

GENERAL COUNSEL

Duration:	Permanent
Salary:	circa £105,000 per annum
Job Level:	1
Hours:	35 hours per week. Other flexible arrangements will be considered
Disclosure Level:	Basic. This role involves no direct or indirect work with children
Reports to:	Chief Operations Officer
Location:	working from home and two days a week at 1 Westfield Avenue, London E20 1HZ

At the UK Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF UK), we work alongside partners and communities to help realise children's rights and build a better world for every child. We are committed to an inclusive workplace where people feel valued, supported, and able to thrive – connected by shared values, a sense of purpose and a collective commitment to making childhood unstoppable.

Our work is guided by the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which recognise the universality of children's rights.

ABOUT THE ROLE

As General Counsel & Company Secretary at UNICEF UK, you will lead the organisation's legal, governance and regulatory strategy, ensuring we operate with integrity, sound judgement and confidence while delivering maximum impact for children. You will be the principal legal adviser to the Chief Executive, Executive Team and Board of Trustees, combining strong strategic insight, commercial acumen and pragmatic risk management to support high-quality decision-making across the organisation. As a member of the Strategic Leadership Group, you will contribute to organisational leadership to support UNICEF UK in achieving its mission and strategic objectives.

You will lead a multi-disciplinary directorate encompassing Legal, Governance, Data Protection, Income Generation Quality & Compliance, Environmental & Social, and Procurement, positioning these functions as strategic, value-adding enablers to the organisation.

What we will expect you to achieve

Strategic leadership

- Contribute to organisational strategy as a member of the Strategic Leadership Group, bringing a legal, governance and risk perspective to executive decision-making
- Act as principal adviser to the Chief Executive, Executive Team and Board on complex and high-risk legal, governance and regulatory matters
- Support ethical, commercially informed decision-making in line with UNICEF UK's risk appetite

- Ensure legal, governance and risk considerations are embedded early in organisational planning, transformation and major initiatives

Legal & Governance Advisory

- Lead legal input into major organisational initiatives, partnerships, and transformational activity, providing clear, pragmatic advice across areas including commercial contracts, employment, intellectual property, data protection, disputes and regulatory compliance.
- Partner with teams across the organisation to develop practical, legally sound solutions that enable delivery of strategic objectives

Risk, Compliance & Assurance

- Maintain and continuously strengthen the organisation's governance framework, ensuring compliance with charity law, company law and regulatory requirements
- Oversee complex legal risks, disputes, and regulatory engagement, applying a pragmatic, commercially aware approach aligned with our risk appetite framework.
- Ensure effective oversight of data protection, income generation compliance and wider regulatory obligations; stepping in when required to support decision making and incident management
- Support organisational readiness for crisis management, serious incidents and regulatory scrutiny
- Provide senior stewardship of procurement governance to support effective, proportionate and responsible procurement that delivers value for money and effective key supplier management

Commercial & Partnership Leadership

- Support the development of commercially sound approaches to income generation, partnerships and delivery models
- Take charge of the legal aspects of complex commercial models, partnership structures and new routes to market. This may involve the creation of new legal agreements and templates, and extensive negotiation with commercial partners and suppliers
- Balance opportunity and risk to enable innovation, sustainable income growth and impact

Function Leadership and Organisational Impact

- Lead, develop and position the legal team as trusted, proactive, value-adding experts, fostering a high-performing culture of collaboration, accountability and continuous improvement.
- Build organisational capability and confidence in legal, governance and risk matters through effective engagement, training and support
- Maintain and strengthen relationships with key external contacts and third parties including: UNICEF Global, commercial partners, engaged and pro bono law firms, and relevant regulators, always ensuring consistently high-quality service and support.
- Demonstrate and model a commitment to our shared values, behaviours and inclusive practices (known as [Our Shared Commitment](#)) in all aspects of your work.

BEHAVIOURS, EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS

Effective behaviours

Supporter driven and mission aligned

- Is committed to children and their rights and motivated to work towards creating a better world for every child.

Creating and innovating

- Establishes a vision and strategic view that creates scalable legal and governance strategies, underpinned by our mission and values.
- Empowers people to innovate and welcomes new ideas that are focused on the delivery of strategic priorities.

Leadership

- Promotes a results-focused culture, engaging and guiding others to achieve ambitious goals.
- Creates and encourages a cross-organisational teamwork and collaboration, acting as a visible role model for inclusive behaviours and practices.

Positive relationships

- Applies strong interpersonal and collaboration skills to build and leverage relationships and influence stakeholders internally and externally.

Achieving change

- Demonstrates a flexible and adaptable approach to leading change and ambiguity.
- Communicates the reason for change and supports colleagues to embrace it, recognising that people will respond in different ways and at different paces.

Communication

- Presents complex and difficult messages clearly and with impact.

Relevant experience

- Deep experience of leading and developing multi-disciplinary and integrated teams, within a complex organisation, operating as a strategic partner to board, execs and across all levels
- Proven experience leading legal and governance functions within a complex organisation, including responsibility for organisational compliance and assurance frameworks
- Experience leading on complex commercial agreements, partnerships and income-generating activity, ideally within a regulated environment
- Credible experience providing legal direction and negotiation for new partnerships, ventures and operating models.
- Proven ability to balance legal risk with commercial and organisational priorities, supporting pragmatic and effective decision-making

- Strong understanding of relevant regulatory frameworks (e.g. charity law, company law, data protection), or the ability to operate effectively within similarly regulated sectors. Charity law experience is helpful but not essential.
- Proven judgement and the ability to balance legal risk with organisational priorities and practical delivery

Specific knowledge and skills

- Strong understanding of legal, governance and regulatory frameworks within complex or regulated environments (e.g. company law, data protection and compliance)
- Excellent judgement and ability to provide clear, pragmatic advice, balancing legal risk with commercial, reputational and organisational considerations
- Strong proven experience in strategic commercial negotiations, deal making while managing competing interests
- Deep knowledge of contract law regulatory frameworks and risk exposure able to balance commercial outcomes with legal requirements while having clear understanding of the implications of decisions.
- Highly effective communicator, able to translate complex legal issues into clear, actionable insights for Executive and Board-level stakeholders
- Strong influencing, negotiating and relationship building skills used to partner across functions, build trusted relationships and shape solutions that enable organisational delivery
- Emotionally intelligent, with the ability to develop people and manage conflict, pressure and difficult conversations to deliver effective solutions to all stakeholders.