

Directorate	Legal, Audit, Risk & Assurance (LARA)	Reports to	Chief Executive & Accounting Officer
Security level	Counter Terrorism Check	Salary band	SLT
Salary range	c.£80,000	IPSA reference	GC24

Overview and context

The General Counsel will be the principal legal adviser to the Authority, acting through the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer. They will also act as the gatekeeper for all external legal advice, currently procured through external providers – indeed, the role is expected to pay for itself through a reduction in outsourced work. The remit of the role is wide, covering the interpretation of primary and secondary legislation, the development and application of rules in-house under legislation, HR, procurement and information governance (amongst other areas). The role will be focussed on how our aims can legitimately be met, and how best to achieve them, having regard to the current statutory framework.

As a new role, the first post-holder will have significant opportunity to develop and shape the General Counsel role, recognising IPSA's corporate objective of enabling MPs to focus on what really matters by providing an exemplary, seamless regulatory service with customer service at its heart.

This role sits within the Legal, Audit, Risk and Assurance Directorate (LARA) and reports directly to the Chief Executive and Accounting Officer.

Key responsibilities

- To provide expert, proactive and highly proficient legal advice to the Executive, Board and internal clients on all legal matters, including those that are complex and have significant potential for legal, financial or reputational damage, and which shape the future direction of the organisation.
- Ownership of all legal areas including *inter alia* regulation, criminal and civil litigation, judicial review, commercial contracts, data protection, employment, equality and diversity, real estate, risk and compliance assessment, and corporate governance matters.
- Support IPSA by providing expert advice and guidance on statutory interpretation, the [Scheme of MPs' Staffing and Business Costs](#), other rules and the future development thereof to meet our objective of moving to a model of principles based regulation.
- Supporting our People Team with employment related advice, including the management of formal proceedings at Tribunal where necessary and the Policy Team with advice on the prescribed terms and conditions of employment for MPs' staff.
- Responsible for all commercial legal work, supporting the Procurement Team, including drafting and evolving commercial contracts for external suppliers, contractors and any other agreements.

- Work closely with the Information Governance, Publications and Communication teams to support a coherent, best-in-class approach to data privacy compliance and information management across the organisation and its services.
- Management of any litigation, including high profile criminal prosecutions, regulatory appeals, judicial reviews and employment tribunals.
- Select and manage specialist external legal advisers with the objective of maximising quality whilst minimising cost, ideally covering the cost of the General Counsel appointment in full.
- Ensure there is an effective system of legal risk reporting and monitoring.
- Monitor all relevant UK legislation, regulations and case law that may impact the organisation's statutory obligations and/or the wider landscape and disseminate any information and its implications to the senior leadership team as required.
- Undertake autonomous projects and other pieces of work as well as contributing to wider IPSA projects, as required.
- Reflect IPSA's values of staying connected, seeing the bigger picture, being open, doing the right thing, and making a difference through all that you do.

IPSA is a learning organisation. We constantly review our work against our customer's need and assess the environment in which we operate so that we can continuously improve. Therefore, the list of key responsibilities may adapt and change over time within the spirit and nature of organisational change and the development of the role.

What we're looking for

As we develop a new, principles based regulatory framework, IPSA is seeking its first General Counsel to provide the highest quality legal advice across all areas of our operations. An insightful, engaging individual, you will be used to dealing with strategic and operational matters, always focussing on how IPSA can legitimately achieve its objectives within the current statutory framework. We are looking for a proactive, supportive lawyer who can operate at all levels of the organisation, helping us to deliver our strategic objectives. You will be used to balancing legal risk against other types of risk, to ensure advice is pragmatic and contextualised but never cavalier.

The balance of our legal advice is currently provided externally. You will be experienced in acting as a gatekeeper, dealing with as many matters in-house as possible. Ultimately, your commercial understanding will lead to the role paying for itself as we reduce our external bill.

Not just a lawyer, you will be part of our Senior Leadership team, working collaboratively with colleagues from across IPSA to further improve our performance. Ultimately your personal contribution to enabling MPs' to focus on what really matters by delivering an exemplary, seamless regulatory service should be clear for all to see.

The experience and technical level required for the role, along with personal qualities, skills, attributes, and qualifications (where relevant) are listed below.

Essential

- A lawyer qualified in England and Wales, with demonstrable experience of acting as a General Counsel or senior lawyer in a comparable public body. You will be required to maintain a valid practising certificate from an approved regulator (SRA, BSB, etc.) throughout.
- Highest degree of professional ethics and integrity.
- A demonstrable 'can do' attitude, based on supporting an organisation to legitimately meet its strategic objectives with strong analytical and lateral thinking abilities to interpret and creatively solve complex issues.
- Senior leadership experience, gained either as an in-house lawyer or within an established law firm, and the ability to operate effectively in a matrix structure.
- A strong track record of providing proactive, expert, timely and authoritative strategic legal advice and support to senior leaders and key decision makers at the highest level.
- A broad knowledge of all legal matters likely to affect the IPSA and a depth of knowledge and experience in advising on regulatory, public law, employment, equality and diversity, commercial and information governance matters.
- Strong interpersonal and presentation skills, along with the ability to communicate effectively with others at all levels of the organisation (and potentially externally to include Members of Parliament and senior Government lawyers) orally and in writing.
- The ability to confidently present and oppose legal arguments and excellent negotiating skills in relation to both legal and commercial issues.
- Personal gravitas and charisma with an ability to operate with confidence and credibility at the highest levels of the organisation.
- Ability to work without supervision, including ensuring that all personal CPD requirements are met.

Desirable

- Experience of working in a remote and/or hybrid environment.