

April 2024

Dear Applicant

Immigration Solicitor/Caseworker - IAAS Level 2

Thank you for your interest in this post.

I am pleased to enclose:

- Organisation Summary and context of the post
- Job Description and Person Specification for Immigration Solicitor/Caseworker IAAS Level 2

Please apply to recruitment@swllc.org by forwarding your CV together with a covering letter of no more than two pages of A4 setting out how you meet the person specification and why you would like to work with South West London Law Centres.

Please note that applications without a covering letter will not be considered.

The final closing date for applications to this role is 5pm on 20 May 2024, however, we will be evaluating applications as we receive them and so you are advised to submit your application as soon as possible.

If you would like to have a brief informal chat to discuss the role, please contact us at recruitment@swllc.org

Yours faithfully

Patrick Marples CEO
South West London Law Centres

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES
Legal Action for Local Communities

JOB ADVERT – Immigration Solicitor/Caseworker - IAAS Level 2

South West London Law Centres (SWLLC) is one of the largest Law Centres in the country and we are seeking an experienced Level 2 IAAS accredited Asylum/Immigration Solicitor or Caseworker to join our team to provide casework supporting clients who have been referred from a number of projects.

Work will be mainly under a Legal Aid Agency contract. We are looking for people who can work on either a full-time or part-time basis. Our immigration team is highly respected and was again rated as “Excellent” in an independent peer review by the Legal Aid Agency in January 2022 and again in 2023. The Law Centre is well known and highly regarded, winning the Legal Aid Firm/Not for Profit in the 2020 LALY Awards.

We are seeking an experienced Asylum/Immigration Solicitor or Caseworker to provide casework with colleagues in a number of new projects including homelessness and domestic violence cases. You will show care and attention to our clients and the command of detail which is a hallmark of our work.

We can offer flexible working and generous benefits.

Immigration Solicitor/Caseworker IAAS Level 2

Salary:	Up to £38,000 p.a depending upon experience
Reports to:	Immigration Team Leader
Term:	Permanent
Based at:	Hybrid working, with a permanent base at our Croydon office
Hours:	Flexible – we welcome applications from those who wish to work part time and support a range of flexible working arrangements.

The final closing date for applications to this role is 5pm on 20 May 2024, however, we will be evaluating applications as we receive them and so you are advised to submit your application as soon as possible. If you would like to have a brief informal chat to discuss the role, please contact us at recruitment@swllc.org. Please see above for how to apply.

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

Legal Action for Local Communities

ORGANISATION SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVES OF THE POST

SWLLC is a community based legal 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 South West London boroughs (Croydon, Merton, Kingston, Richmond, Sutton and Wandsworth). In doing so, we address the root causes of social injustice – poverty, family breakdown, unemployment and exploitation. SWLLC provides full legal casework, representation and advice in the following areas of social welfare law – Community Care, Debt, Employment, Housing, **Immigration & Asylum** and in a limited way in Welfare Rights. In 2022/23 we assisted 6778 people. We represent clients in all courts and tribunals and worked on 2,609 cases. We also provide the housing duty solicitor scheme currently Kingston and previously at Croydon, Kingston and Wandsworth County Courts giving emergency representation in possession hearings for rent and owned homes and at the warrant stage for evictions. Last year we helped 899 clients through the scheme.

We continue to run one of the largest pro bono clinic services across England, we deliver around 100 free clinic appointments per week offering initial advice on a wide range of civil / legal problems over 400 pro-bono lawyers helped 2,954 clients last year.

We have a strong emphasis on quality – we are accredited to the Law Society’s Lexcel standard for excellence in legal practice management and client care and our Immigration Team has been rated as “Excellent” in a Legal Aid Peer Review for three years running.

Working at South West London Law Centres

South West London Law Centres has served the communities of South West London for 50 years. Today, we continue to meet the needs and address the disadvantage of around 7,000 clients per year. They include women fleeing domestic violence, people who are in housing crisis, people with no income or recourse to public funds, those with complex benefit challenges, and people mistreated by unscrupulous employers.

Joining the law centre is a chance to be a part of the law centres movement and to make a real impact with every case.

As an employer we offer hybrid working and support a range flexible working arrangements, including compressed hours to a four day week or nine day fortnight. We welcome applications from those wishing to work part time.

We have a generous leave allowance at 29 days per calendar year, rising to 34 days after five years' continuous service as well as a range of discretionary leave to cover emergencies.

We offer opportunities for training and progression and support staff wellbeing through an employee assistance programme.

Our offices are centrally located close to transport hubs.

Context of the Post

We are seeking an experienced Asylum/Immigration Solicitor or Caseworker to provide casework with colleagues in an number of new projects where we are seeing growing referrals:

Wandsworth - For a number of years we have been undertaking EUSS work particularly in Wandsworth. We are looking to widen scope and referral routes from Wandsworth Council and community based organisations to help people to regularise their status so that they can access statutory services and support. The main source of referrals will come from Citizens Advice Wandsworth and through the community network.

GLA Homelessness - We are taking part in a sub-regional project to assist homeless people or those at risk of homelessness to improve their immigration status. The project is partly funded under a grant from Greater London Authority. The project is part of GLA's London wide Immigration Advice for Rough Sleepers initiative. The project is funded for 2½ years from July 2022 but casework and legal aid funding will extend beyond the end of the project. We already have one caseworker designated to the project and our referrals come from South London Refugee Association.

Domestic Violence Refuges in Surrey - For a number of years, the law centre has taken a limited number of cases from a women's refuge in Surrey. These cases have predominantly dealt with settlement applications. As well as casework, we have provided some one-off second tier advice to partner organisations. The number of referrals has grown and there are other refuges in Surrey that need help as they have a growing number of clients who have immigration difficulties that make a move from the refuge more difficult. In recognition of this growing need, with funding from Surrey County Council we developed a partnership project with a number of domestic violence charities to support abuse survivors to regularise their status. The project has started and referrals are developing.

These projects are partly funded with the majority of casework undertaken under our Legal Aid Agency contract.

We are seeking one caseworker, on either a full-time or part-time basis. You will be taking referrals predominantly from designated sources as set out above. We already have two caseworkers focusing on the GLA and DV project. We are looking for a further caseworker to start the Wandsworth project as well as helping out on the other two projects.. We will ensure

that in taking these referrals you will continue to have an appropriate case mix to maintain a balanced and fulfilling role. There will be opportunities to take on other work. We are looking for caseworkers who can show care and attention to our clients and the command of detail which is a hallmark of our work.

The successful applicants will need to be able to demonstrate that they satisfy the Legal Aid Agency Standards to represent unaccompanied minors and be accredited at IAAS level 2 as they will need to be able to take on and develop a caseload. You will also need to get an enhanced DBS check.

Our immigration team is a small friendly, experienced and respected team of caseworkers and solicitors. We won Legal Aid Team of the Year - Solicitors Journal Awards 2017, where we were commended on our work with extremely vulnerable individuals, including victims of trafficking and unaccompanied minors. One judge was said to have been highly impressed by our submission in the knowledge that our fellow short-listees were 'elephants against mice in terms of resources. We were the only Law Centre to be shortlisted. We regularly get referrals from the Refugee Council, South London Refugee Association, Helen Bamber Foundation and Freedom from Torture (Medical Foundation). We are part of a London wide partnership tackling immigration problems for homeless people.

We have a strong emphasis on quality – we are accredited to the Law Society's Lexcel standard for excellence in legal practice management and client care and our Immigration Team has been rated as "Excellent" in a Legal Aid Peer Review for three years running.

"An exceptional level of client care was provided to vulnerable clients. A large proportion of the files reviewed related to clients who were vulnerable as a result of their youth, mental illness, physical illness, or experience of trauma (sometimes all of these)."

"There was evidence of good quality work being carried out on the files reviewed which led to some positive outcomes being achieved and on complex legal matters."

We are looking for passionate and committed lawyers with a desire to carry out high quality, meaningful casework and to make a real difference within the community.

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES
Legal Action for Local Communities

JOB DESCRIPTION

Immigration Solicitor/Caseworker - IAAS Level 2

Salary:	Up to £38,000 p.a depending upon experience
Reports to:	Immigration Team Leader
Term:	Permanent
Based at:	Hybrid working, with a permanent base at our Croydon office
Hours:	Flexible – we welcome applications from those who wish to work part time and support a range of flexible working arrangements.

Key Tasks

The post-holder will predominantly work under a number of projects helping victims of domestic violence, street homeless individuals and developing immigration casework in Wandsworth. You will provide a range of immigration and asylum casework to help to improve people's immigration status which will help them to take the next steps in their lives, together with the support of people supporting them. This will involve the whole range of immigration and asylum cases including: settlement, variation and extension of leave, asylum, deportation, removal, nationality and EU cases. Most areas of work are undertaken under the legal aid scheme with areas out of scope being covered by grant funding under the projects. The post will involve office based work in Croydon as well as potentially some outreach.

Duties & Responsibilities

- 1 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 and Lexcel quality mark
- 2 To ensure all casework is recorded within our 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 with the overall requirements of the Law Centre's annual budget and our contracts. The current target is £50,000 per annum. Against this an allowance will be made for grant funded work.
- 3 To ensure that the terms of all Law Centre grant agreements are kept to in relation to advice & casework including providing reports as required.
- 4 To report on the work of the Law Centre to the management committee as required.
- 5 To participate in team meetings and to carry out file reviews in accordance with Lexcel requirements.
- 6 To participate in staff meetings from time to time.
- 7 To be responsible for your own word processing, filing and case recording within our case management system and maintenance of an electronic file.
- 8 To advise and provide training and talks to Law Centre staff and volunteers and to frontline advice agency staff within the Law Centre's catchment area as necessary
- 9 To attend meetings of coordinating bodies as required.

- 10 To share the work of maintaining everyday necessities.
- 11 To provide cover for colleagues during absences.

Advice & Casework

- 12 To provide immigration and asylum 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. Your clients will predominantly come from project referrals.
- 13 To provide one off advice and liaison with the referrers into the project.
- 14 .
- 15 To assist clients in liaising with other people and organisations to resolve their immigration/asylum problems where possible.
- 16 To represent clients at Immigration Tribunals and do the necessary preparation and research.
- 17 To visit clients at their homes and in the refuges as appropriate.
- 18 To instruct and attend Counsel's chambers with clients as appropriate.
- 19 To supervise as required any immigration/asylum advice and casework conducted.

SWLLC Project Work

- 20 To take an active role with colleagues in the development of immigration projects and partnerships including working with partners to develop services
- 21 To take referrals from the designated partners and referrers.
- 22 To assist the senior management team in reporting and complying with the project reporting and monitoring requirements
- 23 To take part in project meetings and events as and when required

Professional Development

- 24 To attend courses on new legislation, specialist skills and the use of information technology.
- 25 To keep up to date with the changes in relevant legislation.
- 26 To read the relevant law journals.
- 27 To maintain IAAS level 2 accreditation, DBS checks and relevant authorisation through the SRA or OISC.
- 28 To discuss regularly with the Immigration Team Leader your job performance and personal career development.
- 29 To be appraised regularly and to engage fully in this process to further personal development and maximise your contribution to SWLLC.
- 30 To undertake such training as is necessary to maintain your accreditations.

Social Policy

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

Equal Opportunities

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

Other Duties

- 34 To play a full role in the organisation supporting colleagues to maximise their effectiveness.
- 35 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. Experience of working under a Legal Aid Agency Contract specification for Public Funding (Legal Aid) and Legal Help with demonstratable billing targets.
2. At least two years' full-time equivalent experience of immigration/asylum casework and representation covering a wide range of cases to meet the IAAS Level 2 accreditation.
3. Ability to manage a varied caseload of sufficient appropriate matters to meet the billing target currently of a minimum £50,000 per annum.
4. Ability to draft appropriate documentation in all areas and procedures of Immigration/Asylum law.
5. Commitment to equal opportunities as set out in the principles and policies of South West London Law Centres.

Essential Skills

6. Registered IAAS Level 2 caseworker.
7. Relevant accreditation with SRA or OISC and Enhanced DBS check.
8. An intelligent and highly motivated person who is accustomed to taking significant decisions and having a high level of personal accountability.
9. Ability to work independently with a proven ability to prioritise work and to meet deadlines.
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 and the strategies of successfully dealing with vulnerabilities of these victims
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. A wide range of representation experience in immigration tribunals and ability to recognise cases that could be subject to judicial review or to be taken through the higher courts
18. Current IAAS supervisor accreditation.