

June 2025

Dear Applicant

Re: Housing Solicitor

Thank you for your interest in this post.

I am pleased to enclose:

1. Job description and person specification for Housing Solicitor role
2. Guidelines for Applicants
3. Organization Summary

The closing date for the receipt of applications is 28st August 2025 at 5 pm

To apply, send an up-to-date copy of your CV with a cover letter no longer than 2 A4 pages to recruitment@swllc.org.

Applications without cover letter will not be accepted.

Yours faithfully

Patrick Marples
SWLLC CEO

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES***Legal Action for Local Communities*****JOB ADVERT – Housing Solicitor**

South West London Law Centres (SWLLC), one of the largest Law Centres in the country, is seeking a Housing Solicitor.

We are looking to recruit a housing solicitor to join our dedicated team of 3 solicitors, 3 paralegals, and 2 trainees across our three branch offices in South West London. Our team handles a broad range of housing work funded by Legal Aid, including early legal advice, strategic casework related to Temporary Accommodation, and extensive representation as part of the Housing Possession Court Duty Schemes in Wandsworth, Croydon, and Kingston.

This role is ideal for an experienced and energetic lawyer who is not only passionate about housing law and access to justice, but also committed to nurturing the next generation of social justice lawyers. A key part of this role will involve supervising and supporting our current paralegals and trainees—providing guidance, quality assurance, and skills development on casework and advocacy. We are seeking someone who enjoys coaching others, thrives in a collaborative environment, and is motivated to contribute to the growth and development of a strong, mission-driven team

We offer flexible working, hybrid arrangements, and a wide range of generous benefits.

Housing Solicitor

Salary:	Up to £41,615 p.a depending on experience
Reports to:	Head of Legal Practice
Term:	Permanent
Based at:	Wandsworth office, which is a short walk away from Clapham Junction. Travel may be required to our other branch offices and court duty schemes we operate.

The closing date for the post is 28th August 2025 by cob 5 pm with interviews soon after. If you would like to discuss the post further, please email recruitment@swllc.org.

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 2024/25 we assisted 5868 people understanding and enforcing their legal rights.

We represent clients in all courts and tribunals. In 2024, we worked on 242 housing cases. We also provide the **housing duty solicitor scheme** in 3 County Courts, giving emergency representation in possession hearings for rent and owned homes, and at the warrant stage for evictions. We are currently helping around 1000 clients per year to avoid evictions and repossessions.

We continue to run one of the largest pro bono clinic services across England, delivering around 70 free clinic appointments per week in different areas of Law, offering initial legal advice to people without the means to be able to afford legal services. We are very grateful to our 400+ volunteers a year who have allowed us to assist over 2,500 people this year, understanding and asserting their rights.

Context of the Post

Our current housing law team is deeply committed and passionate about their work. Among them, one solicitor also serves part-time as a deputy district judge, a paralegal is training to become a barrister, and one apprentice and trainee are on track to qualify within the next 12 months. A significant part of our work at the law centre involves court duty scheme representation in possession cases. While this is incredibly important, our community engagement has shown that we're not fully meeting the wider needs of the community. In particular, people need more support earlier in the process—before possession proceedings begin—as well as help with issues like disrepair.

Thanks to recent funding, we've been able to bring on two housing paralegal who are managing the housing advice lines in Wandsworth and Merton, and are expanding into Croydon. At the same time, our Cost of Living team has grown, creating new opportunities to offer early housing legal

advice. The proposed harmonisation of legal aid housing rates has the potential to make more early legal advice more viable.

Although most of the team's work is currently funded by legal aid, we see growing potential to diversify our funding sources, including through grants. We are collaborating with several law firms to enhance our legal clinics so they can offer more than just one-off advice, especially for individuals who aren't eligible for legal aid. To support this program, we have put in place a highly experienced Housing Solicitor to supervise the housing clinic's operations.

Although legal aid remains at the core of our work, we are actively developing alternative funding streams. We are now looking to grow the housing team further in order to meet rising demand, without compromising on quality. To do this, we are seeking an enthusiastic and experienced housing solicitor who is not only committed to social justice but also eager to take an active role in supervising and developing junior legal staff. You will play a key role in mentoring trainees and paralegals, quality-assuring advice, and helping to build a strong, supportive team culture. Your contribution will be central to our efforts to expand capacity, extend our reach, and deepen our impact.

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

Legal Action for Local Communities

JOB DESCRIPTION

POST:	Housing Solicitor
Salary:	Up to £41,615 p.a. depending on experience
Reports to:	Head of Legal Practice, CEO
Line Manages:	Housing Team solicitors, Caseworkers/Paralegals and Volunteers assigned to them
Functional Links:	Head of Legal Practice, Board of Trustees, Senior Management Team and other project teams in SWLLC
Term:	Permanent
Based at:	Wandsworth office (a short walk away from Clapham Junction) with regular travel to other branches and to Court

Key Tasks

- 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.
- To supervise as required any housing advice and casework conducted.
- To be or work towards being a LAA category housing supervisor. The post-holder will ensure maintenance of standards in accordance with Lexcel accreditation.
- To supervise solicitors, caseworkers and paralegals within the housing team
- 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.
- You will work within SWLLC's policies and procedures to make sure the Housing Team leaders and those caseworkers/paralegals in their teams meet their performance targets, maintain quality standards in line with regulation and contracts, and develop their professional skills. The post-holder will ensure maintenance of standards in accordance with Lexcel accreditation.
- 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
- 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 to the overall requirements of the Law Centre's annual budget and our contracts.

- 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.
- To participate in team meetings and to carry out file reviews in accordance with Lexcel requirements.
- To participate in staff meetings from time to time.
- To be responsible for your own word processing, filing and case recording within SOS case management system.
- 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
- To attend meetings of coordinating bodies as required.
- To share the work of maintaining everyday necessities.
- To provide cover for colleagues during absences.

Advice & Casework

- 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.
- To assist other teams in the Law Centre in helping clients resolve any housing matters
- To assist clients in liaising with other people and organisations to resolve their housing problems where possible.
- To represent clients at Courts and Tribunals and do the necessary preparation and research.
- To visit clients at their homes if appropriate.
- To instruct and attend Counsel's chambers with clients as appropriate.
- To supervise as required any housing advice and casework conducted.

Supervision

- To provide line management to a team of housing caseworkers, monitoring performance against targets and ensuring caseworkers under supervision comply with contractual requirements, our Lexcel accreditation, and SWLLC policies and procedures
- To supervise housing caseworkers formally at least every quarter and complete a formal appraisal annually. This includes checking files and standards of work, going through billing and time recording, ensuring that Lexcel standards are maintained. The split of housing team to be supervised will be designated by the Head of Legal Practice.
- To monitor the assignment and allocation of new and existing casework within the Housing team as necessary to ensure contract compliance and appropriate cover where a

member of the Housing is absent from work so that a professional standard of service is maintained at all times.

- Co-ordinate and carry out file reviews in accordance with the Lexcel Quality Manual with Housing caseworkers designated under your supervision to ensure agreed quality standards are maintained.
- To follow the underperformance procedure for any caseworker in your team not meeting the performance targets within the guidelines set by the CEO.
- To work with Housing caseworkers designated under your supervision to identify appropriate professional development objectives and training or other routes to meet those objectives.
- In conjunction with other Housing Team Leaders, to hold in rota Housing team meetings on a quarterly basis to update the entire housing team across SWLLC on operational issues, trends, procedure and practice, and training. To produce minutes of these meetings and to provide the Head of Legal Practice and CEO with a copy.
- Be an active member of SWLLC's operational management team to ensure co-ordination of activities, effective communication between teams, offices, monitor service delivery issues, recommend service improvements, identify issues and opportunities and support fellow operational management team members.
- Ensure volunteers are trained, supported and supervised in the team for which you are responsible, in line with SWLLC procedures.
- Be responsible for the line management of housing casework staff designated to you, specifically to include:
 - Supervision and appraisals
 - Authorising annual leave
 - Reporting issues to the Chief Executive relating to sickness, performance and timekeeping
 - Cascading information about training needs and opportunities between management and the team
- To be aware of other issues within your office.
- All of these duties to be carried out in line with SWLLC procedures.

Professional Development

- To attend courses on new legislation, specialist skills and the use of information technology.
- To keep up to date with the changes in relevant legislation.
- To read the relevant law journals
- To discuss regularly with the Head of legal practice your job performance and personal career development.
- To appraise and have regular reviews of the work of the people you supervise
- To be appraised regularly and to engage fully in this process to further personal development and maximise your contribution to SWLLC.
- 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
- To be alert at all times to the social policy implications of issues presented by clients.
- To take appropriate action to influence social policy in regard to these issues

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- To take appropriate action to influence social policy in regard to these issues
- To help and facilitate cross working between the Housing Team and the Cost of Living project. This will include supervision or ensuring that there is appropriate supervision of the housing work carried out by the cost of living team.

Other Duties

- Play a full role in the organisation supporting colleagues to maximise their effectiveness.

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.

SOUTH WEST LONDON LAW CENTRES

Legal Action for Local Communities

PERSON SPECIFICATION

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Term:	Permanent
Based at:	Wandsworth (a short walk away from Clapham Junction) with regular travel to other branches of SWLLC and Court.

Essential Experience

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

Essential Skills

1. An intelligent and highly motivated person who is accustomed to taking significant decisions and having a high level of personal accountability.
2. An ability to supervise people work's to ensure it meets the Lexcel and the LAA standards
3. Ability to work independently with a proven ability to prioritise work and to meet deadlines.

4. Ability to take strategic overview and to plan for the long term.
5. Ability to liaise and work effectively in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders.
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 be self-servicing: you will be expected to manage most of your own typing, filing and billing and payment of cases.
9. 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).
10. Ability to working collaboratively within SWLLC
11. You must be very well organised in order to work well under pressure without compromising standards

Desirable Experience and Skills

1. 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
2. Experience of running cases through conditional fee agreements
3. Experience of giving successful training or talks