

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES
Legal Action for Local Communities

JOB DESCRIPTION

POST:	Housing Solicitor/Caseworker
Salary:	Up to £34,942 p.a (NJC Scale 35 including Inner London Weighting) depending on experience
Reports to:	Housing Team Leader
Line Manages:	Paralegal and Volunteers assigned to them
Functional Links:	Head of Legal Practice, Board of Trustees, CEO, Finance Manager, Client Services Manager, Team Leaders, Branch Administrators
Term:	Permanent
Based at:	Wandsworth or Kingston with duty in Kingston, Wandsworth or Croydon County Court

Key Tasks

- 1 The post-holder will advise and represent clients who live or work in South West London in all areas of housing law taking cases as necessary to all levels of courts and tribunals.
- 2 To be or work towards being a LAA category housing supervisor. The post-holder will ensure maintenance of standards in accordance with Lexcel accreditation.

Duties & Responsibilities

- 3 To ensure that all advice, assistance and representation complies with the requirements of our Lexcel quality mark and where publicly funded complies with the requirements of the Legal Aid Agency
- 4 To ensure all casework is recorded within our SOS case management system and prompt billing and payment of work undertaken. The post holder will be expected to meet billing and time recording targets which are set in accordance to the overall requirements of the Law Centre's annual budget and our contracts.
- 5 To ensure that the terms of all Law Centre funders are kept to in relation to advice & casework including providing reports as required. To report on the work of the Law Centre to the management committee as required.
- 6 To participate in team meetings and to carry out file reviews in accordance with Lexcel requirements.
- 7 To participate in staff meetings from time to time.

- 8 To be responsible for your own word processing, filing and case recording within SOS case management system.
- 9 To advise and provide training and talks to Law Centre staff and volunteers and to front line advice agency staff within the Law Centre's catchment area as necessary
- 10 To attend meetings of coordinating bodies as required.
- 11 To share the work of maintaining everyday necessities.
- 12 To provide cover for colleagues during absences.

Advice & Casework

- 13 To provide housing advice and casework service to clients of the Law Centre. This is to include interviewing clients, advising them of their rights and responsibilities, assessing suitability and effectiveness of alternative courses of action, advising on potential challenges and legal procedures.
- 14 To assist other teams in the Law Centre in helping clients resolve any housing matters
- 15 To assist clients in liaising with other people and organisations to resolve their housing problems where possible.
- 16 To represent clients at Courts and Tribunals and do the necessary preparation and research.
- 17 To visit clients at their homes if appropriate.
- 18 To instruct and attend Counsel's chambers with clients as appropriate.
- 19 To supervise as required any housing advice and casework conducted.

Professional Development

- 20 To attend courses on new legislation, specialist skills and the use of information technology.
- 21 To keep up to date with the changes in relevant legislation.
- 22 To read the relevant law journals
- 23 To discuss regularly with your Team Leader your job performance and personal career development.
- 24 To be appraised regularly and to engage fully in this process to further personal development and maximise your contribution to SWLLC.
- 25 To undertake such training as is necessary to maintain and/or achieve the standards required of a Legal Aid Agency Category Supervisor in Housing.

Social Policy

- 26 To be alert at all times to the social policy implications of issues presented by clients.
- 27 To take appropriate action to influence social policy in regard to these issues

Equal Opportunities

- 28 To have regard at all times in the planning and execution of duties to SWLLC's Equality and Diversity Policy.

Other Duties

- 29 Play a full role in the organisation supporting colleagues to maximise their effectiveness.
- 30 In addition to the tasks and duties listed in this job description to undertake such duties as may be identified and which are generally compatible with the functions of the post.

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PERSON SPECIFICATION

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Essential Experience

1. At least two year's full time equivalent experience of Housing Law casework and representation.
2. Experience of working under a Legal Aid Agency Contract specification for Public Funding (Legal Aid) and Legal Help with demonstrate able billing targets.
3. Ability to manage a varied caseload of sufficient appropriate matters to meet the billing target currently of a minimum £63,000
4. Ability to draft appropriate documentation in all areas and procedures of Housing law
5. A wide range of representation experience in the county court with the ability to take cases through the higher courts.
6. Commitment to equal opportunities as set out in the principles and policies of South West London Law Centres

Essential Skills

7. An intelligent and highly motivated person who is accustomed to taking significant decisions and having a high level of personal accountability.
8. Ability to work independently with a proven ability to prioritise work and to meet deadlines.
9. Ability to take strategic overview and to plan for the long term.
10. Ability to liaise and work effectively in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders.
11. Excellent communication skills: you must be able to relate well to colleagues, clients and third parties, in person, in writing and on the telephone, despite the pressures of the role
12. Understanding of the problems which face diverse communities.
13. Ability to be self-servicing: you will be expected to manage most of your own typing, filing and billing and payment of cases.
14. Ability to use computer and information technology including management information systems and to be self-servicing. Must be proficient in Microsoft operating systems (Word, Excel, and Office).
15. Ability to working collaboratively within SWLLC
16. You must be very well organised in order to work well under pressure without compromising standards

Desirable Experience and Skills

17. At least three year's full time equivalent experience of Housing Law casework and representation covering a wide range of cases including ability to meet LAA qualified category Housing Supervisor standard
18. Experience of running cases through conditional fee agreements
19. Experience of giving successful training or talks