



ASYLUM AID

Policy Specialist  
Job Description  
July 2026



## OUR HISTORY AND PURPOSE

For over 35 years, Asylum Aid has supported survivors of trafficking and torture, stateless people, unaccompanied young people, and families separated through war and conflict, taking on cases that are considered too complex or lengthy within the legal aid system. We combine high quality legal work with a trauma informed approach, recognising the impact of human cruelty, displacement and systemic injustice on our clients' ability to navigate the asylum process.

Since August 2020, Asylum Aid has been part of the Helen Bamber Foundation Group, strengthening our collective impact through complementary expertise in legal representation, policy, and survivor support.

Asylum Aid operates as an independent charity, led by its own Director within the group structure, and is ambitious about growing its impact and reach in the future to ensure protection from persecution for those who need it.

## OUR VALUES

- **Excellence:** We strive to be the best we can be in our work.
- **Courage:** We advocate bravely for human rights and are not afraid to speak out against injustice.
- **Collaboration:** We proactively seek opportunities for partnerships, for sharing knowledge, and for joint work.
- **Integrity:** We are honest, open, respectful, and professional in all our dealings with our clients, partners, other stakeholders and each other.
- **Equity:** We are committed to promoting equity, diversity and inclusion within our organisation and in our dealings with our clients, volunteers and partners.

# EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

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 all 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 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 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, statelessness and trauma in the refugee and migration sectors. We value experience gained overseas as well as in the UK and you will receive full training to enable you to transfer your knowledge and skills to the UK context.

# ABOUT THE ROLE

## OVERVIEW OF THE ROLE

This is an exceptional opportunity for an experienced and driven policy professional to lead Asylum Aid's external policy and advocacy work at a pivotal moment for refugee protection in the UK.

The UK asylum and immigration systems are under sustained pressure. Successive waves of hostile legislation and increasingly difficult political environment have caused serious harm to people seeking international protection and made already complex systems even harder to navigate. At this time there is an urgent need for effective, well-evidenced voices in Parliament, Whitehall and the courts that keeps human experiences at its centre.

Our proactive and prioritised policy advocacy is evidence-led, based on the experiences of survivors, collective expertise and/or the HBF group's research findings. Asylum Aid, as part of the Helen Bamber Foundation group, uses its legal expertise and evidence to secure ongoing policy and systems change by:

- Providing evidence and recommendations to central government through reports, briefings, consultation responses, oral and written evidence to parliamentary select committees and parliamentary lobbying.
- Ongoing direct engagement on improvements to policy and practice with civil servants in the Home Office, Ministry of Justice and other relevant departments.
- Working collaboratively with others in the asylum, trafficking and children's sectors to highlight issues in the asylum and trafficking systems, and push for recognition and respect for international asylum, trafficking and human rights obligations.
- Undertaking strategic litigation to secure change that cannot be achieved through policy advocacy.

As Policy Specialist, you will be Asylum Aid's policy and advocacy lead - responsible for shaping our policy positions; driving our advocacy strategy; building and managing coalitions across the sector; and ensuring that the voices and experiences of our clients directly inform our external work. You will be managed by the HBF Group Director of Policy, Evidence and Communications, and work closely with AA's Executive Director and legal team. As well as coordinating and undertaking joint policy work with HBF, you will ensure close working relationships with partner organisations and coalitions and be a visible and credible presence in the wider refugee and human rights sector.

## MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### Policy Strategy and Leadership

- Support the development and delivery of Asylum Aid's policy and advocacy strategy, ensuring it reflects our organisational priorities and centres the voices and experiences of our clients.
- Maintain a sound understanding of UK asylum, immigration and trafficking law, policy and practice, and identify strategic opportunities for impact.
- Develop well-evidenced policy positions on key issues for Asylum Aid and the Helen Bamber Foundation Group in general, including the fairness of asylum decision-making; access to legal advice; family reunion; statelessness; trafficking; age assessments; and the treatment of unaccompanied children seeking international protection
- In collaboration with Asylum Aid's legal team, lead the organisation's response to government proposals/consultations, proposed legislation, and parliamentary inquiries.
- Produce high-quality policy briefings, reports, and submissions for government, parliamentarians and public audiences.

### Advocacy and Influencing

- Build and maintain strong relationships with MPs, peers, Home Office officials, and other government stakeholders.
- Represent Asylum Aid in parliamentary and governmental fora, such as Home Office stakeholder meetings.
- Work with communications colleagues to translate policy work into accessible public-facing content and media engagement.
- Work collaboratively with Asylum Aid's legal team to identify and respond to litigation opportunities that have strategic policy implications and to ensure that all policy advocacy work is legally informed.

### Client-Centred and Survivor-Led Advocacy

- Ensure that the experiences of Asylum Aid's clients directly inform all policy and advocacy work.
- Develop ethical, trauma-informed approaches to centring survivor voices in external work.
- Champion the interests of particularly marginalised groups within the asylum system, including survivors of trafficking and torture, stateless people, and children

### Sector Leadership and Coalition Building

- Play an active leadership role in the wider refugee and asylum sector, building coalitions and contributing to shared advocacy agendas.
- Represent Asylum Aid in sector coalitions, taking an active role in the Refugee and Migrant Children's Consortium and the Coalition for Asylum Rights and Justice.
- Maintain and develop partnerships with legal, human rights, and civil society organisations
- Represent Asylum Aid at senior external events, conferences, and in media.

### Research and Evidence

- Work collaboratively with Asylum Aid's legal team to develop an evidence base from casework that informs policy positions and public debate.
- Work closely with the HBF Group research team to facilitate Asylum Aid's contribution to research; encourage research that supports Asylum Aid's policy advocacy and maintain awareness of the academic and think-tank evidence landscape.
- Monitor and analyse developments in UK and international asylum and refugee law and policy, sharing with colleagues where appropriate.

### General

- Commitment to Asylum Aid's ethos and mission.
- Maintaining the values of the charity and positively promoting the work and activities of the charity at all times
- Championing diversity and inclusion in your role at all times.
- Work outside normal office hours as required and travel in order to carry out the responsibilities of the post.
- To undertake any task that may be requested from time to time that may be consistent with the nature and scope of this post.

## PERSON SPECIFICATION

### Knowledge and Experience

| Criterion                                                                                                                                          | E / D     | How Assessed |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Significant experience in a senior policy, advocacy or public affairs role, ideally within the refugee, asylum, immigration or human rights sector | Essential | AF / I       |
| Working knowledge of the UK asylum system, immigration law and policy, and the legislative landscape, either through lived or learned experience.  | Essential | AF / I       |
| Established track record of successfully influencing policy or legislative change                                                                  | Essential | AF / I       |
| Experience of working with parliamentarians, government officials, and/or statutory bodies                                                         | Essential | AF / I       |
| Experience of leading or contributing to strategic litigation or public law interventions                                                          | Desirable | AF / I       |
| Experience of working as a barrister, solicitor or caseworker                                                                                      | Desirable | AF / I       |
| Specific knowledge of statelessness, trafficking, or migrant children and families as policy issues                                                | Desirable | AF / I       |

### Skills and Abilities

| Criterion                                                                                                                                  | E / D     | How Assessed |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Exceptional written communication: able to produce high-quality briefings, reports, and submissions for varied audiences                   | Essential | AF / T       |
| Strong analytical skills: able to interpret complex legal and policy material and draw out strategic implications and compelling arguments | Essential | I / T        |
| Skilled relationship-builder: able to work credibly with senior external stakeholders and build effective coalitions                       | Essential | I            |
| Strategic thinker: able to identify and prioritise opportunities for impact in a crowded policy landscape                                  | Essential | I            |
| Skilled public speaker: able to represent the organisation at senior external events                                                       | Essential | I            |

## Values and Approach

| Criterion                                                                                                                                                  | E / D     | How Assessed |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Deep commitment to the rights of people seeking asylum and refugees, and to racial and social justice                                                      | Essential | AF / I       |
| Trauma-informed approach to work: understanding of the impact of persecution, trafficking, and forced migration, as well as the impact of vicarious trauma | Essential | I            |
| Commitment to survivor-centred advocacy: experience of ethically incorporating lived experience in policy work                                             | Essential | AF / I       |
| Collaborative working style: able to work effectively across teams, organisations, and disciplines                                                         | Essential | I            |
| Commitment to Asylum Aid's values of courage, collaboration, integrity, and equity                                                                         | Essential | I            |

As is the nature of this sector, the role holder will be exposed to a high volume of traumatic and distressing material and, whilst they will be supported by their supervisor and surrounding team, they should also be able to demonstrate knowledge of good self-care principles in an intense work environment and dissemination of those principles to junior members of the team.

### REPORTS TO

You will report to the Group Director of Policy, Evidence and Communications

### SALARY

£35,000-£37,000 depending on experience

### HOURS

9 – 5.30pm, 37.5 hours per week (full time) (part-time and flexible working considered, minimum 0.8FTE))

Hybrid working: 40% office presence

### LOCATION

Old Street, London

### START DATE

As soon as possible

# 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



## Wellbeing support

Three wellbeing days a year (pro-rated for PT staff), a confidential 24/7 helpline through our Employee Assistance Programme, a 2 week winter-closure period, free fruit in the office, weekly free Yoga in the office, a corporate eyecare scheme and much more!



## Training & development

An individual training budget on training for you and monthly Lunch and Learns with external and internal speakers



## Employer pension Contributions

We provide competitive pension contributions of 4%



## Clinical supervision

We offer monthly group clinical supervision sessions for all staff.



## Reasonable adjustments

Occupational health assessments as necessary to understand how we can support and make reasonable adjustments



## Family friendly policies & work life balance

We care about your wellbeing and encourage flexible working arrangements to promote a healthy work-life balance. We also provide enhanced maternity, paternity, adoption, family reunion and shared parental leave



## Sabbatical Leave

Opportunity to apply for sabbatical leave after three years of service (conditions apply)



## Employee experience

We have an Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Working Group, monthly staff meetings, and three staff away days a year!

## HOW TO APPLY

The first stage is to complete on our online application form on our website **by 9am on 26<sup>th</sup> August 2026**.

The website form will ask you to:

- 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. This information can be shared in one of four different ways:
  1. Written A4 (No more than 2 sides of A4)
  2. PowerPoint (No more than 3 slides)
  3. Audio recording (No more than 5 mins) \*
  4. Video Recording (No more than 5 mins) \*

\* if you send in your cover letter in one these formats, please do not upload this to our website but email it to [jobs@helenbamber.org](mailto:jobs@helenbamber.org).

- Upload your current CV
- 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.

## TIMELINE

- Closing date: **26<sup>th</sup> August 2026**
- Preliminary interviews (online): **2<sup>nd</sup> September 2026**
- Final panel interviews (in person): **10<sup>th</sup> September 2026**

## SELECTION PROCESS

We will invite candidates to an initial 30-minute online screening meeting week on **2<sup>nd</sup> September 2026** followed by shortlisted candidates attending in-person interview on **10<sup>th</sup> September 2026**. We will also ask you to complete a short exercise on the day.

At Asylum Aid we want to be transparent about what kind of qualities we are looking for and build trust from the very beginning of your journey with us. The first step is your interview, and we mean 'your' interview so we will provide you with your interview questions ahead of the interview. This will allow you time to prepare, and ensure you have your best examples in mind.

We offer a guaranteed initial interview for refugees, stateless people and others with lived experience of forced migration, provided that they can provide some evidence of the relevant experience or skills in relation to the essential criteria.

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

## 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 would like to discuss any specific requirements, please get in touch with us at [jobs@helenbamber.org](mailto:jobs@helenbamber.org).

## 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).

## SAFER RECRUITMENT

As an organisation, we are committed to creating and fostering a culture that promotes safeguarding and the welfare of young people and adults at risk. Our safer recruitment practices support this by ensuring that there is a consistent and thorough process of obtaining, collating, analysing and evaluation information from and about

candidates to make sure that all persons appointed are suitable to work with our children and adults. The recruitment and selection of our people will be conducted in a professional, timely and responsive manner and in compliance with current employment legislation, and relevant safeguarding legislation and statutory guidance.

Successful candidates will also be subject to a 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.

### EXPERTS BY EXPERIENCE SUPPORT

We are also proud to be a member of the Experts by Experience Employment Network ([www.ebeemployment.org.uk](http://www.ebeemployment.org.uk)), which aims to increase representation of people with lived experience in the refugee and migrant 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 seek independent and confidential support with your job application from the Experts by Experience Employment Network. They can help you in preparing your job application by providing one-on-one mentoring support to review your CV, cover letter or provide interview preparation. To request job application support or general one-to-one career advice and mentoring, please click [here](#).

### STATEMENT ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) AND RECRUITMENT

At Asylum Aid we don't make decisions based on artificial intelligence (AI). We have a human approach to hiring and all applications are reviewed and assessed by our team.

Similarly, what we are most interested in hearing about is your individual motivation, experience, skills and values. AI doesn't know about you or what motivates you – we want to hear from you.

AI may be a helpful tool, but typically leads to generic answers repeated by multiple candidates, not stand out applications. Please make sure that your responses reflect your own thoughts and experiences.

### TO FIND OUT MORE

To find out more about this role, please contact [jobs@helenbamber.org](mailto:jobs@helenbamber.org).

