SERIOUS FRAUD OFFICE
TE TARI HARA TĀWARE

Version: November 2026

Principal Lawyer – Technical Lead (12 month fixed term)

Team:	**Legal Services / Operations**
Reports to:	**Deputy Chief Executive Legal and Corporate | Chief Legal Advisor**
Direct reports:	**None**
Indirect reports:	**None**
Delegations:	**Financial Authority- refer delegations policy**
NZSIS Clearance:	**Confidential, if required**
Location:	**Auckland**
Travel:	**Occasional**

Being a Public Servant

Ka mahitahi mātou o te ratonga tūmatanui kia hei painga mō ngā tāngata o Aotearoa i āianei, ā, hei ngā rā ki tua hoki. He kawenga tino whaitake tā mātou hei tautoko i te Karauna i runga i āna hononga ki a ngāi Māori i raro i te Tiriti o Waitangi. Ka tautoko mātou i te kāwanatanga manapori. Ka whakakotahingia mātou e te wairua whakarato ki ō mātou hapori, ā, e arahina ana mātou e ngā mātāpono me ngā tikanga matua o te ratonga tūmatanui i roto i ā mātou mahi.

In the public service we work collectively to make a meaningful difference for New Zealanders now and in the future. We have an important role in supporting the Crown in its relationships with Māori under the Treaty of Waitangi. We support democratic government. We are unified by a spirit of service to our communities and guided by the core principles and values of the public service in our work.

Position purpose of the Principal Lawyer – Technical Lead

This is a unique opportunity to help shape the future of legal practice at the Serious Fraud Office.

The Principal Lawyer - Technical Lead is a senior legal leadership role responsible for providing operational legal leadership across the SFO's evaluations, investigations and prosecutions. Reporting to the Deputy Chief Executive Legal and Corporate (Chief Legal Advisor), the role supports the delivery of high-quality, consistent and effective legal services that enable successful operational outcomes.

The position acts as the primary professional lead for the Investigating Lawyer cohort, providing mentoring, technical guidance and leadership on significant and complex matters. Working alongside operational leaders, SFO Prosecution Panel members, Principal Lawyers and investigation teams, the role ensures legal expertise is effectively embedded throughout the lifecycle of all SFO investigations and prosecutions.

As a fixed-term role, the Principal Lawyer - Technical Lead will also assess and strengthen the operation of the Investigating Lawyer model, identifying opportunities to improve capability, consistency, deployment and impact across the organisation.

What we do matters – Our purpose

The Serious Fraud Office (SFO) is a highly specialised government department whose purpose is to protect New Zealand's financial and economic wellbeing. We do this through our mission of disrupting and deterring serious or complex fraud through prevention, investigation, and prosecution.

How we do things – Our Values

Integrity First | Ngākau tapatahi	We do what's right, with independence, fairness and courage
Sharp on Purpose | Kōpere	We act with clarity and intent, focusing our energy on what matters most
Stronger Together | He waka eke noa	We back each other, share ideas and work as one team

What you will do to contribute	As a result, we will see
Technical Legal Leadership of Investigations and Prosecutions • Provide senior legal leadership across SFO evaluations, investigations and prosecutions. • Advise on complex legal, evidential and procedural issues. • Review and quality assure significant legal advice, court applications and prosecution decisions. • Appear in court where required as an SFO in-house prosecutor. • Support investigation teams to achieve legally robust and effective outcomes.	• High-quality, practical legal advice that supports operational decision-making. • Legal risks are identified and managed effectively. • Significant investigations and prosecutions benefit from strong legal leadership.
Management of Legal Resources • Support workforce planning and capability development. • Monitor utilisation and identify opportunities to improve impact and efficiency. Provide advice on future capability and resource requirements.	• Legal resources are deployed effectively to priority matters. • Capability is aligned with organisational needs. • Clear recommendations support future workforce planning.
Technical Leadership of the Investigating Lawyer Cohort • Provide professional leadership, mentoring and technical guidance to Investigating Lawyers. • Promote consistent legal standards, practice and ways of working. • Build capability through coaching, quality assurance and knowledge sharing. • Foster a connected and high-performing community of practice.	• Investigating Lawyers are engaged, capable and well supported. • Legal practice is consistent and of a high standard. • Capability across the cohort continues to grow.

What you will do to contribute	As a result, we will see
Continuous Improvement and Future Proofing Capabilities • Evaluate and strengthen the Investigating Lawyer operating model. • Lead initiatives that improve how legal expertise is integrated into operational work. • Identify lessons learned and drive improvements in legal practice. • Monitor emerging legal, technological and investigative developments, including artificial intelligence, digital evidence and advanced analytics. • Support legally robust adoption of new investigative tools and technologies.	• Practical improvements are implemented and embedded. • Legal practice keeps pace with technological and legislative developments. • The organisation is equipped to respond to emerging forms of financial crime.
Building Relationships and Influence • Build trusted relationships across the agency • Partner with operational leaders, external counsel and key justice-sector stakeholders. • Promote a culture of professionalism, continuous improvement and operational excellence.	• Strong and effective working relationships are established. • Legal expertise is sought and valued across the organisation. • Collaboration between Legal Services and Operations is strengthened.

Fixed Term Deliverables	
By the conclusion of the 12-month term:	• Capability and professional support arrangements have been strengthened. • Sustainable improvements have been or will be implemented across investigations and prosecutions. • The SFO is better positioned to respond to emerging technologies and evolving financial crime threats.

Who you will work with to get the job done	
Internal	ELT / SLT
	Legal Services Team
	Operations Team
	Wider SFO Team
External	Crown Law Office
	Other agency partners and stakeholders
	SFO Panel Prosecutors

Your competency profile	What you will bring specifically
Keys to success: • Technical Legal Excellence • Operational Leadership • Strategic Judgement	Experience: • 7+ years' post-qualification experience in criminal law, prosecutions and complex litigation, including:

Your competency profile	What you will bring specifically
• Developing Others • Collaboration and Influence • Continuous Improvement • Delivery Focus • Future-Focused Thinking	○ Significant experience advising on complex, high-risk matters. ○ Expertise in criminal law and criminal procedure. ○ Extensive experience appearing as sole counsel in complex criminal proceedings, including appeals. • Experience mentoring and developing lawyers. • Proven ability to exercise sound judgement in complex and sensitive situations. • Excellent stakeholder management and influencing skills. • Be a visible role model for the highest standards of professional conduct, integrity and ethical decision-making. • Senior Prosecutor classification (or equivalent). Skills: • Experience in financial crime, fraud, corruption or other complex investigations. • Experience leading legal capability or practice improvement initiatives. Other requirements: • Bachelor of Laws (or equivalent). • Current New Zealand practising certificate. • Ability to obtain and maintain an appropriate security clearance.