



PDS Assistant Office Public Defender

Reports to	Office Public Defender	Group	Office of Legal Counsel
Unit/Team	Public Defence Service	Location	Manukau
Direct reports	Up to 5 (approx.)		

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.

We lead the justice sector and our role is wide-ranging – we administer the courts, the legal aid system and the Public Defence Service. We provide policy advice to the government and advise on legislation relating to the courts, justice system and New Zealand's constitution. We also negotiate settlement of historic Treaty of Waitangi claims for the Crown and administer the Marine and Coastal Area (Takutai Moana) Act.

Our team of over 3000 work across the country and are passionate about making a difference for New Zealanders. They work for an organisation which values excellence and service and treats people with integrity and respect and they make a difference and change people's lives.

When you join us, you'll play an important part in helping to keep our communities safe and ensuring our justice system is fair and credible. We work together to ensure a safe and just New Zealand.

The Public Defence Service (PDS)

The PDS is the largest employer of criminal defence lawyers in New Zealand and provides independent criminal defence and duty lawyer services in 10 locations nation-wide; servicing 15 District Courts, their respective High Courts, the Court of Appeal and Supreme Court and helping some of the most marginalised people in our communities access justice.

The PDS provides its employees with on-going professional training and development at all levels, a varied caseload including significant time in court, professional leadership, and full administrative support. The PDS is part of the Ministry of Justice and the wider justice sector. The ministry provides centralised business services, infrastructure and support to the work of the PDS.

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 Assistant Office Public Defender, you will lead, manage and provide guidance to a unit of PDS lawyers and ensure they have the knowledge, skills, resources, systems, and processes required to deliver high quality legal aid services. Assistant Office Public Defenders also have a key coordination role in the office. You will support the Office Public Defender (OPD) by working with other members of the office leadership team to provide up to date information on the operation and performance of the office and to coordinate capability development across the units, including supervision requirements.

You are expected to role model continuous professional development as a leader and a lawyer and provide leadership in health and safety. In the absence of the OPD you may be expected to assume full accountability and responsibility for office leadership.

Dimensions of the position for which the incumbent is accountable

- HR Delegation: Level 5
- Financial Delegation: Level 5

Your responsibilities

Leadership

- Champion the Ministry's and PDS's purpose, strategy, vision and values
- Role model the Ministry's and PDS's desired values and behaviours and the PDS professional and quality standards
- Work collectively with other members of the office leadership team to deliver sustainable and long-term improvements to system and client outcomes
- Co-ordinate the development and implementation of the capability development programme for the office and lead assigned training sessions as required
- Model and encourage a culture of continuous improvement
- Participate on Court Committees at a local level (e.g. Family Violence User Group etc.)
- Contribute to PDS strategic and operational planning and service improvement activities.

Management

People Management:

- Jointly develop an office culture and engagement plan with the office leadership team and Legal Team Managers and ensure delivery of agreed actions
- Plan and organise team building events as appropriate
- Champion participation in PDS and Ministry Culture and Diversity initiatives
- Use rigorous selection processes to recruit the most suitable candidates for vacant positions
- Empower and support unit staff to effectively deliver on their tasks and duties and achieve client outcomes
- Supervise, coach and mentor more junior lawyers
- Measure and evaluate performance against PDS goals
- Contribute to the office leadership team's resourcing decisions to ensure that resource is allocated to teams at the right time to deliver
- Provide timely, clear and constructive feedback to direct reports about areas for improvement; and agree actions required to address performance issues.

Operational management:

- Work closely with the unit's Legal Team Managers and Principal Lawyer to assign cases, manage the trial calendar, ensure the PDS QA programme is being followed including file reviews and court observations
- Use sound work management practices to organise the unit's work priorities and ensure it is operating at the optimum level of efficiency
- Coach and support Legal Team Managers to manage their team's cases in such a way as to ensure the best possible outcome for the client
- Manage and resolve court issues and complaints as required
- Adhere to Ministry and PDS policies, guidelines and delegations
- Coordinate the movement of staff across the office as resourcing needs and workloads change
- Actively manage staff wellbeing, help build resilience and role model management of your own wellbeing
- Ensure staff have the tools and resources necessary to perform their roles
- Identify issues or risks, escalate where appropriate and lead the development and implementation of mitigation strategies
- Measure and monitor service delivery standards, efficiency and effectiveness across the unit.

Capability Development

Unit Capability:

- Identify and develop essential skills, knowledge and behaviours (competencies) required for direct reports to be effective
- Assess gaps between desired and actual capability and identify areas for development
- Ensure PDPs (Performance and Development Plans) are in place for all direct reports and unit staff, agree objectives aligned with PDS strategy, identify performance improvement needs, development needs, CPD and career aspirations
- Ensure all unit staff receive the necessary supervision and coaching
- Invest time in coaching and mentoring direct reports to assist them to enhance the capabilities required in their current roles and the roles they aspire to
- Working in collaboration with the office leadership team, Principal Lawyers and Legal Team Managers ensure appropriate supervision and coaching arrangements are in place for all lawyers
- Undertake file reviews and use court observations and other trial opportunities to provide regular feedback, coaching and support to build performance and capability
- Support, contribute to, and monitor lawyer career progression and junior lawyer certification programmes
- Manage the PAL approvals process for the unit, seeking sign off from the OPD.

Own Capability:

- Ensure an in-depth understanding of the Ministry and PDS systems, structures and interfaces
- Continue to build breadth and depth of leadership, management and legal experience by actively seeking and taking up learning opportunities
- Actively participate in leadership development programmes such as development centres, 360-degree feedback and coaching
- Encourage regular feedback on own leadership approach and/or work style from a range of sources
- Keep abreast of new legislation, case law and practice notes and adapt practices accordingly.

Projects

- Undertake projects as directed by the OPD, ensuring completion with agreed timeframes and financial constraints.

Caseload management

- Appear for clients granted legal aid and assigned to the PDS predominantly in the more complex, serious and high-profile cases (PAL 3 and/or PAL 4).
- Provide legal aid services with cultural sensitivity
- Be fully conversant with the PDS case management system
- Demonstrate and maintain strong trial advocacy skills
- Work collaboratively with lawyers to discuss pre-trial/trial strategies and submission writing.

Relationship management

- Build and maintain positive and respectful relationships across the bar
- Establish and maintain strong relationships with all internal and external stakeholders; particularly stakeholders such as case service managers etc.
- Support and model a culture of collaboration and open communication within the office, across PDS and the wider Ministry. Facilitate resolution of differences between teams and staff members as appropriate
- Effectively represent PDS and engage, consult on and communicate PDS priorities.

Health & Safety at Work

- Provide leadership in health and safety issues
- Understand and meet your health and safety responsibilities, including in relation to hazard management
- Communicate and consult with employees 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, Ministry's policies and PDS procedures.

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 a minimum criminal provider approval level of 3
- A 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

In undertaking the role of Assistant Office Public Defender, the following capabilities are required:

- You have experience in leading and managing the operations of a legal team, legal practice or similar organisation, including training, mentoring and developing staff
- You have extensive experience and proven capability in reviewing, developing and setting policy, practice and standards in criminal law
- You demonstrate drive, optimism and a delivery-focus to make things happen and achieve outcomes
- You demonstrate effective change management skills with a track record in managing successful change initiatives
- You have developed and maintained a range of effective business relationships and a wide network of professional relationships
- You have substantial criminal litigation experience and excellent advocacy skills
- You are committed to self-development and maintain your knowledge of criminal law
- You role model high personal and professional performance standards.