

Job Description

Job title:	Head of Legal Services
Reports to:	Director of Governance, Regulation and Business Assurance
Responsible for:	Direct line management responsibility

Role Overview

We make moments that matter by truly caring about our customers and ensuring they are at the heart of everything we do.

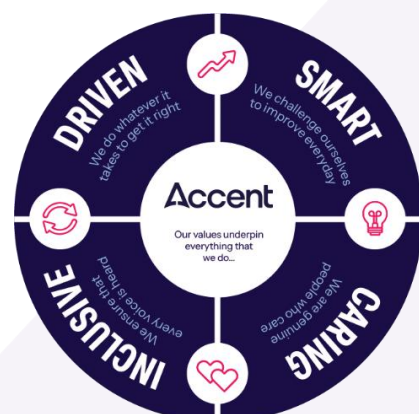
Like us, you are committed to exceptional customer service, and working hard to ensure our customers feel valued, heard, and supported. We deliver affordable homes and build better futures by actively listening to the needs and aspirations of our customers. We work to create communities where people feel safe, secure, and empowered. By fostering open communication, offering tailored services, and continually striving for excellence, we all aim to build lasting relationships that go beyond housing – enhancing lives and contributing to thriving, vibrant communities where everyone can feel good to be home.

As the Head of Legal Services, you will provide robust legal advice and oversight to the organisation. You will lead and support members of the Legal Team in achieving service delivery, working as a key member of the wider Strategy, Governance, Regulation and Business Assurance Team. You will proactively manage relationships with Accent's framework of external legal providers, and collaborate with both internal and external stakeholders to ensure legal compliance and consistency of approach. This role requires excellent analytical skills, strong communication and the ability to work collaboratively across senior leadership teams with a professional and proactive approach to legal service delivery. An expertise in contract law, or the specific legal frameworks associated with the social housing sector, would be useful.

Core Values Alignment

We live and breathe our values. We are Smart, Driven, Caring, and Inclusive. Our colleague and leader competency framework underpins this and helps provide focus and clarity around the behaviours and attributes that are expected at Accent. Our focus on value for money ensures that we continue to spend wisely, work productively and make the best use of our resources. This is all about how we do things: it's what we expect everyone to embrace and work towards in their roles.

In this role, you will demonstrate a commitment to upholding these values in every aspect of your work. By fostering transparency, collaboration, and effective governance, you will contribute to the delivery of Accent's vision and goals. You will help ensure that all legal activities are conducted with the highest levels of integrity and professionalism, reflecting the organisation's commitment to ethical leadership and sound decision-making processes.



Key Responsibilities and Duties

- **Legal Counsel:** act as senior legal advisor to the organisation, supporting and advising the organisation on relevant legal matters and in particular, complex legal cases and contractual matters.
- **External Legal Framework:** proactively manage, monitor and ensure effective working relationships with Accent's framework of external legal providers, maintaining oversight of the specification, commissioning and placement of work, working closely with internal teams on their specific requirements, meeting quarterly with external providers, and monitoring spend against budget and value for money.
- **Collaboration:** work with other senior leaders, providing support and training to internal teams as required. Hold stakeholders accountable for meeting legal requirements and statutory deadlines. This work is likely to involve taking a lead role in the oversight and coordination of relevant contracts, particularly those of high value to the organisation.
- **Training:** Deliver or coordinate a bespoke legal training programme that helps mitigate key risks to the organisation.
- **Risk Management:** Effectively manage both strategic and operational legal risks within the established risk tolerance. Ensure service delivery is aligned with the organisation's strategy and within risk appetite. Ensure performance of legal services is in line with statutory timescales, service objectives and targets.
- **Legal Compliance:** lead on ensuring legal compliance for the organisation, including alignment with regulatory requirements.
- **Budget Management:** be responsible for ensuring cost controls, managing budgets and mitigating financial risks relating to the areas of role oversight, and as part of the overall Directorate budget. Lead in ensuring legal activity and spend stays within budget and forecasting assumptions are as accurate as possible based on performance data and trends analysis.
- **Performance Management:** Ensure the team are performance focussed with clear objectives and KPIs for their service area. Lead on the continuous monitoring and evaluation of service performance.
- **Reporting:** relevant reporting to the Senior Leadership Team and Executive Team on key legal matters and legislation as well as appropriate escalation when required, exercising sound judgement in doing so and an ability to explain complex legal matters in a concise way tailored to the audience.
- **Probity and Standards:** support the Director of Governance, Regulation and Business Assurance in the development and maintenance of an ethical, high quality framework and culture of probity and professional standards across the organisation.

Leadership Responsibility

As leaders at Accent, we are tasked with more than just achieving organisational goals; we are entrusted with the responsibility to create an environment where every colleague can thrive. To do so, we must embody the core competencies that define true leadership.

- Ensure we build a customer first culture within our teams and the wider organisation.
- Ensure we engage and are committed to the wider vision of the organisation and its goals always working collectively to achieve the best outcomes for our customers.
- Proactively and positively give feedback directly to colleagues and leaders when there may be an opportunity to improve behaviours. At Accent we want an open and transparent culture and must always act with integrity towards our peers and colleagues and not engage any disrespectful behaviours.
- Invest in personal development and development of our teams, fostering growth through continuous development, coaching, and challenging experiences.
- Inspire innovation by encouraging new ideas, diverse thinking, and a culture of continuous improvement.
- Drive forward making bold decisions, tackle difficult issues, and grow from setbacks.

- Building trust, collaborating openly, and valuing inclusion, creating safe spaces where every voice is heard and respected across the whole organisation.
- Align our actions with a clear vision and purpose, taking decisive action to achieve results while always keeping our commitments.
- Embody care, ensuring that compassion and accountability are at the heart of everything we do.
- Work to the Accent competencies, always achieving the highest standard of conduct and integrity.

The must haves:

- Solicitor, barrister or equivalent qualified lawyer with substantial post-qualification experience
- Extensive experience as a senior in-house lawyer within a regulated sector with specialist knowledge in commercial and/or sector-specific law, and the right to practice law in this jurisdiction.
- In-depth legal expertise with an understanding of legal principles and practices, with evidence of continued professional development (CPD) commensurate with the requirements of the role.
- A strategic mindset with experience in business planning, performance management and value.
- Proven analytical and problem-solving skills, demonstrating your ability to assess and understand complex legal issues, and provide strategic advice.
- Natural leadership, management and influencing skills, with the ability to assess and understand complex legal issues, build trusted relationships with stakeholders and maintain probity and professional standards at all times
- Have exceptional writing and communication skills, with the ability to deliver succinct presentations or advice to senior leaders and wider organisation.

The added extras:

- Knowledge of commercial, housing and/or property law is desirable
- Experience within the housing sector is desirable

This role description highlights key responsibilities but is not exhaustive. Colleagues will agree on priorities with their Line Manager and are expected to work flexibly, supporting the team and working collaboratively across teams to deliver outstanding results for our customers. Working together as one team is our norm at Accent and reflects how we achieve success and meet the organisation's evolving needs.

We work flexibly and on an agile basis. We design our work around the customer with the focus being on ensuring we deliver the best possible service to our customers and to the best of our abilities. How and where you work will be agreed with your line manager to achieve the best outcome for both the organisation and for you, wherever possible.