

## **Housing Paralegal/Caseworker**

**£28,500.00 per annum - Full Time**

### **NKLCs Background**

North Kensington Law Centre – NKLC, opened its doors in 1970 as the first Law Centre in the country, pioneering a community-based legal service which promotes rights and equality of opportunity. In 2020, we celebrated our 50<sup>th</sup> year serving the communities of North Kensington and beyond and have established a history and tradition of fighting for justice on behalf of people from disadvantaged and vulnerable communities. Recently, we became part of the West London Homelessness Project with London Councils.

Our current areas of work are employment, housing, immigration, and welfare benefits. For immigration, we are registered with the OISC and we have an LAA contract in Housing and Immigration. We also undertake privately funded work for matters which are out of scope for Legal Aid.

### **The Role**

Housing paralegal/caseworker

Responsible to: Director

Line managed by: Supervising Solicitor

### **Main Objective**

To provide advice and casework in housing law.

### **Casework responsibilities**

- To provide legal advice and assistance on a wide range of housing problems, including homelessness, possession proceedings, allocations and disrepair;
- To raise target-based income for NKLC through Legal Aid Agency funding of cases by claiming costs from other parties where possible;
- To keep up to date with changes in housing and associated legislation through attendance at training courses and by reading relevant housing law journals;
- To undertake casework administration in accordance with Legal Aid Agency requirements and to bill and cost cases;

- To assist in daytime housing advice sessions and undertake all necessary follow up work;
- To assist in outreach sessions as and when required.

### **General responsibilities**

- To undertake work in accordance with the Solicitor's Practice Rules, with regard to the rules and principles of professional conduct and the agreed practices of NKLC;
- To work under the professional supervision of NKLC's Housing Supervisor;
- To attend staff meetings convened by the Director, including meetings of the Board of Trustees if required;
- To identify your own training and development needs and implement plans to meet them;
- To work in accordance with NKLC's policies and procedures. We place particular emphasis on our Confidentiality and Equal Opportunities policies;
- To assist in cover arrangements during the absence of members of staff or at times of pressure;
- To undertake any other duties as may be reasonably required.

### **Person Specification**

Essential:

- 1) Area of Substantive Law
  - a) Thorough knowledge of housing law;
  - b) At least one year of recent experience providing practical housing advice through casework (does not have to be post-qualification);
  - c) Thorough knowledge of legal aid certified work and legal help scheme;
  - d) Effective communication skills;
  - e) Good understanding of litigation.
- 2) NKLC ethos
  - a) Commitment to equal opportunities policies;
  - b) Commitment to client-focused service delivery.
- 3) Management of workload
  - a) Experience of identifying priorities, working to deadlines, balancing competing demands and efficient billing/closing cases.
- 4) Procedures and Administration
  - a) Experience of complying with Legal Aid Agency requirements and Lexcel standards;
  - b) IT skills.
- 5) Team Working
  - a) Willingness to share the routine tasks essential for the day to day running of NKLC;

- b) Willingness to share expertise, support colleagues and contribute to a productive working environment;
- c) A positive and constructive approach to work.

Desirable:

- 1) Practical housing casework experience;
- 2) Experience of dealing with and following through complex housing cases including preparation of hearings;
- 3) Experience of representation in court/tribunal;
- 4) Recent experience of working under the Legal Aid Agency's Legal Help scheme and Civil Legal Aid (certificated work);
- 5) Proven ability to keep knowledge up to date;
- 6) Experience of paid or unpaid work contributing to the promotion of Equal Opportunities and anti-discrimination policies;
- 7) Experience of working in the not-for-profit sector;
- 8) Experience of managing workload without direct supervision;
- 9) Experience of meeting billing targets;
- 10) Experience of working with Legal Aid contracts;
- 11) Ability to monitor and maintain records, systems and procedures;
- 12) Experience of working as part of a team.

### **Equal Opportunities:**

NKLC is an equal opportunities organisation. We recognise that widespread discrimination exists in society towards individuals and groups both directly and indirectly. All employees are expected to adhere to and promote NKLC's Equal Opportunities Policy.

### **Specific Details:**

The post is full time – 35 hours per week, primarily working from our offices in North Kensington – on a fixed term basis for the duration of 18 months with scope for the post to become permanent. There may be flexibility with hybrid working arrangements.

The role requires an enhanced DBS clearance within 4 weeks of commencing employment and the post will remain dependent on the outcome. Candidates are required to make a full disclosure of previous or pending civil and criminal matters against them and of any other suitability matters relating to the role. These must be highlighted at the end of their personal statement. Candidates must have the right to work in the UK without sponsorship.

### **Vacancy Details:**

To apply for the post, please email your CV with a detailed Cover Letter of no more than 1000 words to [recruitment@nkcl.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@nkcl.org.uk) explaining how you meet the Person Specification Criteria.

### **Closing date for applications:**

Applications will be reviewed, and interviews offered on a rolling basis until the position is filled. Shortlisted candidates will be initially contacted by email. If you have not received a response within 14 days of submission, please assume your application was unsuccessful.

If you have any disabilities and require special arrangements for the interview process, please highlight this at the end of your statement.