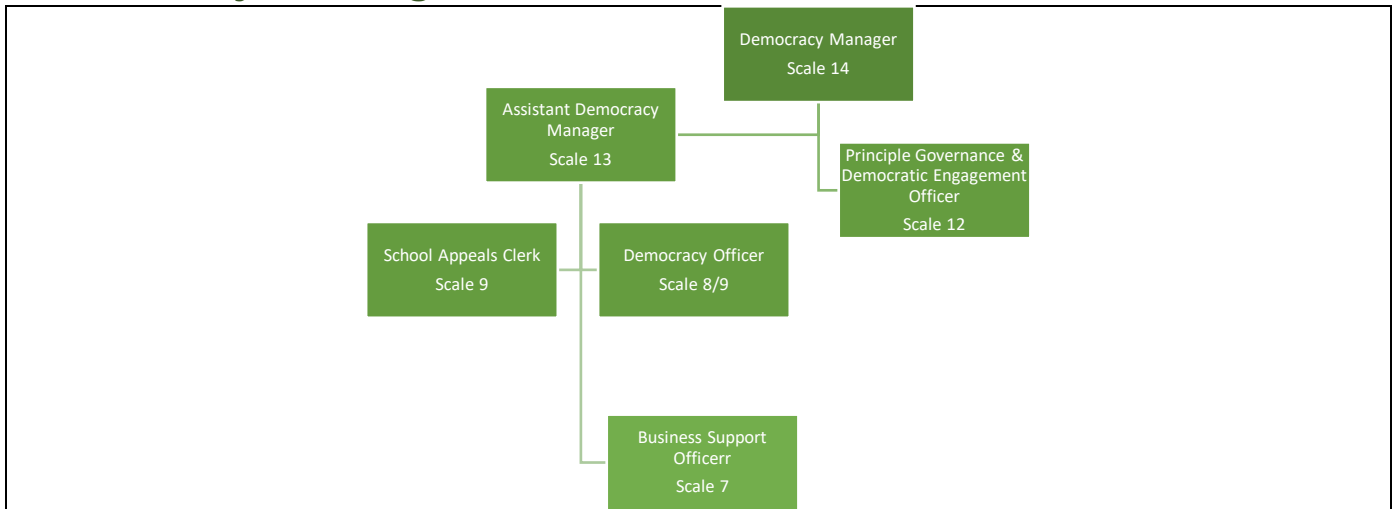
Physical demands

- Working within a normal office environment;
- The post entails a mixture of desk based working using Council IT equipment but also includes taking resources and equipment to both internal and external locations across Kirklees eg to facilitate school appeal hearings.

Work context

- Working within a political environment. The post will involve liaising with councillors on a day to day basis and building an officer/councillor relationship built on mutual respect, trust, clear and honest communication and unbiased professional advice;
- Working within a normal office environment;
- Working in other internal and external locations across Kirklees;
- Dealing with a range of enquires from Councillors, Senior Officers, Citizens and Partners.

Position of job in organisational structure



Employee Specification

Knowledge, skills and experience	Shortlisting criteria
Professionally qualified or experienced in governance and democratic practice, including supporting and advising councillors and senior officers.	Essential
Specialist and detailed knowledge of the education appeals process in line with the legislative requirements and the School Admissions Appeals Code and the Admissions Code.	Essential
Excellent written communication skills to produce a range of documents including reports, decision letters, minutes and briefing notes.	Essential
Excellent oral communication skills to provide advice and technical explanations in an appropriate manner.	Essential
Tact, diplomacy and sensitivity to work effectively with politicians and senior officers.	Essential
Knowledge of legislation, the practice and procedures governing local government meetings, governance and decision making.	Essential
The ability to provide training to a range of internal and external audiences on governance issues and working effectively in a political environment.	Essential
Excellent problem solving skills and able to develop and implement innovative approaches to service delivery.	Essential
Experience of managing teams and supporting the personal and professional development of staff.	Essential
Excellent customer service and interpersonal skills to support the public and others to access democratic processes.	Essential
The ability to manage a varied workload and respond in a timely and professional way to unplanned issues as they arise.	Essential
Good IT skills and a willingness to continue to develop to use other technologies and media to support engagement and the understanding of democratic issues.	Essential
Ability to work flexible hours, including occasional evenings and weekends. Requirement to travel to various locations to carry out the duties of the post.	Essential

Behaviours and expectations

The right behaviours and attitudes are as important to us as the skills you bring to the job. We expect all our employees to demonstrate the following behaviours:

- Positive
- Honesty
- Respectful
- Flexible
- Communicative
- Supportive

You will also promote and be a role model of the Council's expectations of a New Council Employee within the organisation. This role is at level 2. Find out more about [Council Behaviours and Expectations](#).

General information

See your responsibilities related to [Safeguarding](#).

Able to work unsocial hours

Driving licence or able to travel independently across Kirklees

DBS check required

This Job Profile is intended to provide an understanding and appreciation of the responsibilities of this particular job. It is not possible to specify every detail and we expect you to work flexibly within your skills, knowledge, experience and grade of this job.

For Office Use Only:

Job ID ref No:

Last Updated: