



Job Title: Housing Legal Aid Caseworker (Trainee position if applicable)

Contract: Fixed Term Contract
(One Year – with potential to extend subject to funding)

Full Time (37 hours per week)

Please note that we may consider a Job Share arrangement

Line Manager: Housing Legal Aid Supervisor

Salary: £17,941.37 - £19,300 (dependent on experience)

Summary of Main Responsibilities:

To support our Housing Law Team in providing a Housing Legal Advice Service across Suffolk as part of our Legal Aid Civil Contract. To take referrals, meet with clients, listen to their legal issues, carry out initial triage and arrange appointments where appropriate. To provide Pro Bono Housing advice to clients who fall outside the scope of Legal Aid. To undertake legal casework duties under supervision.

Ideally, we are looking for someone with relevant Housing experience, no matter how minimal, including experience in a client-facing advice role; preference will be given to applicants who fit this 'desirable' criteria. However, this post might suit a Law Graduate as a first job after graduating, with some volunteering experience. As part of Suffolk Law Centre's 'Grow Your Own' strategy and to help address Suffolk's legal advice gaps, we are keen to provide the training and casework experience to enable trainee staff to work towards achieving Supervisor Standard (as defined by the Legal Aid Agency's Category Supervisor requirements). We are particularly keen to attract candidates who also have lived or work experience of the diverse communities we serve and who experience legal problems.

Job Description:

Main Duties and Responsibilities:

1. After initial and ongoing in-house training and with some supervision, legal tasks to include interviewing clients, organising information, making applications for Legal Aid, recording Key Dates, legal research, giving oral and written advice, drafting legal documentation, some negotiation, to assist in preparation for hearings, support in delivering the HPCDS and advocacy at Court, and to prepare files for billing and audits;
2. To signpost and refer clients to other Suffolk Law Centre (SLC) legal advice services and/or to external advice agencies where required;

3. To provide office-based administrative support to the Housing Legal Advice Service, including:
 - a. To act as a point of contact for the Housing Legal Advice Service;
 - b. To assist in maintaining client files to the Specialist Quality Mark (SQM) standard;
 - c. To produce marketing and publicity material;
 - d. To liaise with partner advice agencies to coordinate outreach advice sessions;
 - e. To produce reports on statistical and qualitative evaluation;
 - f. To promote and provide information about the work of the Housing Legal Advice Service at SLC.
4. To input, update and maintain data held on the Case Management System, including to document advice and casework and ensuring that it is compliant with the SQM standard and meets the criteria set out within the Legal Aid Contract and funding agreements/requirements;
5. Assisting with external events, presentations and training delivery;
6. Accurately record full details of all telephone and other contacts and further action recommended, according to SLC procedures;
7. Liaising with external organisations and dealing with referrals in to SLC;
8. Ensure that own knowledge and expertise are as up to date as possible in the relevant fields of law;
9. Provide general support to the running of SLC, including organising and attending meetings and events such as the Annual General Meeting and other county or regional based groups;
10. Actively participate in team meetings, briefings and training events;
11. Contribute to the development of learning materials or other resources;
12. Take responsibility for developing your own and other professional knowledge and skills;
13. Maintain the standard of professional service in line with relevant policies and procedures;
14. Undertake any other related duties as may reasonably be required.

Special Conditions to Note:

1. The post holder will be required to travel across Suffolk and East Anglia for outreach, as well as nationally for which the appropriate allowances will be paid;
2. The hours of work are flexible to meet the demands of the job, and may require some evening and weekend working, for which time off will be given;
3. This job description may be subject to change in consultation with the post holder;
4. The post holder works toward SLC's commitment to Equality and Human Rights.

Person Specification:

Essential Skills and Attributes:

Whilst the post is open to all, **we are particularly keen to attract candidates who are from backgrounds currently underrepresented in the law**, and who may have experienced some of the issues faced by our clients.

- A reasonable knowledge (to experienced CA advisor level or equivalent) of the English Legal System, the Courts and Tribunal process (including interlocutory processes) and interpreting legislation (this will be tested at interview);
- Demonstrate an understanding of the benefits of effective advice and advocacy skills, patience and tact, to be able to work with all kinds of clients in difficult circumstances, and the importance of empowering clients;
- Demonstrate the ability to follow instructions accurately, the ability to absorb large amounts of complex information and attention to detail;
- Demonstrate the ability to write letters/reports and analyse complex information promptly;
- Demonstrate strong verbal communication skills;
- Demonstrate the ability to work on own initiative as well as part of a team, to follow and adhere to management guidance structures in line with SLC professional employment standards, policies and procedures;
- Show excellent office IT skills to include use of up to date technology such as Microsoft Word, Excel, Teams and Zoom etc.;
- Experience of working to demanding time scales and competing priorities in a pressurised environment;
- Demonstrate the ability to problem solve and deal with stressful situations;
- Demonstrate the understanding for respect for confidential information;
- Demonstrate an ability to empathise with clients.

Desirable Skills and Attributes:

- English Law Degree or equivalent;
- Knowledge of Housing Law and/or advice;
- Has the experience to demonstrate that, after initial training will work independently with supervision;
- Experience of working under the Legal Aid Agency Contract requirements for Legal Help and Certificated Work;
- Experience of living/ working with communities/individuals who are affected by discrimination and/or agencies working in the voluntary or statutory sector in a relevant field of work;
- Some knowledge of the workings of the public, private and voluntary organisations.