Job Description and Person Specification

Solicitor (with Legal Aid)

Citizens Advice Sheffield is Sheffield's leading provider of advice and advocacy services. Every year we help over 20,000 people in Sheffield. Our services are free, confidential, independent and impartial.

We work with our partners, ranging from large public sector bodies to smaller community organisations, to support our clients with the problems they face, while campaigning to improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives.

We provide a wide variety of advice and advocacy services through digital means, by telephone and in person and we strive to be responsive and adaptable in order to meet the changing needs of the communities we serve.

We work in a fast-changing and often challenging environment but together we make a big difference.

Job Description

The Role

Solicitor specialising in a specific area of social welfare law, providing high-quality legal advice and representation. Managing their own caseload and providing comprehensive legal services under our Legal Aid contract. The solicitor is also responsible for managing a team of advisors within their specific specialist area of law and the monitoring of the quality of their work through both local and national Citizens Advice standards and the external ones set by the Legal Aid Agency.

An important aspect of this role is to communicate effectively with other client-facing staff members to offer support, advice and guidance when dealing

with clients presenting with queries relating to their specialist area.

Duties and Responsibilities

Solicitors at CAS are Team Managers and part of the wider management team. They are required to:

- Deliver services in accordance with our service delivery strategy and operational plans, including telephone, digital and pre-booked appointment services
- Meet the needs of all clients, wherever possible empowering clients to improve their confidence and capability, and supporting them to develop and implement action plans to meet their needs

In addition Solicitors are expected to:

- Provide expert legal advice, casework assistance, and representation to clients in your specialist area (eg Housing, Employment, or Immigration Law).
- Manage a varied caseload, including conducting initial interviews, undertaking legal research, drafting legal documents, negotiating settlements, and representing clients in court or tribunals.
- Conduct thorough case analysis and develop effective legal strategies.
- Maintain accurate and up-to-date case files in accordance with Legal Aid Agency requirements and internal procedures.
- Comply with all relevant Law Society and Legal Aid Agency regulations, standards, and quality requirements. Including but not limited to ensuring preparation, record keeping and service delivery for SQM (Service Quality Mark) and all other required audits.
- Ensuring that accurate and securely stored records are maintained for the required period and are available for timely legal aid billing requirements.
- Contribute to the development of legal resources and training materials for staff and volunteers.
- Participate in internal and external meetings and networking events as required.
- Work collaboratively with other team members, including caseworkers, volunteers, and administrative staff, to provide a holistic service to clients.
- Contribute to the organisation's aims and objectives, including promoting access to justice and raising awareness of social welfare issues.
- Undertake continuous professional development to maintain and enhance legal knowledge and skills.

Staff supervision, support and development

Like all team managers, Solicitors are required to:

- Contribute to creating and supporting a positive culture in which all paid staff and volunteers are supported and valued
- Contribute to engaging paid staff and volunteers in good team work, planning and delivering services, and in campaigning
- Supervise paid staff and volunteers in accordance with our policies and procedures
- Provide advice, guidance and support to and supervise paid staff and volunteers in relation to any aspect of service delivery
- Support volunteer recruitment, training, development and retention
- Support the design and delivery of training

Campaigning and social policy development

Solicitors may also:

- Support research and other activity to identify priorities for campaigns and social policy development, and the evidence to support such campaigns
- Support the design and implementation of campaigns locally
- Assist with our contribution to regional and national campaigns, and with acting upon these campaigns locally

Service strategy, planning and development

Solicitors will:

- Support and advise the leadership team to develop and implement service delivery strategies and plans

Professional learning and development

Solicitors, like all team managers are all required to undertake learning and development including:

- Keeping up to date with legislation
- Keeping up to date with policies and procedures
- Attending internal and external training
- Obtaining and maintaining accreditation for specialist practice

Reporting to: Service Manager

Responsible for: a team of paid advisers/ advice workers and volunteers

Person specification

The Solicitor (with legal aid) will demonstrate the following competencies:

- **Deep Knowledge of Relevant Law:** A thorough understanding of the specific areas of law covered by the legal aid contract (e.g., housing, welfare benefits, immigration, family law). This includes legislation, case law, and procedural rules.
- **Casework Management Proficiency:** Excellent ability to manage a complex caseload efficiently and effectively, adhering to legal aid regulations, deadlines, and quality standards. This includes conducting client interviews, undertaking legal research, drafting documents, and representing clients in relevant forums.
- **Legal Analysis and Problem-Solving:** Strong analytical skills to assess complex legal issues, identify relevant facts, and develop sound legal strategies.
- **Risk Management and Compliance:** Understanding and adherence to professional conduct rules, legal aid guidelines, and the policies and procedures of both Citizens Advice and the law centre.
- **Commitment to Access to Justice:** A genuine passion for and understanding of the principles of access to justice and a commitment to serving vulnerable individuals.

Line Management & Leadership:

- **Supervisory Skills:** Ability to effectively supervise and support a team of legal caseworkers, staff members, or volunteers. This includes delegating tasks, monitoring performance, providing constructive feedback, and conducting PDR's and supervisions.
- **Performance Management:** Ability to set clear objectives, monitor progress, and address performance issues in a fair and consistent manner.
- **Coaching and Mentoring:** Skilled in developing the skills and knowledge of

team members through coaching, mentoring, and identifying training needs.
- **Team Building and Motivation:** Ability to foster a positive and collaborative team environment, promote teamwork, and motivate individuals to achieve their best.
- **Communication and Interpersonal Skills:** Excellent written and verbal communication skills to effectively interact with team members, senior management, clients, and external stakeholders. This includes active listening, clear articulation, and the ability to adapt communication style to different audiences.
- **Organisational and Time Management Skills:** Strong ability to organise workload, prioritise tasks for themselves and their team, and meet deadlines in a demanding environment.
- **Delegation Skills:** Ability to effectively delegate tasks to team members, empowering them and ensuring efficient workload distribution.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Ability to mediate and resolve conflicts within the team or with other stakeholders in a constructive and professional manner.

Organisational Awareness & Collaboration:

- **Understanding of Citizens Advice and Law Centre Ethos:** Appreciation for the distinct yet complementary missions and values of both Citizens Advice and the law centre model, including their commitment to holistic advice and advocacy.
- **Collaboration and Partnership Working:** Ability to work effectively with other teams within both organizations, including advice workers, administrators, and managers. This also includes potential collaboration with external agencies and partners.
- **Adaptability and Flexibility:** Ability to navigate the different operational structures and reporting lines that may exist within a joint organization.
- **Understanding of the Legal Aid Landscape:** Awareness of the challenges and opportunities within the legal aid sector, including funding constraints and policy changes.
- **Commitment to Continuous Improvement:** A proactive approach to identifying areas for improvement within their team and the wider organization.

Personal Attributes:

- **Integrity and Professionalism:** Maintaining high ethical standards and demonstrating professionalism in all aspects of their work.
- **Empathy and Client Focus:** Understanding and responding to the needs and vulnerabilities of clients accessing legal aid services.
- **Resilience:** Ability to cope with the emotional demands of legal aid work and manage pressure effectively.
- **Problem-Solving and Initiative:** Ability to identify and proactively address challenges and find creative solutions.

- **Commitment to Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion:** Ensuring fair and equitable access to services and promoting an inclusive work environment.