

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE	Legal Officer
ACCOUNTABLE TO	General Secretary
ACCOUNTABLE FOR	The work of the National Office Legal Department on Employment and Industrial Relations Law
GRADE	9
PLACE OF WORK	National Office
HOURS OF WORK	Unspecified

1. MAIN RESPONSIBILITY

- This is a senior post within the National Office Legal Department. A qualified lawyer, the post-holder is responsible for the Department's work on employment and industrial relations law.
- The post-holder will develop and promote the Union's employment and industrial relations law policies, and provide legal advice to the Union's Officers including the General Secretary and the Central Executive Council.
- The post-holder will play a key role in decisions affecting the Union's legal position in the area of employment and industrial relations law.
- The post-holder will be required to have absolute integrity as they will be dealing with confidential and sensitive issues affecting the Union.

2. SPECIFIC TASKS AND DUTIES

(a) Employment and Industrial Relations law

The post holder will bear responsibility for the Department's work on employment and industrial relations law.

- Provide comprehensive advice to the Union's national and regional officers on employment and industrial relations law, with particular regard to collective matters, including play a significant part in constructing the Union's

response to strategic legal challenges, including those arising out of developments in equal pay & sex discrimination, industrial action, and statutory recognition.

- Write guidance, provide advice and draft correspondence and documents in relation to negotiations with employers, employment tribunal proceedings, recognition applications to the Central Arbitration Committee, including instructing and working with the Union's solicitors as appropriate.
- Advise national and regional officers in industrial disputes, including writing guidance, provide advice, and draft correspondence and documents, and liaise with the independent scrutineer and solicitors as appropriate. Advise the Senior Management Team, including the General Secretary and Deputy General Secretary in relation to claims by employers alleging breaches of the legislation relating to industrial action, including the Union's potential liabilities and the potential risks to member's jobs.
- Prepare submissions to Government for reform of the law, including policy documents and responses to proposals from Government Departments.
- Make decisions on obtaining external legal advice and representation in appropriate cases, including incurring costs for the union (in conjunction with senior officials as appropriate). Advise the Senior Management Team, including the General Secretary, on national strategic litigation and consequent expenditure for the Union.
- Be responsible for overseeing the Union's national litigation strategy.
- Keep up to date with developments in industrial relations and employment law.

(b) Publications

- Be responsible for developing publications on employment and industrial relations law produced by the Department, with particular reference to the needs of the Union's Officers in recruitment priority workplaces.
- Evaluate and advise Senior Officers on legal developments, including its impact on policy for the Union.

(c) Training and Briefings

- Devise and conduct briefings and seminars for the Union's officers on employment and industrial relations law, including recognition applications to the Central Arbitration Committee, industrial action procedures, and employment tribunal procedures. This will include briefings and seminars on key areas of and developments in employment and industrial relations law.
- Where appropriate, support the Union's recruitment efforts through training of Officers.

(d) Representing members and the Union

- Develop and co-ordinate the Union's employment litigation strategy at appellate level, identifying key areas of test litigation. Advise and instruct the Union's solicitors as appropriate.
- Be responsible for the Department's litigation work, liaising with the Union's solicitors as appropriate.
- Develop the national union litigation strategy in equal pay and related issues. Advise and work with National and Regional Officers on these issues. Advise and instruct the Union's solicitors as appropriate.
- Where appropriate and as and when required represent GMB and its members in Employment Tribunals, the Employment Appeal Tribunal and above, the Certification Officer, and the Central Arbitration Committee.
- Represent GMB legal strategy at outside organisations such as the TUC, and Government ministers, parliamentary and civil servants as appropriate.

(e) The Union's legal service

- Promote the development of the Union's legal service, advise the General Secretary, Regional Secretaries, and the Central Executive Council on developments in the law, practice and framework of the supply of legal services by the Union's solicitors, reporting directly to the General Secretary and the Senior Management Team. Respond to Government proposals for

changes to the provision of legal services.

- Provide the Organisation Committee of the Central Executive Council with reports of the Department's activity, and reports regarding the achieving of the Union's objectives for its legal service and raise matters and proposals for policy determination. Where appropriate, draft reports to the Senior Management Team and the Central Executive Council on the Union's legal service and developments in this area. Draft the Legal Department section of the General Secretary's Report to Congress.
- Develop and promote the Union's policies on the law relating to trade union legal services at ministerial, parliamentary, and civil service levels.

(f) Governance of the Union and GMB Congress

- Act as legal adviser to the Union's annual Congress, and act as Secretary to the Standing Orders Committee. Advise the General Secretary and the Standing Orders Committee on the constitutionality of motions, and Congress procedures.
- Participate in the drafting of composite motions, and liaise with Regions in the preparation of Congress.
- Attend Congress and Congress Working Party and advise on the Union's rule book and related matters taking any external advice as appropriate.

(g) Working relationships

- Establish close, effective, and harmonious working relationships with the Union's officers, and other Departments at National Office.
- Develop contacts with appropriate personnel in the TUC and in other trade unions to promote GMB policies and maintain the Union's profile.
- Develop contacts and good working relationships with the Union's outside solicitors, counsel, and senior counsel.

(h) Other responsibilities

- Be a member of the TUC Union Legal Officer's Network (ULON).

- Be a member of the Executive of the Institute of Employment Rights, on behalf of the General Secretary.
- Deal with matters relating to social security law, and occupational accidents and diseases where appropriate, and liaise with other Departments at National Office and with the Union's solicitors as appropriate.

3. PERSON SPECIFICATION

SKILLS / KNOWLEDGE / EXPERIENCE / QUALIFICATIONS / TRAINING

The post holder will be qualified to practise law in England & Wales, preferably a solicitor and preferably the holder of a law degree.

The post holder will have:

- In depth knowledge of all aspects of employment and industrial relations law
- Ability to give advice of practical relevance to the Union's officers and officials
- Ability to assess the impact of domestic and European legislation on GMB members at work
- A knowledge of industrial relations, and a sensitivity to the importance of enforcing legal rights through collective organisation in the workplace
- The ability to write clearly and concisely in a form accessible to the Union's Officers and officials
- IT skills, including Microsoft word
- As a senior member of a small, busy department, good interpersonal and participative skills
- A commitment to the aims of the trade union movement is essential

- Must have the complete confidence of the General Secretary and the Senior Management Team