

JOB TITLE:	Appeals Support Advisor (Westminster) (maternity)
LOCATION:	Outreach locations in Westminster (1 day per week); home-based or working from our office in Old Street (2 days per week)
RESPONSIBLE TO:	WASP volunteer coordinator / advice supervisor
CONTRACT:	6 months fixed term maternity cover
WORK PATTERN:	0.6FTE (22.5 hours per week). Our normal working hours are 9am-5.30pm.
SALARY:	£37,000 per year <i>pro rata</i> (£22,200 for a 0.6FTE post)
BENEFITS:	Annual Leave: 27 days plus bank holidays (increasing to 29 days after three years of service, and to 30 days after five years of service) plus up to 4 discretionary days for the winter closure period Winter closure period: two week winter closure period where the charity is closed Pension: 4% matched contribution by the Helen Bamber Foundation Group Employee Assistance Programme
START DATE:	1 July 2025

BACKGROUND

For over thirty years, Asylum Aid has been providing legal representation to some of the most vulnerable people seeking asylum in the UK. Our welfare advice team provide generalist advice on welfare benefits, housing, asylum support and related issues to Westminster residents with refugee and migrant backgrounds who do not have English as a first language and who would otherwise be unable to access vital advice which enables them to avoid destitution, homelessness and food poverty. We deliver this advice as part of the Westminster Advice Services Partnership through a drop in and outreach at local community venues, and supported by local volunteers many of whom speak community languages.

The post of Appeals Support Advisor is a new post established with the benefit of a grant from Westminster City Council. The post holder will support clients with appeals and reconsideration requests in relation to welfare benefits and housing. This will allow us to provide a more comprehensive service for our clients, many of whom struggle to lodge appeals and reconsideration requests, and to gather evidence in support of their appeals without advice, due to language barriers. The post holder will deliver advice in community languages, including with the assistance of interpreters, to local residents as part of our partnership work. Most of our clients are refugees, people seeking asylum and others with a refugee or migrant background. The Appeals Support Advisor will work with clients referred from Asylum Aid's Information and Advice Service (including our weekly drop in) and from other partners in the local community. They will also provide training and supervision to the Generalist Advisor and our volunteers. External supervision will be arranged for the post holder.

The ideal candidate will be resident in or near to the City of Westminster and fluent in one or more community languages. In particular, fluency in one or more of the following is highly desirable: Arabic, Bengali, Farsi, Kurdish Sorani/ other Kurdish dialects, Somali, Amharic, Tigrinya.

As this is a new post delivering a specialist appeals and casework service from within our generalist advice team, it offers an exciting opportunity to set up and establish systems for the delivery of this service during the six month fixed term contract, including ensuring that case management processes are established which meet the requirements of our Lexcel quality mark and that clear referral procedures are established with the drop in service and our partners.

Equal Opportunities

Our commitment to principles of equity, diversity and inclusion is an integral part of our approach to our clients, our volunteers and our staff, and we are an equal opportunities and Living Wage employer.

We are committed to attracting and recruiting diverse candidates because we are keen to make sure that our staff, trustees, volunteers and ambassadors reflect the communities we serve and the wider community we work in.

We genuinely welcome and encourage applications from candidates from a range of backgrounds, especially people of colour, people with disabilities, people from low socio-economic backgrounds, refugees, stateless people and others with lived experience of forced migration or trauma and of the housing and welfare system, who are under-represented in our organisation.

We recognise and value the role of lived experience in meeting the needs of our clients and acknowledge the under-representation of people with lived experience of forced migration and statelessness in the advice sector. We value experience gained overseas as well as in the UK. We offer a guaranteed interview for refugees, stateless people and others with lived experience of forced migration, provided that they meet at least 50% of the essential criteria.

Key Duties and Responsibilities

The post-holder will:

- Be part of a generalist advice service, with special emphasis on language support, as part of the Westminster Advice Services Partnership (WASP), a collaboration of advice agencies Asylum Aid, Westminster Citizens Advice, Age UK Westminster, and Deaf PLUS Westminster Advice Service.
- Provide specialist appeals casework and support to clients who do not speak English as a first language and need to challenge decisions, request mandatory reconsiderations, internal housing reviews, lodge appeals in relation to welfare benefits and housing.
- Provide ongoing casework support up to the Tribunal stage, including helping clients to gather evidence in support of their mandatory reconsiderations and appeals and preparing for hearings (but not including representation at hearings)
- Where capacity allows, help to deliver generalist face to face and telephone advice and information, in a community language and English, to migrants and asylum seekers on issues related to welfare benefits, housing and asylum support in accordance with Asylum Aid's contract within the WASP partnership, and taking responsibility for the quality of advice given.
- Provide training and supervision to the Generalist Advisor and to volunteers, supporting the development of their advice skills and ensuring the quality of advice delivered throughout the advice service.
- Maintain a high standard of electronic case records (using AdvicePro) for the purpose of continuity of casework, information retrieval, monitoring and evaluation of the service, and to help identify issues to be raised through policy advocacy.
- Ensure that all casework is conducted in accordance with the Lexcel quality standard, including by establishing case management procedures for the delivery of specialist advice which meet the Lexcel standard, and participate as required in annual Lexcel quality mark audits
- Attend external and in-house training organised by Asylum Aid and regular supervision sessions to develop and maintain the skills and knowledge required to help deliver a quality advice service, and to keep up to date with changes in welfare benefits, housing and asylum support law
- Cascade information, changes, and developments in social welfare law, including learning from external training, to other staff and volunteers who assist with the delivery of the welfare advice service
- Work effectively with partners to provide a seamless service for clients, making and receiving referrals and maintain up to date information about other service providers for the purposes of referrals and signposting.
- Be responsible for achieving relevant targets for quality and quantity set by the WASP coordinator
- Provide case studies and other information from the work of the advice service to support policy advocacy and strategic legal work in support of Asylum Aid's vision of fair and dignified treatment of people seeking asylum, refugees and other vulnerable migrants
- Carry out any other tasks within the scope of the post to ensure the effective delivery and development of the service.

The post holder will need to be able to travel to and within Westminster to deliver advice at outreach locations as well as at a drop-in in or around the Church Street Estate. Travel expenses will be paid to attend locations away from Asylum Aid's office(s) and the main location of our drop-in service (currently the Church Street library).

Other duties:

- Respect for client confidentiality at all times in line with Asylum Aid's confidentiality agreements and consent forms.
- To attend staff meetings as required.
- To undertake other duties which are generally compatible with the functions of the post.
- To comply with the organisation's policies and procedures, particularly those relating to safeguarding, health and safety, diversity, equity & inclusion, confidentiality and security, as set out in the Office Manual as well the policies of other relevant partner organisations.

Person Specification

Essential skills, knowledge and experience:

- At least 12 months' experience of supporting benefits appeals through to Tribunal stage and Housing Reviews
- At least 5 years' experience of working face to face with clients to deliver generalist advice in different areas of law including welfare benefits and housing
- Knowledge on a range of issues on which advice may be sought including health and social care, housing and welfare benefits, including a thorough and up to date understanding of social security and welfare benefits legislation and policy
- Experience of managing a case load
- Knowledge or ability to understand and use relevant legislation
- Have completed Advice UK's Learning to Advise training or hold the Citizens Advice Generalist Adviser certificate or an equivalent qualification
- Be fluent in written and spoken English as well as a second language spoken by a substantial proportion of the Westminster population, ideally Arabic, Bengali, Farsi, Kurdish Sorani/ other Kurdish dialects, Somali, Amharic, Tigrinya (to a standard that enables accurate advice to be given in the language)
- Experience of working with interpreters in the delivery of advice
- Able to meet deadlines, work under pressure, meet performance targets and take responsibility for their work, while working flexibly within a team environment
- Able to relate to a wide cross section of clients in a non-judgmental way.
- Able to use a range of IT systems and packages confidently and competently to be able to support and encourage others in using online systems and resources to enable them to self-help.
- Able and willing to learn and assimilate new knowledge in a working environment.
- Able to give and receive feedback objectively and sensitively.
- Able and willing to work both on own initiative and as part of a team.
- Understanding of and commitment to the aims and principles of Asylum Aid service and commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.

- Good understanding of the needs of migrants and asylum seekers and the issues and barriers that affect them in UK.

Desirable:

- Experience of specialist advice work, including appeals and mandatory reconsiderations
- Friendly, polite, and patient
- Experience of working under a relevant quality mark such as the Advice Quality Standard or Lexcel
- Understanding of the housing and other support available to people seeking asylum who do not have the right to work in the UK
- Experience of working with volunteers
- Experience of supervising other advisers, including volunteers
- Demonstrable understanding of issues facing vulnerable clients whose English is not the first language and many with mental health problems.
- Lived or learned experience of the difficulties that migrants and refugee communities face when they have to deal with the UK welfare system
- Personal experience and/or Knowledge of the advice process and experience in the areas of either benefits, housing or debt.
- Experience of using interpersonal skills, including sensitive listening, and questioning skills to understand the needs of others,
- Ability to communicate with other organisations, housing, and welfare departments.

How to apply

The first stage is to complete on our online application form on our website **by 9am on 9 June 2025**.

The website form will ask you to:

1. Upload a short covering letter. Please tell us why the position appeals to you, and how your relevant skills and experience, including any voluntary experience and lived experience, matches the listed responsibilities and person specification. Please also state in your covering letter when you would be available to start the role.
2. Upload your current CV
3. Complete an online Equal Opportunities monitoring form – completion of this form will help us ensure that our recruitment procedures operate in such a way as to provide genuine equality of opportunity. The questions are entirely optional and this information will not be available to members of the selection panel.

Selection Process

We anticipate that we will invite candidates to an initial 15-minute online screening meeting week commencing **16 June 2025**, followed by shortlisted candidates attending in-person

interview week commencing **23 June 2025**. We will also ask you to complete a short written task on the day.

We regret that we can only respond to applicants who make it to the interview stage.

Eligibility

Please note that the successful candidate must have the right to work in the UK (as a small charity we do not have the capacity to sponsor work visas).

Successful candidates will also be subject to a basic DBS check. If appointed, you will also be required to give your consent to the charity to receive regular updates on your criminal records status throughout your employment and to disclose any relevant convictions incurred during your time with us.

Adjustments

We are committed to providing reasonable adjustments throughout our recruitment process and we'll always endeavour to be as accommodating as possible. If you require a different format of the application form, such as large print or Word format, or if you would like to discuss any specific requirements, please get in touch with us at jobs@helenbamber.org.

Experts by Experience Support

We are also proud to be a member of the Experts by Experience Employment Network (www.ebeemployment.org.uk), which aims to increase representation of people with lived experience in the charitable sector.

If you are an expert by experience (a refugee or a migrant with direct, first-hand experience of issues and challenges of the UK asylum or immigration system), you can ask for an independent and confidential support for your job application from the Experts by Experience Employment Network and access other information and resources at <https://www.ebeemployment.org.uk/ebe> which may help in preparing your job application. (www.ebeemployment.org.uk).