

Job Description



JOB TITLE:

Housing Caseworker / Solicitor – Advice Services

LOCATION:

Derby and across Direct Help & Advice's offices and project locations

SALARY:

Competitive (including professional weighting for Solicitors)

HOURS OF WORK:

37.5 hours per week

This role will require you to undertake a Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) check and disclose information which would otherwise be considered "spent" under the provision of the Rehabilitations of Offenders Act 1974.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Direct Help & Advice provides direct help via specialist housing advice, advocacy and representation for families and individuals facing crisis, to prevent and alleviate homelessness, debt and housing difficulty.

In addition, DHA also offer accessible accredited and non-accredited training and skills development; and are the lead organisation in the running of 10 Community Managed Libraries (CML's) across Derby City.

JOB PURPOSE:

To provide specialist housing advice, advocacy and representation for families and individuals facing crisis to prevent and alleviate homelessness and housing difficulty.

To contribute to the effective delivery of our services and working to our funders' requirements and DHA policies, procedures and quality standards.

OVERVIEW OF DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE POST:

1. To provide specialist legal advice, advocacy, and representation to DHA's clients on a wide range housing related matters according to current law and practice.
2. Act as a representative or advocate on behalf of clients in formal settings such as County Court.
3. To liaise and network with other agencies and advice providers, attending relevant external meetings where required.
4. Conduct confidential interviews with clients via the telephone and face to face in DHA offices as well as at other locations including project venues and home visits; and refer clients to other agencies or specialist advice providers where appropriate
5. Manage and conduct own caseload appropriately and comply with agreed office procedures and working practices, maintaining accurate and up-to date records, statistical information and reports.
6. Be committed to delivering a high quality specialist legal advice service in line with funders and contractual requirements.
7. Take responsibility for ensuring that targets and KPI's are met and carry an appropriate caseload whilst maintaining quality standards.
8. To assist and support colleagues with all aspects of the role, as and when required.
9. To keep up to date with legislation, case law, policies and procedures relating to Housing Law, and attend appropriate training.
10. To conduct oneself as a professional and comply in all respects with the code of conduct imposed on solicitors by the Law Society and SRA.

The post holder will carry out any other duties as are within the scope, spirit and purpose of the job.

KEY SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE & EXPERIENCE:

Caseworkers

- To have a minimum of 6 months’ specialist working knowledge of legislation, case law and social policy relating to Housing law.
- To have experience of advising clients via the telephone and face-to-face, ensuring excellent communication and negotiation skills.
- The ability to handle a mixture of caseload.
- Experience dealing with vulnerable clients, including legal help and legal aid cases, ensuring compliance with Legal Aid Agency contract requirements.
- Excellent communication and negotiation skills with experience of advocating with agencies.
- Excellent organisational skills with the ability to prioritise workload, formulate complex letters and reports, and meet deadlines and targets.

Solicitors

- A minimum of 2 years PQE, with demonstrable experience and knowledge of Housing Law, and hold a current valid practising certificate
- The ability to handle a mixture of caseload.
- A wide range of public funding experience within housing law, including all types of possession proceedings, disrepair claims and counterclaims, obtaining injunctions in unlawful eviction claims, JR claims and appeals.
- Advocacy experience is preferred as most hearings will be conducted by instructing solicitor.
- Knowledge of the Legal Aid Agency, with LAA supervisory status being an advantage
- Experience dealing with vulnerable clients, including legal help and legal aid cases, ensuring compliance with Legal Aid Agency contract requirements.
- Excellent communication and negotiation skills with experience of advocating with agencies.
- Excellent organisational skills with the ability to prioritise workload, formulate complex letters and reports, and meet deadlines and targets.

DEVELOPMENT & TRAINING:

To respond positively to new and alternative systems, undertaking training and development activities as identified.

HEALTH & SAFETY:

To comply with relevant health & safety legislation, policies and procedures in the performance of the duties and responsibilities of the post.

EQUALITY & DIVERSITY AND SAFEGUARDING

To support, promote & comply with the Company’s Equality and Diversity policies in the performance of the duties and responsibilities of the post. Experience and an understanding of Safeguarding, Prevent and British Values.

CONFIDENTIALITY & DATA PROTECTION:

The Company requires all staff to maintain a high standard of confidentiality, and any disclosure of information outside the proper and recognised course of duty will be treated as a serious disciplinary offence. All staff are also subject to the General Data Protection Regulations.

AGREEMENT OF JOB DESCRIPTION:

These duties are intended as a guide and operational requirements may necessitate the employee performing other duties not included in this job description.

I hereby confirm that I have read and understood this job description and agree to comply with the content therein.

Print name Sign Date