

Housing Solicitor Recruitment Pack

Closing date for applications 23:59 hours on Sunday 9th June 2024

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Welcome

I am delighted that you are considering joining our Cambridge House team. This recruitment pack includes information about our organisation and this role that I hope you will find useful.

With a dedicated and innovative team, tackling poverty, social inequity and social injustice has been our mission at Cambridge House since 1889. We work to tackle social exclusion and enable people to transition out of crisis and progress towards independence.

Our vision is of a society without poverty where all people are valued, treated equally and lead fulfilling and productive lives. Our activities are split into two areas - frontline services to support people to stabilise their lives and progress; and a research and knowledge exchange to support the development of the most effective social policy and practice.

Law Centre

Free, independent, and expert legal services in housing, employment, discrimination and welfare benefits law alongside crisis mitigation support.

Independent Advocacy

Statutory Care Act, Mental Health Act and Mental Capacity Act advocacy for adults and children.

Safer Renting

Specialist advice, support, and advocacy for vulnerable private rented sector tenants affected by criminal landlords.

Youth Empowerment

Investing in young people so they thrive as adults.

Disabled Peoples' Empowerment

Supporting disabled children and adults to take control of their own lives and futures.

Research and knowledge exchange

Activities that capture local knowledge, insights and lived experience of 'what works' to develop innovative solutions to poverty, social inequity, and social injustice.

We value diversity and warmly welcome applications from disabled people, the LGBTQ+ communities, people from Black, Asian, and ethnic minority backgrounds and candidates who shared lived experience with our service users.

If you would like to be part of this very special organisation and believe that you can contribute to our mission, we welcome an application from you. For more information about us, please visit our website www.ch1889.org.

Yours sincerely



Karin Woodley CBE
Chief Executive

The Cambridge House Law Centre

Enabling people living with complex needs to save their homes, keep their jobs and protect their families

As a Legal Aid Agency accredited provider, we deliver free, independent and expert legal and crisis navigation services in housing, employment, discrimination and welfare benefits law.

Our Law Centre was established in 1894 and we maintain a reputation as one of the country's leading law centres including:

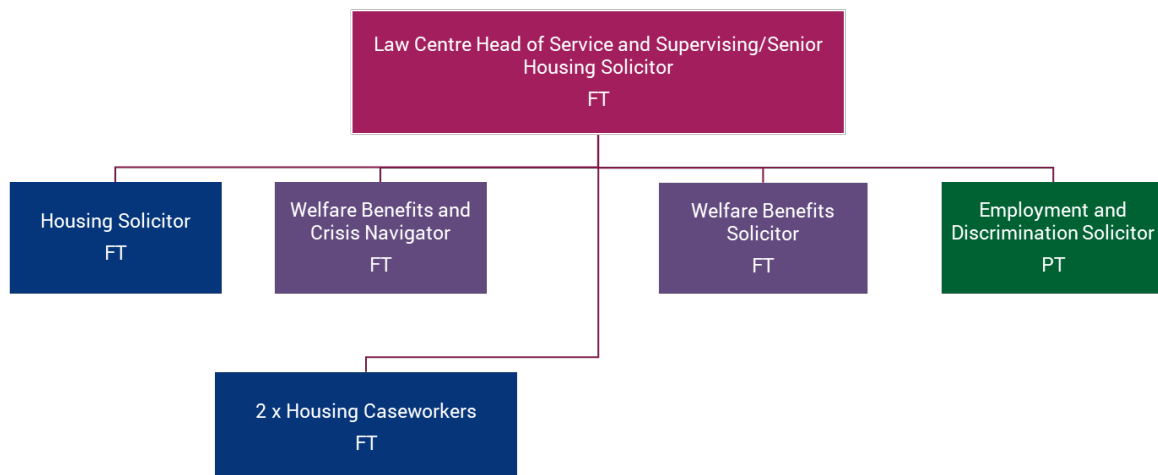
- Recognition as a Centre of Excellence by the London Legal Support Trust
- Lexcel accreditation for quality legal practice management and excellence in client service
- Receiving a 2022 Law Centre's Network award in recognition of our work tackling racial injustice

Q's story

Q is single, in their early sixties and living with diabetes and poor eyesight. Loss of employment during the pandemic forced them to claim Universal Credit and they were evicted because of rent arrears. Our team prevented homelessness by securing alternative accommodation and secured additional welfare benefits to cover housing costs.

The Law Centre holds Legal Aid Agency and Southwark Council contracts, receives funding from a variety of grant giving foundations, and generates on average over £200,000 per annum in legal fees.

The team comprises five solicitors (including the Head of Service and a Crisis Navigator), one housing caseworker and an administrator.



“Through the regular clinics that your Crisis Navigator has been delivering at the Baytree Centre, they have been instrumental in ensuring that the women are aware of their rights, access the support and benefits to which they are entitled and see their issues properly addressed. In addition to these ‘hard’ benefits, this also contributes to ‘softer’ outcomes including improvements in the women’s self-confidence, agency and well-being.”

Anna Iacuzzi, Service Director, The Baytree Centre

Our track record includes

- Achieving a historic recognition of the rights of homeless people by winning a Supreme Court case defining vulnerability and priority of need. This was the first Supreme Court case concerning a homeless individual with a disability in 30 years.
- Excellence in case outcomes protecting the homes and incomes of vulnerable individuals:
 - 100% success rate in possession/eviction proceedings, enabling clients to protect their homes.
 - 100% success rate in homelessness challenges, protecting homeless individuals’ right to housing.
 - 100% success rate in welfare benefits appeals.
 - 100% success rate in welfare benefits appeals to the First Tier Tribunals encapsulating legal issues for example, overpayment of tax credits or housing benefit. Disallowance of ESA, PIP, DLA.
- Advice given on Judicial Review matters such as unreasonable delay, breach of a statutory duty such as failure to send decision notices notifying the claimant of his or her appeal rights.
- Appeals to the Upper Tribunal on point of error of law.
- Cases involving the right to reside, habitual residence test, or Windrush issues.
- Housing Benefit backdating revisions and supersessions.
- Social Fund Reviews.
- Advice given on entitlement to contributory-based benefits, such as maternity allowance, contribution-based JSA/ESA.
- Income Maximisation.
- Advice given to elderly clients in respect of Pension Credit and Attendance Allowance.
- Advice on all aspects of employment related enquiries.
- Excellence in client service:
 - 93% were “Very Satisfied” with overall level of service.
 - 97% rated the overall service as “Excellent” or “Very Good”.
 - 93% reported increased awareness of their rights and responsibilities.

The Law Centre is embedded in the local community, is closely involved in local advice networks and belongs to a consortium of advice organisations.

Why work for Cambridge House?

As a member of our team you join a diverse and inclusive team with a shared commitment to justice and equity. Our current team comprises people who:

- Share lived experiences with our service users
 - 100% of the leadership team
 - 80% of our heads of services
 - 75% of staff
 - 33% of trustees
- Are from Black Asian and ethnically minoritised communities
 - 100% of the leadership team
 - 20% of our heads of services
 - 51% of staff
 - 33% of trustees
- Are women
 - 100% of the leadership team
 - 80% of our heads of services
 - 63% of staff
 - 50% of trustees
- Are disabled, neurodiverse and/or live with a mental or physical health condition
 - 100% of the leadership team
 - 80% of our heads of services
 - 39% of staff
 - 25% of trustees
- Are from LGBTQIA+ communities
 - 20% of our heads of services
 - 27% of staff

From the moment you join Cambridge House, you will be part of an incredible group of people providing pioneering and high-quality services. You'll play a vital role in our life-changing charity and you'll have the opportunity to form special connections and relationships, work in a supportive and flexible environment, and be a part of our highly skilled and motivated team.

Our staff remuneration offer includes:

- Personal learning and development plans
- A generous 30 days leave per annum plus bank holidays and long service increments
- Hybrid working
- Flexible working
- Pension scheme
- Interest free staff loans for:
 - Season tickets
 - Bicycle purchasing
 - Tenancy deposits
 - Nursery deposits
 - Tuition fees
- Tenancy health checks
- Childcare vouchers
- Eye tests
- An employee assistance programme
- Death in service benefits

Job Description

Job title:	Housing Solicitor/Legal Aid Supervisor
Reports to:	Head of Service
Responsible for:	N/A
Contract:	Permanent
Location:	Cambridge House, Unit F, 22 Amelia Street, London, SE17 3PY
Salary:	Up to £45,000 per annum (depending upon experience)
Working hours:	35 (FT) hours per week (Monday to Friday)
Holiday:	30 days per annum pro rata
Special conditions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Enhanced DBS check.- Qualified as a Solicitor or Barrister (England & Wales)- Occasional evening and weekend working to undertake outreach, community education and social policy-related work.- To maintain appropriate qualifications including attending a minimum of 16 hours relevant CPD training per year.- Flexible remote and office working arrangements by agreement

Job Purpose

As a member of Cambridge House's Law Centre Team, led by the Head of Service, this role is responsible :

- i) To provide high quality advice, assistance and representation to users of the Law Centre in the field of housing law.
- ii) To contribute to the development of Cambridge House as a multi-purpose voluntary organisation addressing a range of community needs in flexible and imaginative ways.

Key Duties

1. To deliver specialist housing law services for the Law Centre in compliance with Legal Aid Agency and Lexcel standards, and including advice and casework involving:
 - a) Complex cases which break new ground and/or require representation at the County Court.
 - b) Providing advice and support to other members of the Law Centre Team to deliver an effective and efficient service and improve the quality of support to service users.
 - c) Undertaking outreach, advice and community education policy-related work.
2. Generating income for the Law Centre from housing cases to meet annual financial targets and objectives.
3. To work to financial, time allocation and case targets as required by the Head of Service including effective use of the Legal Aid Agency Cost and Case Management System and prompt billing of files.
4. To maintain administrative and case records in compliance with Law Centre Policies, Procedures and Quality Assurance Manual, external accrediting and funding bodies, and Cambridge House's internal reporting and financial management requirements, including:
 - a) Maintenance of comprehensive, accurate and up to date records, including:

- i) Case records and files
 - ii) Time recording systems
 - iii) Case studies
5. Submission of activity and performance reports as required and in compliance with internal quarterly reporting and funder's requirements.

General Responsibilities

1. To keep abreast of the overall work of Cambridge House.
2. To be self-servicing and competent in the use of IT software.
3. To participate in regular supervisions and an annual appraisal, and to be committed to one's own professional development.
4. To participate in internal/external meetings as required, to attend conferences and other functions, and to contribute to general management decision making as necessary.
5. To comply with all of Cambridge House's corporate policies and procedures.
6. To carry out any other duties commensurate with the role.
7. To work occasional unsociable hours (evenings and weekends).
8. Travel across, and on occasions, outside of London.

This job description is provided as a guide to the role. It is not intended to be an exhaustive description of duties and responsibilities. It will be subject to periodic revision as the emphasis on and ways of working within the role changes.

Person Specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications and training	<p>Qualified as a Solicitor or Barrister (England & Wales), with a current practising certificate and at least 2 years' post qualification experience in housing law.</p> <p>NB: whilst we are looking for somebody who qualifies as a Housing Legal Aid Supervisor, we will consider someone who would meet the Supervisor Standard within a period acceptable to the Legal Aid Agency and Cambridge House, with external supervision provided</p>	Training in additional areas of law.
Knowledge and experience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2-4 years' experience in providing legal advice in housing law and casework. Experience of possession proceedings, homelessness matters and disrepair casework. Demonstrable experience of working to the LEXCEL quality standard mark. Sound general knowledge of the law and ability to develop other areas of the law/legal expertise. Excellent working knowledge and comprehension of written English, including grammar, copy writing and editing. Proficiency in use of Microsoft Office including Excel and Word. Experience of successfully completing tasks in a fast-paced environment and to deadlines. Experience of working pro-actively and with minimal instruction. Experience of working with confidential data. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Experience of recovering Legal Aid Agency costs and inter-parties costs. Experience of fulfilling the Legal Aid Agency contract supervisory requirements. Working in a small team. Working in a charity/not for profit organisation
Skills, abilities, and competencies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to react appropriately to short and long-term issues and to be decisive. Ability to prioritise conflicting tasks and manage a challenging workload. Confident and adept communicator with strong interpersonal and presentation skills. Ability to work flexible hours, including evenings and weekends. Ability to undertake and deliver training. Being self-servicing and able to use ICT programmes. To keep up to date with legal and social policy developments and changes in housing law. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Proficiency in other languages
Personal Attributes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Honesty, reliability, and excellent timekeeping. Loyalty and a commitment to Cambridge House's work. Positive, enthusiastic, and friendly attitude. Problem solving and 'can-do' approach. Listening skills. Flexible, motivated, and adaptable to change. Discretion. Customer-focused. Inclusive team-player. 	

How to Apply

1. Please provide:
 - a) An evidenced-focused **Supporting Statement** of no more than two sides of A4 explaining why this appointment interests you and how you meet the essential criteria in the person specification.
 - b) Your **Curriculum Vitae** with your:
 - i) Full address, email, mobile, work and home telephone numbers.
 - ii) Education and professional qualifications.
 - iii) Full employment history and details of your latest salary and your notice period.
 - c) The names, positions, organisations, and contact details of **two referees**. These referees must include employers and/or academic supervisors covering the last five years. References will only be taken once your express permission has been granted.
2. A completed **Diversity Monitoring Form**

The form will not be treated as part of your application and the information you provide will be treated as confidential and used for statistical purposes only.
3. A completed **Criminal Records Declaration Form**

The post you are applying for is exempt from the provision of Section 4(2) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) (Amendment) Orders 1975 and 2001 and therefore all convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as 'spent', must be declared on Cambridge House's Criminal Record Declaration Form and submitted with your application.
4. As a Disability Confident employer, we will generally offer an interview to any applicant that declares they have a disability and meets the minimum criteria for the job as defined by the person specification. If you have a disability or long-term condition (such as dyslexia, diabetes, arthritis, a heart condition or mental health condition) and want to apply under the Disability Confident Scheme please let us know in the email to which you attach your CV, supporting statement and Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form. If you are invited to interview and require adjustments, don't worry, we will ask you about this within your invitation to interview.

Recruitment Timetable	
Closing Date for applications	23:59 hours on Sunday 9th June 2024
Interviews	Week commencing 17th June 2024
The interview dates may change but we will advise you in advance.	
Successful applicants will be asked to take up their appointments as soon as possible.	

Please email completed applications by midnight on 9th June 2024 to: recruitment@ch1889.org

All applications MUST include the following:

1. Supporting Statement
2. CV
3. Contact details of 2 professional and/or academic referees
4. Diversity Monitoring Form
5. Criminal Records Declaration Form

If you do not hear from us within 14 days of the closing date, please assume your application has been unsuccessful on this occasion. **Please note that we only provide feedback to shortlisted candidates.**