



PDS Office Public Defender

Reports to	Public Defender	Group	Office of Legal Counsel
Unit/Team	Public Defence Service	Location	Nationwide
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Our ministry

Justice is the foundation of any democratic society and New Zealand has one of the most trusted public services in the world. At the Ministry of Justice, we work as one team to provide a great service to the public every day. Our team of over 4,000 people is working together for a fair and safe Aotearoa.

We lead the justice sector administering the courts and tribunals, the legal aid system and the Public Defence Service, ensuring their integrity. We provide policy advice to the government on legislation relating to the justice system and New Zealand's constitution. We help the Crown to honour its responsibilities to Māori.

It is an exciting time to join us. We are leading the transformation of our criminal justice system, helping to tackle New Zealand's high levels of family violence and sexual violence, and improving New Zealanders' access to justice. We want to provide better justice for Māori and we are working closely with the tangata whenua.

We listen to and work with our communities so we can improve our services for the people who need them most, and increase our support for the most vulnerable. We want people to have the same high quality of service regardless of who they are, where they are, or how they interact with us.

The Ministry is a great place to be - where you can be yourself and succeed. We value diversity. We respect our people, practice integrity, deliver great service and our team always aims for excellence - Respect, Integrity, Service, Excellence - R.I.S.E - these are our values.

Our group

The Public Defence Service (PDS) is a strong, independent, professional, people-centred criminal law practice, providing high quality legal advice and representation in criminal legal aid cases. The Public Defence Service employs over 180 criminal defence lawyers in 10 offices across New Zealand and is a key contributor to the wider justice sector and a significant part of the wider criminal bar in New Zealand.

Our highly skilled and dedicated team of lawyers and support staff are committed to promoting our clients' best interests and carrying out our guardianship role in New Zealand's justice system. We receive between 15,000-16,000 cases annually and provide over 18,000 Duty Lawyer hours across our 10 metropolitan centres and service 15 District Courts, related High Courts, Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court. We also oversee the Duty Lawyer Service and provide duty lawyer services in the courts we operate in.

Our mix of senior, intermediate and junior lawyers are employed to undertake a full range of criminal legal aid cases.

PDS provides a collaborative and supportive environment with the wide variety of work undertaken making it an exciting place to work. Our staff gain great skills as support staff, managers and criminal lawyers and benefit from working for a large organisation. We offer specialised in-house professional development opportunities including criminal law, management and leadership training. All our staff get the opportunity to gain the skills and experience they need to work as support staff or criminal defence lawyers and to further their careers.

Our values: RISE

Respect: We value others and their contributions

Integrity: We are honest and open

Service: We deliver results

Excellence: We focus on quality

Your role

As an Office Public Defender (DPD) you are the manager of the PDS office and are responsible for leadership, mentoring and management of staff while working through an assigned caseload at a senior level. You also form part of the PDS Legal Management Team. You are responsible for:

- Managing the performance and operation of the office
- Managing a caseload
- Developing and maintaining strong internal and external relationships
- Role modelling continuous professional development
- Professional Expectation
- Providing leadership on health and safety

Your responsibilities

Lead the performance and operation of the office

- Deliver the agreed core business objectives agreed for PDS for your office
- Support and encourage Team Leaders to manage staff performance and build capability of staff
- Undertake annual performance reviews for all direct reports. Provide advice to the Director PDS and Public Defender regarding annual performance reviews and salary adjustments for legal staff
- In consultation with the Public Defender and National Business Manager ensure appropriate resourcing and capability to meet operational needs
- Coach and support team leaders to manage their teams' cases in such a way as to ensure the best possible outcome for the client
- Ensure the professional service delivery of the office is operating at the optimum level of efficiency
- Contribute to operational procedures which ensure that representation services are provided in a culturally appropriate way
- Create and maintain a positive, open and collaborative office environment
- Provide leadership of the office and ensure professional staff compliance with the PDS and MOJ policies, procedures and code of conduct.
- Lead the Quality Assurance Programme for your office, undertake file reviews and court observations for staff and encourage shared learning from experience
- Lead people by communicating effectively and building collaborative relationships. Facilitate resolution of differences between teams and staff members
- Manage the recruitment of new legal staff in the office
- Establish a forward training programme and ensure that regular training occurs in the office for legal staff
- Work in partnership with administration support managers and Team Leaders to ensure the office operates effectively
- Monitor the wellbeing of staff in your office and coach and support Team Leaders to be effective in caring for the welfare of their teams
- Encourage staff to raise concerns and help find solutions

Manage a caseload

- Appear for clients granted legal aid in appropriate criminal proceedings categories and assigned to the PDS in predominantly the more complex, serious and high-profile cases (criminal PAL 3 & 4).
- Keep abreast of new legislation, case law and practice notes
- Uphold professional and quality standards
- Ensure that all legal aid services are provided in a culturally appropriate way
- Be fully conversant with the PDS case management system
- Develop and maintain a client base
- Be well prepared and ready to advance your case
- Be recognised as a legal expert in the office and preferred counsel
- Demonstrate and maintain strong trial advocacy skills
- Work with senior lawyers within PDS and the defence bar to ensure best practice and up to date knowledge
- Ensure that court and trial opportunities are used to develop other lawyers and constructive feedback is provided
- Work collaboratively with lawyers to discuss pre-trial/trial strategies and submission writing

Develop and maintain strong internal and external relationships

- Build healthy relationships across the bar
- Contribute to the identification of relevant organisations for external engagement and collaboration
- Engage and work in partnership with key stakeholders where appropriate, including other Ministry business groups to ensure a consistent and collaborative approach
- Engage, consult on and communicate PDS priorities

Role model professional development as a leader and lawyer

- Build breadth and depth of experience by actively seeking learning opportunities
- Actively participate in professional leadership development programmes
- Build and maintain up to date technical knowledge and adapt practices accordingly
- Lead and contribute to feedback on draft policies, reviews and initiatives

Professional Expectation

- The Public Defence Service promotes professional supervision.
- Professional supervision is a formal process of support and learning which enables you to develop knowledge and competence, assume responsibility for your own area of practice and enhance protection and safety in relation to many issues which you may encounter through your work.
- The frequency of your Professional Supervision will be determined in conversation with you and may vary depending upon any issues which you are encountering, through your work.

Provide leadership on health and safety

- Understand and meet your health and safety responsibilities, including in relation to hazard management
- Communicate and consult with employees and health and safety representatives on health and safety issues
- Ensure effective injury management processes are put in place for injured employees
- Investigate and report work related accidents, illnesses and incidents in accordance with the requirements of the law and the Ministry's policies
- Escalate serious concerns you have about the health and safety of your staff to the Public Defender or Director

Your working relationships

Internal All Ministry staff

External PDS clients
The Judiciary
Court employees
Crown Solicitors and prosecution lawyers
Police and Police prosecutors
Legal professional organisations
Local community groups and representatives of client groups, including iwi, Pacific peoples and recent immigrants
Other justice and social sector agencies
Other government departments and agencies including relevant Crown entities

Your education & experience

EDUCATION/PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND TECHNICAL SKILLS

- A law degree and current New Zealand practising certificate
- Legal aid provider with criminal provider approval level 4
- High level management skills and experience in the effective use of staffing and financial resources, for leading staff in the achievement of objectives, and for managing conflicting priorities, timeframes and complex issues
- Sound understanding of the constitutional principles and legal processes that underpin the New Zealand justice system and an understanding of Courts, Judicial Protocols, conventions, operations, and processes

WORK EXPERIENCE

- Experience in managing the operation of a legal practice or similar organisation
- Experience in training, mentoring and developing staff
- Extensive experience and proven capacity in reviewing, developing and setting policy, practice and standards in criminal law
- Change management skills and a track record in managing change initiatives
- Substantial criminal litigation experience and excellent advocacy skills
- Ability to build and maintain a range of effective business relationships within an organisation and a wide network of professional relationships across organisation
- High personal and performance standards

Public Service

Mahi tōpū ai ngā Kaimahi Tūmatanui e whai tikanga ai te noho a ngā tāngata o Aotearoa. Hei tā te Public Service Act ko te pūtake o ngā Kaimahi Kāwanatanga, ko te tautoko i te kāwanatanga whai ture me te kāwanatanga manapori; ko te āwhina i te Kāwanatanga o te wā nei me ō anamata ki te whakawhanake, ki te whakatinana hoki i ā rātou kaupapa here; ko te tuku i ngā ratonga tūmatanui e nui ana te kounga, e nahanaha ana anō hoki; ko te tautoko i te Kāwanatanga e tūroa ai te whai oranga o te marea; ko te huawaere i te whai wāhitanga o te kirirarau ki te ao tūmatanui me te whakatutuki i ngā mahi i runga i tā te ture i whakahau ai. E hiranga ana te wāhi ki a mātou ki te tautoko i te Karauna i ana hononga ki ngā iwi Māori i raro i te Tiriti o Waitangi. Ahakoa he nui ngā momo tūranga mahi, e tapatahi ana ngā kaimahi tūmatanui i roto i te whakaaro nui ki te hāpai i ngā hapori, ka mutu, e arahina ana ā mātou mahi e ngā mātāpono matua me ngā uara o ngā Kaimahi Tūmatanui.

The public service works collectively to make a meaningful difference for New Zealanders. The Public Service Act states that the purpose of the public service is to support constitutional and democratic government, enable both the current Government and successive governments to develop and implement their policies, deliver high-quality and efficient public services, support the Government to pursue the long-term public interest, facilitate active citizenship and act in accordance with the law. We have an important role in supporting the Crown in its relationships with Māori under the Treaty of Waitangi and te Tiriti o Waitangi. Whilst there are many diverse roles, all public servants are unified by a spirit of service to the community, and guided by the core principles and values of the public service in our work.

