

## **Job Description and Person Specification**

**Job Title:** Supervising Solicitor/Caseworker, Kids in Need of Defense UK Project, Migrant and Refugee Children's Legal Unit (MiCLU), Islington Law Centre

**Reports To:** Legal Practice Lead, MiCLU, Islington Law Centre

### **Purpose of post**

This is a unique and exciting opportunity to be involved in Kids in Need of Defense UK (KIND UK). KIND UK is a partnership which provides free, specialist immigration advice and representation for children and young people, and their families. It is a collaboration between Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) US, Central England Law Centre, MiCLU at Islington Law Centre, Coram Children's Legal Centre, Greater Manchester Immigration Aid Unit and Just Right Scotland. The UK agencies each employ Supervising solicitor(s)/lawyer(s) to provide training, guidance and support to commercial lawyers, who in turn provide the advice service on a pro bono basis.

This position falls within the Migrant and Refugee Children's Legal Unit at Islington Law Centre. MiCLU was established in 2012. MiCLU works closely with Islington Law Centre's team of lawyers leading and developing specialist legal services aimed at upholding and improving the rights of young people. Our work is led by the views and experiences of our young clients who continue to inspire and develop our services. Together we are committed to educating young people about their rights and supporting the work of carers and professionals dedicated to helping young people live safe and protected lives in the UK.

MiCLU has been involved in the Kids in Need of Defense UK programme since its inception, and we now work with 8 corporate law firms, with additional partners about to come on board. MiCLU forms part of Islington Law Centre's Migration Unit recently rated as 'Category 1 - Excellent' under the Legal Aid Agency's Peer Review scheme, and with a national reputation for high quality legal advice and representation, policy work and strategic litigation.

We are looking for a dynamic and enthusiastic solicitor with expertise in immigration and nationality law to supervise commercial lawyers in providing free legal advice and representation to children, young people and families with out-of-scope immigration and nationality cases. The successful candidate will be expected to attend on clients with lawyers from the partner firms, and then supervise the lawyers in preparing the client's applications - running a number of cases at one time. They will be expected to ensure that the project takes on a target number of cases and makes the maximum possible positive impact for a vulnerable client base.

## **Main responsibilities and activities**

The main duties are set out below, but this is an emerging project and the activities and responsibilities may evolve as it develops. The post holder will work closely with the MiCLU project staff group and Islington Law Centre (Immigration Unit) lawyers.

### ***Legal Casework and Supervision***

- Processing referrals into the project and undertaking an initial analysis of the work needed in each case before passing referrals on to the pro bono teams in partner firms.
- Taking steps to ensure that all advice, submissions and other legal work undertaken by pro bono lawyers in partner firms is undertaken to a sufficiently high level of accuracy and quality
- Attending client interviews with pro bono lawyers and then providing ongoing supervisory support, including via telephone and email and by the development of template materials.
- Conducting and co-ordinating immigration/asylum/public law casework and litigation on behalf of organisations and individuals where it is agreed that the casework cannot be undertaken within the pro bono partner firms, but it is strategically or practically necessary for the work to remain part of the Kids in Need of Defense UK project for conduct or operational reasons; or to make appropriate referrals where casework cannot be undertaken due to capacity reasons
- Conducting legal research where necessary or supervise Law Centre volunteers or pro bono lawyers undertaking such work
- Providing onward referral to other solicitors and services as appropriate.
- Maintaining standards of professional service in line with MiCLU's standards and procedures documents and complying with all policies of MiCLU and ILC.
- Promoting and embedding MiCLU's child-centred practice in the representation of children and young people
- Record all work undertaken and carry out billing, ensuring all income is accounted for on each case in accordance with the requirements of the Kids in Need of Defense UK funders, or the Legal Aid Agency (although the majority of work carried out will not be publicly funded work)
- The post holder will be expected to carry out their casework with a high degree of professionalism, and to conduct their work in such a way as to meet relevant external standards (e.g. Law Society, The Law Society Lexcel Quality Standard, Solicitors Regulation Authority, and OISC). S/he will also be expected to meet the Law Centre's performance targets in relation to time recording.
- Complying with accreditation and professional standards.

### ***Training and Development***

Working in partnership with the other Supervising solicitors/lawyers to:

- Develop and deliver legal and practical training to pro bono lawyers recruited to the project.
- Maintain, and revise where necessary, training notes, advocates manual, procedures, policies, referral forms, letters of authority, pro forma attendance note, template letters, etc.
- Ensuring that own legal expertise is as up to date as possible in the relevant fields of law, including immigration, asylum and nationality law.
- Demonstrate awareness of and ensure access to appropriate referral channels, to other legal issues that arise related to the child's or young person's well-being, such as family law, community care law, education and health care.

### ***Partnership and Stakeholder Management***

- Working within the values, aims and objectives and in furtherance of work plans agreed by the KIND UK's Steering Group.
- Active involvement with KIND UK's National Co-ordinator to manage and collaborate on the progress and development of the project.
- Co-ordinating and overseeing the delivery of project casework. This will include monitoring the working methods of the project and trouble-shooting problems.
- Initiating, developing and maintaining positive relationships with partner firms, and referral organisations.
- Regular feedback to pro bono coordinators on progress, including visits to partner firms to meet coordinators and volunteers.
- Revising and maintaining record-keeping systems and ensuring compliance with client confidentiality, data protection procedures/policies.
- Assisting with project budget in so far as it relates to casework, including allocating, tracking and managing disbursements on files.
- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the project, including outcomes and impact for clients, and reporting to National Co-ordinator and the partner firms and corporations.

### ***Delivering Strategic Change***

- Seeking out opportunities for strategic litigation on issues of children and young people's rights which will feed into MiCLU's and KIND UK's wider policy advocacy work to effect positive change and promote the rights of children and young people.
- Raising awareness of the project and building referral streams, including involvement in publicity events and workshops to promote the project.
- Support the development of a pro bono culture within partner law firms.
- Support partner firms to use their own advocacy opportunities to advocate for positive change for migrant children

### ***Promoting Kids in Need of Defense UK in collaboration with the Law Centres***

- Proactively contributing to policy and research work through observations made and cases seen through the project and its working methods.
- Attending regular meetings with other supervising solicitors/lawyers and the National coordinators.
- Attending quarterly Steering Group meetings.

### ***General***

- Contribute to the fulfilment of any reporting requirements to funders, the Legal Aid Agency (LAA), The Law Centre and others
- Undertake general administration including working with volunteers and other project staff to maintain the MiCLU/KIND UK project waiting list, maintain relationships with referral organisations and other partners
  
- Attend meetings of the KIND UK Steering Group and Advisory group as agreed on a shared basis with other staff on the project.
- Represent MiCLU externally as necessary
- Undertake other tasks appropriate to the role

### ***Teamwork, decision making and management***

- The post holder will be part of the MiCLU staff team. The post holder will be expected to attend MiCLU team meetings and Islington Law Centre meetings and may also attend specialist immigration unit meetings and other staff meetings and participate in consultation and decision making. S/he will carry out their duties in accordance with the Law Centre's policies as set out in the Quality Manual
- The post holder will work closely with the MiCLU lawyers and other staff and, depending on experience, will report to the MiCLU Legal Practice Lead
- All Law Centre staff who are solicitors have a responsibility to support casework supervision of non-legally qualified staff, and comply with the SRA Code of Conduct in terms of the Solicitors Accounts rules and Personal Competence Training and record keeping in accordance with the professional practice rules for solicitors
- All solicitors and caseworkers undertaking publicly funded work MUST hold the Law Society Immigration and Asylum Accreditation (IAAS) at Level 2 or above. In addition, all solicitors and caseworkers undertaking work with children and/or young people MUST hold a current Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificate

## ***Promotion of the Law Centre's Policies***

### **Equality and Diversity**

The Law Centre's clients are mainly on low incomes and come from a diverse range of minority ethnic groups. The post holder will be expected to show a particular interest in working with this type of client group and to show an understanding of equal opportunities issues including the promotion of equality

### **Confidentiality**

The post-holder will be required to comply with the Law Centre's confidentiality policy in relation to client information. They will also be expected to ensure that commercially sensitive information is treated confidentially.

### **Health and Safety**

The post holder will be required to abide by the Law Centre's Health and Safety policy and to ensure that they conduct their duties with due regard to their own health and safety and that of other people.

***This job description is not exhaustive and as such, the post-holder will need to be flexible, and to carry out all reasonable requests. However, any substantive changes will only be made following discussion with the post-holder and the provision, as appropriate, of further training.***

## **Person Specification**

**The Supervising solicitor/caseworker must have the following:**

1. Level 2 Caseworker accreditation with the Law Society's Immigration and Asylum Accreditation Scheme (IAAS). Supervisor status under the IAAS is desirable.
2. Experience of managing a caseload and working to deadlines.
3. Experience of approaching casework strategically to maximise benefits beyond the individual client.
4. Experience of supervising staff with a wide range of legal experience, including volunteers.
5. Experience of working in partnership with other organisations and making presentations to small and large groups.
6. Up to date expertise and experience in immigration, asylum and nationality law.
7. A commitment to high quality legal casework and client care.
8. Experience of diagnosing support, accommodation and community care issues and an understanding of how immigration law intersects with other areas of law, and how to make appropriate referrals for specialist advice and support where necessary.
9. Experience representing destitute families to make immigration and nationality applications.
10. Experience of managing and developing external relationships with diverse stakeholders.

## **Skills/Knowledge & Personal Attributes**

1. Skilled in coaching and supporting others.
2. Excellent communication and influencing skills.
3. Skilled in making presentations and delivering written reports.
4. Self-motivated, able to work independently and on own initiative and able to organise own workload.
5. Ability to identify problems within the project or cases and to address these.
6. Ability to work as part of a team.
7. Ability to work flexibly and sometimes outside of office hours, with some travel to partner firms.
8. Understanding of the pro bono sector.
9. Highly developed interpersonal skills.
10. Support for MiCLU, ILC and KIND UK's aims and a commitment to promoting children and young people's rights and understanding of working within a human rights and child rights framework.
11. A sensitive approach to working with children, young people and families including those without regular immigration status.
12. Knowledge and understanding of the issues affecting migrant children, young people and families.

Signed ..... Dated .....