

Job Description

Asylum Caseworker

Salary	£29,290 pa
Location	Asylum Aid offices in Highbury, London N1
Line Manager	Legal Team Manager
Professional Supervisor	Solicitor

Purpose of Post

The Caseworker will manage a caseload of publicly-funded asylum cases and provide a range of legal information, advice, advocacy and representation services to clients of Asylum Aid in relation to their asylum claims and related immigration and support matters, and will contribute to Asylum Aid's policy development and campaigning work.

Main Tasks and Responsibilities

Casework

- Interviewing clients and taking detailed statements about the client's reasons for seeking asylum;
- Assessing and analysing written information on cases;
- Conducting negotiations on behalf of client's, particularly with public authorities;
- Carrying out country of origin information research and researching case related legal issues;
- Accompanying clients to UK Border Agency and other relevant appointments, where appropriate;
- Making written and oral representations to the UKBA and other relevant authorities in respect of client's cases;
- Assisting clients with the completion of relevant application forms including completing notices of appeal;
- Providing legal representation for clients at appeal, human rights or bail hearings;
- Providing legal representation, as appropriate and under the supervision of Asylum Aid's solicitors, in the Higher Courts (including Judicial Review and statutory appeals to the Court of Appeal)
- Instructing counsel on cases, as appropriate;
- Providing legal advice and representation to clients in relation to applications for family reunion, regularisation or naturalisation
- Liaising with referral agencies, government departments, local authorities and with other advisors, as required.

Advice and Information

- Participating in Asylum Aid's client assessment process to determine which clients will be taken on;
- Participating in the delivery of Asylum Aid's telephone advice line and responding to email and postal enquiries, as required;
- Participating in the delivery of Asylum Aid's outreach services;
- Referring clients and liaising with solicitors or other external services, where appropriate;

- Giving advice and support to clients on other relevant matters, including general immigration issues;
- Participating in the design and delivery of Asylum Aid's external training programmes.

General

- Maintaining up-to-date case files and participating in regular supervision meetings with the Technical Supervisor, drawing up plans and timetables for the effective conduct of cases, as required;
- Meeting the requirements of the Legal Services Commission's Specialist Quality Mark and other contractual requirements in respect of casework;
- Complying with all appropriate and relevant LSC, OISC and SRA regulatory requirements including maintaining a minimum of 15 hours of Continual Professional Development points per annum
- Staying up-to-date with all relevant developments in asylum/immigration law and practice and with relevant developments in the countries of origin of our clients;
- Maintaining up-to-date and accurate records of all advice service delivery activity;
- Contributing to Asylum Aid's research, information, policy development and lobbying and campaigning activity;

Asylum Aid:

- Supporting and assisting colleagues in carrying out their duties;
- Attending staff and team meetings, case reviews and internal and external training sessions;
- Attending regular line management meetings with the Legal Team Manager;
- Adhering in full to all Asylum Aid's policies and procedures;
- Undertaking any other relevant duties as required by the Technical Supervisor or Line Manager of the post.

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August 2010**

Person Specification

Asylum Aid Locum Caseworker

Your application form should show clearly how you meet the requirements for the post set out in the person specification below. You must not assume that your experience speaks for itself.

Your application will not be considered if you are unable to demonstrate clearly the relevance of your past experience, or if your past experience does not add up to two years.

The Asylum Aid Caseworker will possess the following experience, knowledge and abilities

Essential Requirements

Experience

- at least 2 years full time experience (or the part-time equivalent) of giving legal advice to, and undertaking legal advice and representation on behalf of asylum applicants in the UK;
- at least 1 years experience of undertaking casework within the framework of a Legal Services Commission contract;
- Level 2 accreditation under the Immigration and Asylum Accreditation Scheme.

Knowledge

- a thorough awareness and working knowledge of the law and policy as it relates, in general, to all asylum seekers;
- familiarity with the requirements of the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner, Solicitors Regulation Authority and the Legal Services Commission in relation to the conduct of cases and to the management of case records;
- a good understanding of the backgrounds and experiences of asylum seekers, both in their countries of origin and in the UK, and of the impact these have on their asylum applications;
- a thorough awareness and working knowledge of the law and policy as it relates to asylum applications and appeals in the UK;
- a strong awareness and understanding of gender issues in relation to the asylum determination process and of the experience of women fleeing persecution and human rights abuses;
- a thorough working knowledge of the welfare and support entitlements of asylum seekers and of the welfare and support provision arrangements presently in place, or in prospect;

Abilities

- the ability to maintain a caseload of mainly complex asylum cases and to contribute to the provision of a high quality legal service in line with LSC and OISC regulatory requirements;
- the ability to maintain a high level of client care, recognising the difficulties and constraints inherent in providing legal services;
- the ability to work co-operatively with colleagues, both in terms of the delivery of Asylum Aid's legal and related services, and in the general running of the organisation;
- the ability to work autonomously, to prioritise workloads and to ensure that all deadlines are met;

- the ability to analyse and assess detailed information, and to grasp complex issues rapidly;
- the ability to communicate effectively with people from a wide range of backgrounds, many of whom do not speak or read English and who may have experienced torture, persecution or other trauma;
- the ability to deal empathetically and supportively with asylum seekers;
- the ability to communicate fluently and effectively in English, by correspondence and by telephone, with a range of internal and external contacts, including referral agencies, Government and local authority officials, and with other relevant authorities;
- the ability to be self-servicing in an office environment and to be able to use the full range of standard IT applications;
- the ability to work outside normal office hours on occasions, as required;
- the ability to travel, both within London and beyond, in order to carry out the responsibilities of the post.

Desirable Requirements

- personal experience of being a refugee and applying for asylum in the UK;
- experience of advocacy in Asylum and Immigration Tribunal appeal hearings (i.e. up to Level 2 of the Immigration and Asylum Accreditation Scheme).
- experience of providing legal advice and representation in applications for extension of leave, applications for entry clearance (particularly family reunion), applications for naturalisation
- experience of providing legal advice and representation, under the supervision of a solicitor, in respect of Judicial Review or in statutory appeals to the Court of Appeal
- knowledge of one or more languages, in addition to English, likely to be of use in working with asylum seekers;
- the ability to design and deliver training courses and workshops on asylum and related legal issues for a varied range of participants.

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