**Information pack for perspective employees**

**Post**: Housing Caseworker

**Hours:** Full time – 35 hours per week

**Closing date**: Monday 15th November 2021 at 9:30am

**Interview date:** Week commencing 22 November 2021

**Interview method**: via Zoom



**Contents**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 2. | Summary of the post |
| 5. | Job Description |
| 8. | Person Specification |
| 9. | Promoting Equality and Valuing Diversity Statement |
| 10. | Guidance Sheet |
|  |  |
|  |  |

e



**Housing Caseworker**

**Starting salary** – £25,481

**Salary scale** – SCP 19 to 28 (£25,481 to £32,234)

**Contract** – Full time - 35 hours

**Duration:** Fixed term – 2 years from start date

**Job share** – Suitable for job share

Do you fancy working for a forward thinking and proactive advice charity? Derbyshire Law Centre is a thriving charity based in Chesterfield, Derbyshire specialising in social welfare law.

**The role**

Due to new project funding, a vacancy has arisen for a experienced housing caseworker to join the active and experienced team at Derbyshire Law Centre. We are looking for someone who can preferably start immediately and the post will be for a fixed-term period, 2 years from start date.

The post will consist of 2 different roles. Part of the role will be working in conjunction with funding local authorities to work on disrepair cases. The postholder will work to encourage local authority tenants to report repairs through the Law centre and make any relevant damages claims through the Law centre. There will be development work publicising the legal advice that we can offer to tenants and taking on disrepair claims against landlords including injunctions and claims for damages. The other part of the role will be working on a new project funded by The Lloyds Bank Foundation to support residents in the Bolsover district who are experiencing homelessness and housing difficulties.

Applicants should have experience of supervised case work, ideally with a focus on disrepair. They should be able to run their own caseload.

The postholder will be a member of the Collective Management Team and undertake shared duties in the overall management of the Law Centre.

**Location of post**

The post will be based in our Chesterfield office with a day working in Bolsover or when required.

**Required Education, Skills and Qualifications**

Applicants should have experience of giving advice across a variety of platforms and will preferably have experience of housing casework. An up to date knowledge of the impact Coronavirus has had on housing law would be advantageous.

**Organisation**

Derbyshire Law Centre is a registered not-for-profit legal charity. The Law Centre has been in existence since 1989 and enjoys support from public and voluntary sectors and communities across Derbyshire. Its primary aim is to provide free specialist legal services in areas of social welfare law to individuals and families on low incomes, including debt, discrimination, housing, employment and immigration.

Derbyshire Law Centre is a Disability Confident employer.

Derbyshire Law Centre strives to be an equal opportunity employer. Applicants from BAME and LGBTQ+ communities are particularly encouraged to apply as those groups are currently under-represented in our work force.

**Benefits**

* 31 days' annual leave, plus bank holidays (pro rata)
* Flexible working arrangements
* Pension Contribution 8%

**Covid 19 information**

Derbyshire Law Centre is reviewing its working patterns and envisages a hybrid approach, with a mix of home and office working. Staff will be expected to spend at least part of the working week in the office.

All offices and interview rooms are Covid 19 secure. Full PPE is available to all staff, volunteers and clients.

If you require any further information, please contact Nikki Tugby on 01246 550674.

**DERBYSHIRE LAW CENTRE**



JOB DESCRIPTION

**TITLE OF POST** : Housing caseworker (full time)

**SALARY: £25, 481** (depending on experience)

**Salary scale** – SCP 19 to 28 (£25,481 to £32,234)

**Contract** – Full Time (35 hours)

**Duration:** Fixed term – for 2 years from start date

**Job share:** Suitable

**MAIN PURPOSE OF JOB**

The post holder(s) will provide legal advice, information and representation to individuals and groups across the catchment area of the Law Centre. The work will be at a level suited to the post holder(s)'s particular abilities, experience and knowledge. The post holder(s) will specialise in agreed area(s) of law. However, in line with the other team members, the post holder will be flexible and prepared to take on work in other areas of law should the need arise. In addition, the post holder(s) will be part of the workers group collective at the Law Centre and undertake shared duties in the overall running of the Law Centre.

Due to new project funding, a vacancy has arisen for a experienced housing caseworker to join the active and experienced team at Derbyshire Law Centre. We are looking for someone who can preferably start immediately and the post will be for a fixed-term period, 2 years from start date.

The post will consist of 2 different roles. Part of the role will be working in conjunction with funding local authorities to work on disrepair cases. The postholder will work to encourage local authority tenants to report repairs through the Law centre and make any relevant damages claims through the Law centre. There will be development work publicising the legal advice that we can offer to tenants and taking on disrepair claims against landlords including injunctions and claims for damages. The other part of the role will be working on a new project funded by The Lloyds Bank Foundation to support residents in the Bolsover district who are experiencing homelessness and housing difficulties.

Applicants should have experience of supervised case work, ideally with a focus on disrepair. They should be able to run their own caseload

**LOCATION OF THE POST**

The post holder(s) will be based at the main premises in Chesterfield or at any other Law Centre premises within the catchment area.

As the role is part funded by the following local authorities: Chesterfield Borough Council, Bolsover District Council and North East Derbyshire District Council and part funded by The Lloyds Bank Foundation there will be a requirement to work in Bolsover.

**RESPONSIBLE FOR :**

The post holder will not be responsible for any paid staff. However, as part of the collective, they will be responsible for the supervision / support of other staff including volunteers, as directed by the Law Centre's workers group.

**RESPONSIBLE TO :**

The post holder will be a member of the Law Centre's workers group, working as a collective with responsibility for the day-to-day management of the Law Centre. The workers group is responsible to the management committee of the Law Centre.

The post holder will be working under the supervision of an area of law supervisor in the Housing Unit.

**MAIN DUTIES OF THE POST:**

In conjunction with the Law Centre’s other advisers and solicitors,

1. To provide initial legal advice by telephone, in writing, virtually and in personon a wide range of legal issues as required.
2. To provide specialist legal services in agreed areas of law including interviewing and advising clients, researching the law, advocacy and negotiation, and representation in specified areas of law.
3. To participate in specialist area of law units including planning work around that area of law, accepting supervision of casework and undertaking training as agreed.

In addition,

1. To undertake post holder's own administration including maintaining adequate case records, dealing with legal help issues and word processing.
2. To undertake data collection and monitoring in conjunction with the Housing Unit at Derbyshire Law Centre and partner organisations.
3. To supervise, train and support volunteers as appropriate
4. To provide talks and training to groups as appropriate.
5. To attend and participate in meetings including workers group, management committee and other relevant events.
6. As part of the workers group, to contribute to and be responsible for the day to day management of the Law Centre.
7. To undertake any other duties as agreed between the post holder and workers group or management committee, in consultation with the relevant trade union where necessary.

**PERSONNEL SPECIFICATION**



**TITLE OF POST: Housing Caseworker**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Factor** | **Essential** | **Desirable** | **How identified** |
| **Qualifications/**  **Education/**  **Training** | * legal training / core training in advice work | * qualified solicitor * Chartered Fellow of Institute of Legal Executives | * application form |
| **Experience of** | * recent work experience of advising on issues relating to social welfare law * Substantial experience of either housing casework or civil litigation (other than housing) * negotiation and court representation * using legal aid system (legal help and legal representation) * recent experience of CCMS online legal aid * running a disrepair claim against social and private landlords. Good knowledge of the disrepair protocol | * support and supervision of staff * of working with volunteers * giving initial legal advice on a wide range of subjects * has or could achieve area of law supervisor status in housing | * application form / interview |
| **Disposition and attitudes** | * be prepared to operate under a Legal Aid contract * be prepared to be flexible about work areas * commitment to equal opportunities and anti-oppressive practice. * self motivated. * commitment to and understanding of LawCentre's aims. * flexible in approach to work. * reliable. * honest. * able to maintain confidentiality. * demonstrable interest in housing law | * commitment to working with volunteers | * application form / interview * reference * reference * reference |
| **Skills/**  **knowledge/**  **aptitudes** | * ability to manage a varied and challenging housing and/or civil litigation caseload * ability to work with and advise the public by phone, in person and in writing. * ability to analyse problems and advise on a range of solutions in specialist areas of law. * Ability to present legal issues in a clear and easily understandable way * ability to organise and undertake   own administration.   * ability to work as part of team. * ability to organise a caseload | * computer / word processing skills**.** * understanding of issues affecting not for profit agencies | * application form / interview / exercise |
| **Special requirements** | * prepared to work some unsocial hours * able to drive or organise own transport around the catchment area |  | * application form |



**Derbyshire Law Centre**

**Promoting Equality and Valuing Diversity statement**

**Statement of Intent**

Derbyshire Law Centre is committed to achieving social justice and equality through providing free legal services to groups and individuals who, through reasons of disadvantage, have the least access to the law.

The Law Centre is committed to promoting equality and diversity in all areas of its operations:

* Promoting equality of opportunity
* Eliminating discrimination
* Eliminating harassment
* Promoting good community relations / positive attitudes
* Encourage participation
* Favourable treatment / positive action for those from under represented or

disadvantaged groups

* Increasing community awareness of equality, diversity and discrimination

issues.

Derbyshire Law Centre recognises that in this society groups and individuals have been and continue to be oppressed and discriminated against on the grounds of, for example, their:

* Age,
* Association with a person who possess a protected characteristic,
* Caring responsibilities,
* Disability,
* Gender reassignment,
* Race (including nationality, colour, ethnic or national origins),
* Religion or belief (including those that are non-religious),
* Sex (including marital status, pregnancy, maternity and paternity),
* Sexual orientation (including civil partnership status),
* Socio-economic status (class),
* Offending background.

This statement applies to all aspects Derbyshire Law Centre’s operations: membership of the organization, Management Committee, employment policy and practice, service delivery and working with contractors and suppliers.

##### DBS_LC_CMYK (2)

##### GUIDANCE SHEET

Please read through the following guidelines that will help you complete the application form.

* Complete all sections of the form.
* Make sure the form is tidy and try to avoid mistakes by writing out a version first to make sure you are happy with the information you are providing. Always read through your final version before you send it.

If you require an acknowledgement of your application:

* If emailing you must activate a read receipt from your email account.
* If sending by post you must enclose a stamped addressed envelope.
* Please note with limited resources, we cannot verify if we have received your application over the phone.
* Please note with limited resources, only successful applicants will be contacted.

To complete your application:

* Please type or write clearly in black ink.
* Ensure you clearly state the job title you are applying for.
* In the ‘Employment History’ section you must state why you have left a position.
* Always explain any gaps in work history.
* Proof of qualifications and membership to professional bodies may be required.
* If extra space is required please use a separate sheet of paper, clearly stating your name.

**References**

We will take up professional references once you have been interviewed and **provisionally** offered the post. Please make sure that you have given the full contact details of your referees so that this does not delay processing reference requests.

If you have no employer references, we will take up references with named individuals at colleges where you have studied, or people who know you in a professional capacity. Please do not put down family members or people you live with as referees.

You will only be confirmed in the post once we are satisfied with the information received from your referees.

###### **Supporting Statement**

The 'Why you feel you are suitable for this position' part of the form is called your *supporting statement*. It is the most important part of the application form.

You should consider the following:

* Applications can only be assessed on the information you provide. You need to clearly demonstrate your capabilities.
* You need to explain how you meet each of the person specification points and provide examples from your previous experience. Do not forget to present this in relation to the job description.
* Often the strongest applications are those that link the three elements highlighted above and are presented in a clear format (e.g. numbered points that correspond to person specification).
* We expect your supporting statement to be a minimum of ¾ of a side of A4 and a maximum of 2 sides.
* Use concise, unambiguous sentences and avoid exaggerations.
* Honesty is always the best policy; please do not make false claims.
* If you are making a career change, stress what skills are transferable to the role you are applying for.
* Ensure you return your application in good time before the closing date - aim for the day before the deadline.
* CV’s are not accepted.

Finally good luck with your application and thank you for your interest in Chesterfield Law Centre.

**Disability**

Please let us know if you require any adjustments to be made to the application process, including the interview. We will be supportive in our discussions regarding any adjustments required throughout the recruitment process.

**Entitlement to work in the UK**

If successful, the post is offered based on you having the right to work in the UK in line with Home Office Guidance and the law relating to the “prevention of illegal working” we are required to have evidence of your right to work in the UK.

**Criminal Convictions**

Derbyshire Law Centre is committed to the fair treatment of its staff and potential staff regardless of race, gender, religion. Sexual orientation, disability or offending background.

Having a criminal conviction will not automatically exclude you from the post, much will depend on the type of role you are applying for, the conviction and the circumstances surrounding the conviction.