



Job Description

Housing Solicitor

Accountable to: Chief Executive

Responsible for: Legal Aid funded Housing casework

Contract: Permanent

Salary range: Up to £40,000

Hours: Full-time (35 hours) or part-time (17.5 hours minimum)

Annual Leave: 25 days plus Bank Holidays (pro rata for part-time)

Summary of Post

- To provide a quality assured legal aid funded Housing casework advice service, including both Certificated and Controlled Work.
- To ensure that performance and quality standards are achieved and ensure that relevant Law Society and Legal Aid Agency requirements are met.

Duties of Post

1. Casework/Legal Advice and Representation

- To maintain and manage over time a certificated legal aid service in Housing advice that complies with all Legal Aid Agency requirements under the civil legal aid scheme and also the Law Society's Lexcel Standard.
- To maintain an active caseload, including litigation, which enables homeless people, and those with housing problems, to enforce their rights in law. This includes litigation in test cases and issuing cases to judicial review and injunction applications.
- Provide casework covering the full range of Housing advice as expected by the Legal Aid Agency. Advice areas include the following:

- Security of tenure
 - Eviction and possession proceedings
 - Housing benefit
 - Homelessness and re-housing
 - Rent and mortgage arrears
 - Relationship breakdown and domestic violence
 - Neighbour disputes
 - Rental agreements
 - Harassment and illegal eviction
 - Representation at Court
 - Disrepair
 - Anti-Social Behaviour cases
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- To carry out follow-up casework and litigation including research where necessary/appropriate.
 - To agree and manage a caseload of referrals from internal staff and external agencies within a designated procedure and to ensure this work meets quality standards.
 - To meet work in progress and billing targets set by management.
 - Prepare and present cases to the appropriate statutory bodies, tribunals and courts as appropriate.
 - Assist clients with other related problems where they are an integral part of their case and refer to other advisers or specialist agencies as appropriate.
 - Make outreach visits as necessary.
 - Provide advice and assistance to other staff and volunteers across the whole range of Housing advice issues.
 - Ensure that all casework conforms to the Centre's Office Manual and the Law Society's Lexcel Standard.
 - Use the Centre's electronic case management system (currently Advice Pro Legal) and maintain case records for the purposes of continuity of casework, information retrieval, and statistical monitoring and report preparation.
 - Ensure that all work conforms to the Centre's systems and procedures.
 - Work in close partnership with other staff and volunteers.

2. Working with team members and quality

- Work as part of a team and support the Category Supervisor and other Housing caseworkers and paralegals to perform their work and develop their own skills and abilities.
- Where appropriate, review the work of other staff and volunteers to ensure it meets relevant quality assurance standards.
- Provide technical legal support and act as consultant to other advisers where necessary.
- Monitor and regularly review quality of work from case records/file notes.
- Assist in developing and maintaining standards of service delivery.

3. Social policy

- Assist with social policy work by providing information about clients' circumstances.
- Provide statistical information on the number of clients and nature of cases and provide regular reports to the Chief Executive and/or Council of Management.
- Monitor service provision to ensure that it reaches the widest possible client group.
- Alert other staff and volunteers to local and national issues.
- Record outcomes as required by the Centre.

4. Professional development

- Keep up-to-date with legislation, case law, policies and procedures relating to Housing advice and undertake appropriate training.
- Read relevant publications.
- Attend relevant internal and external meetings as agreed with the Director.
- Prepare for and attend supervision sessions/team meetings/management team meetings as appropriate.
- Assist with initiatives for the improvement of services.

5. Administration

- Self-administering.
- Review and make recommendations for improvements to Centre systems.
- Contribute to the maintenance local information systems.
- Ensure contract compliance across all publicly funded cases.
- Use IT for statistical recording, record keeping and document production.
- Keep up to date with policies and procedures relevant to the Centre's work and undertake appropriate training.
- Attend internal and external meetings as agreed with the Chief Executive.
- Maintain close liaison with relevant external agencies.
- Maintain a library of reference material and case law.

6. Public relations

- Liaise with statutory and non-statutory organisations and represent the Centre to outside bodies as appropriate.

7. Other duties and responsibilities

- Carry out any other tasks that may be within the scope of the post to ensure the effective delivery and development of the service.
- Demonstrate commitment to the Centre's equality and diversity policy and other aims and policies of the Centre eg information assurance and confidentiality.
- Abide by health and safety guidelines and share responsibility for own safety and that of colleagues.