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| Job title: | Dispute Resolution Manager - Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) |
| Directorate: | Optimisation + Business Improvement |
| Date written: | July 2024 |
| Notice period: | 2 months |
| Job grade: | 12 |
| Job code: | 1692 |

Purpose of job

This is a new role for Abri and its purpose is to lead a team of Case Managers to respond to all Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS) requests for information (formal investigations) across Abri Group, minimising the risk of negative determinations that could result in reputational risk and possible further investigation by the HOS, or Regulator.

The Team may also be asked to support the collation of information to respond to requests for information from other relevant dispute resolution services, including the Financial Ombudsman Service.

The role holder will develop and maintain ways of working for the function, continuously enhancing how HOS casework is managed.

They will work closely with senior, internal, stakeholders within Abri's Operational and Legal teams, to ensure that all relevant information has been provided to inform HO investigations. They'll ensure stakeholders are appropriately informed of the status of cases and the risk they could pose to the organisation, and any steps that need to be taken to put things right with customers. They'll support stakeholders in preparing and submitting ad-hoc communications with the Housing Ombudsman Service (HOS), including challenges to case outcomes.

The role will oversee enquiries and the completion of Orders and Recommendations, when determinations are made by the HOS. They will also prepare accurate and timely reporting to appropriate governance forums. Additionally, the role of the Manager is to work with the wider Change and Service Improvements teams to implement service improvements, as a result of HOS findings.

The Dispute Resolution Manager will also work closely and collaboratively with the Customer Relations Team in respect of project activity, supporting Abri's readiness for any future changes to the HOS statutory Complaint Handling Code and any other legislative or regulatory changes.

Key duties and responsibilities

Leadership

- Lead, motivate, and inspire a team of Case Managers.
- Facilitate and lead team meetings to bring colleagues together, communicate strategy, and reinforce shared values.
- Recruit and train new team members, as required, ensuring that the team are appropriately resourced.
- Contribute towards Abri's Great Places to Work plan; ensuring all team members are supported on their personal development journey, completing mandatory training, and have regular check-ins and quarterly Great Conversations (appraisals). This also involves supporting actions plans following colleagues satisfaction surveys to address key themes.
- Provide visible leadership and collaborative working with other teams and develop effective relationships with external stakeholders, including the Housing Ombudsman.

Case Management

- Ensure that all enquiries and requests for information are responded to and determination actions are completed in a timely manner, and within given timescales.
- Oversee case allocation and resourcing.
- Quality control information prepared in response to requests for information by the Housing Ombudsman Service, ensuring full compliance, accuracy, and good quality.

Liaison and Communication

- Co-ordinate determination actions with senior stakeholders, as required.
- Develop and maintain a good network within the sector, including with the HOS.
- Understand the requirements of key stakeholders and be a point of contact for advice and oversight for media and legal enquiries, and maintain collaborative relationships.

Risk and Compliance

- To operate within Abri's risk appetite and be aware of risks posed to the Organisation, and to escalate concerns to senior stakeholders where required.
- Ensure that Abri remains compliant with the HOS statutory Complaint Handling Code and any legislative or regulatory changes.
- Ensure that Abri reflects upon and embeds learnings from individual cases, working with the wider Change and Service Improvements teams to implement service improvements, as a result of HOS findings.
- Ensure that Abri reflects upon and embeds learnings from HOS Spotlight Reports (and other sector best practise, as required), by collating action plans and working collaboratively with stakeholders.

Reporting and Analysis

- Gather data and maintain records, to inform performance key performance indicators.
- Prepare reports and briefing notes to key stakeholders and governance forums as needed, relating to key case facts, risk, external benchmarking, and performance.
- Prepare informed forecasting, and ensure the service is appropriately resourced.
- Identify options and recommendations for service delivery change and improvements based on investigation conclusions, including changes to the complaints service, and where needed deliver necessary feedback to individual colleagues, managers or teams across the Organisation, including the wider Change and Service Improvement Department.

Training and Development

- Develop and maintain ways of working for the function, continuously enhancing how HOS casework is managed, including written guidelines and processes.
- Develop and lead a highly skilled team to maintain high performance.
- Supporting the training and development of stakeholders, to ensure they remain aware of and up to date with the requirements of the HOS statutory Complaint Handling Code.

Undertake any other duties commensurate to the role.

Knowledge, skills and experience required

- Proven experience and in-depth knowledge of a regulated environment and dispute resolution in a complaints handling environment.
- Strong inclusive leadership skills with the ability to motivate, mentor and inspire a team to strive for success.
- Strong coaching skills, including the ability to build rapport and psychological safety, emotional intelligence, active listening skills, the ability to give (and receive) feedback, and demonstrates empathy.
- Proven experience of risk awareness and evidence of working within the boundaries of an organisation's risk appetite.
- Ability to stay organised and manage the team's workload to ensure timescales and quality standards are met consistently.
- Ability to show initiative, think critically and be a proactive problem solver, making appropriate objective decisions and recommending service improvements.
- Ability to work under pressure, and support a team through peak operating periods.
- Demonstrable experience of managing good working relationships with internal and external stakeholders, with the ability to influence others to drive change.
- Confident and comfortable to present information to senior stakeholders.
- Proven evidence of excellent written communications ensuring tone and style is appropriate to the audience, including effective report and policy writing, with the ability to produce high quality, accurate, clear, and concise business information, and reports for a variety of audiences at all levels.
- Ability to collate relevant information and present it clearly, in an appropriate format to suit the audience and influence decision making, including strategic reporting.

- Be customer focused.
- Demonstrates Abri's Values and Behaviours.

| Version | Revision date | Summary of Changes | Author |
|---------|---------------|--------------------|--------------|
| 1 | N/A | Initial document | Natalie Hill |