



SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

Legal Action for Local Communities

Asylum and Immigration placement – six-months’ part-time internship.

SWLLC is a community based, Legal Aid practice and a registered Charity. Our history dates back to 1974 when the first Law Centres in Wandsworth were created. We became SWLLC in 2004 through the merger of a number of Law Centres in South West London. We now work across six boroughs, Croydon, Merton, Kingston, Richmond and Sutton and Wandsworth, helping people accessing, understanding and enforcing their legal rights. SWLLC helps around 8,000 people per year.

Our award-winning Immigration and Asylum team runs an ongoing internship programme offering the opportunity for an enthusiast and committed volunteer to provide paralegal support to both asylum and immigration clients and the solicitors and caseworkers within the Asylum and Immigration team for a six-month part-time placement.

The programme runs from April to September and from October to March each year. Please see below for details of how to apply.

Because of the nature of the role, the ideal candidate will need to show a solid understanding of the work undertaken by our colleagues.

Work will include dealing with traumatic materials from extremely vulnerable clients who are victims of torture, slavery, trafficking. The volunteer may be asked to review materials such as scar reports, medical reports and statements with disturbing events that have happened to clients. As such, it is necessary that the candidate is aware of the work undertaken by our Legal Aid solicitors and is desirable that the candidate can show some level of previous experience working alongside a similar setting, supporting colleagues working with sensitive information.

Please note that full training and supervision will be given and support around your wellbeing will be provided by the charity, if necessary.

If you are seeking a career in Law and have an interest in Asylum and Immigration matters/ interest in working and supporting Asylum seekers / Immigrants/ Human Rights, this role will provide you with invaluable experience and insight into the problem faced by this group of communities.

Overall responsibility:

You will be supporting a number of solicitors and senior caseworkers in relation to all aspects of research and admin. The ideal candidate will play a full role in the organisation supporting colleagues to maximise their effectiveness. You may be asked to participate in staff meetings from time to time.

General tasks you may be asked to carry out:

1. Legal research
2. Analysis of Asylum Statements, Country reports, Witness statements
3. Creation of Asylum Statements
4. Writing attendance notes
5. Assisting with booking clients and interpreters to the service
6. General administrative tasks such as filing, archiving, scanning, photocopying, binding of files.

Personal attributes

1. Working towards a legal qualification (LLB, GDL, LPC/ BPTC , ILEX/CILEX or equivalent);
2. Some equivalent experience in a role where you have been supporting a team and colleagues to help achieve targets;
3. Commitment to equal opportunities as set out in the principles and policies of South West London Law Centres.
4. An intelligent and highly motivated person who is accustomed to taking significant decisions and having a high level of personal accountability.
5. Ability to work independently with a proven ability to prioritise work and to meet deadlines.
6. 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.
7. Understanding of the problems which face diverse communities.
8. 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).
9. Ability to work collaboratively within SWLLC.

Professional development

In this role, you will gain an invaluable insight into the day to day activities involved in Asylum and Immigration work. You will develop your research and drafting skills as well as having the opportunity to gain some client-facing experience with the support of our expert team. To support your professional growth you will have access to internal training provided by SWLLC as well as other ad hoc training and events provided by external organisations.

You will also benefit from a structured placement with active supervision and an end of placement evaluation so that you can review your learning from the placement. However note, that because of the sensitive nature of the work carried out by our Asylum and Immigration team and the ongoing support and training provided during the placement, only candidates who can show they can commit for the full length of the placement (six months) will be considered. Inability to attend on a regular basis and to complete the internship will have a negative effect on future reference requests provided by the Law Centre.



Commitment

We are seeking someone who can commit two to three full days a week for at least six months.

Location

This role will require attendance at our Croydon office, although sometimes the volunteer will be able to work from home- Attendance will be agreed upon with supervising solicitor.

Remuneration

While this is a voluntary, unpaid position, we can reimburse your reasonable expenses for up to £15 per working day, when asked to attend and volunteer from the office.

Start date

The programme runs twice a year, starting at the beginning of April and October.

Application process

Applications open in February for the April start date, and in August for the October start date. Please apply by sending your CV and a covering letter to volunteers@swllc.org.