

JOB DESCRIPTION

POST:	Legal Costs Draftsperson / Costs Lawyer
Salary:	£24,000 to £36,000 per annum (pro rata) depending on experience (£110 – £163 per day inclusive of VAT based on 220 days per year if freelance)
Term:	One-year fixed term (initially, becoming permanent if the post self-sustains with increased billing)
Hours:	Flexible, depending on availability
Employment Status	Freelance or Permanent employed
Based at:	London

Context of the Post

To develop systems to improve the efficiency of costing and billing of legal aid files and to provide an essential coordination role within the organization to support lawyers in ensuring files are billed promptly and accurately and costs are maximized.

Duties and Responsibilities

Billing Support

- To assist with the development of an efficient system to progress billing legal aid files
- To define and harmonise how fee earners report matters, including on CCMS
- To maintain accurate records tracking the status of files that are in the billing process and to provide regular updates to fee earners and managers
- To assist fee earners in the preparation of files for billing, providing guidance and support where necessary

Billing

- Prepare and check simple bills on CCMS
- To commission and instruct external costs draftspersons to prepare more complex bills and track their progress, whilst maintaining excellent working relationships with suppliers.
- Check bills thoroughly when they are returned by external costs draftsperson and obtain prompt sign off from the relevant fee earner.

- Deal with any points in dispute in conjunction with the relevant fee earner.
- Submit relevant bills for assessment by the court and track the bills through the assessment process
- Submit final bills to the LAA
- Keep track of settled bills and private fee paying work
- Liaise with the relevant caseworker and finance staff to ensure that all final bills are settled and that the client account is properly reconciled.

Monitoring, reporting,

- Provide managers and supervisors with monthly billing and time reporting performance data, as required.
- Provide the managers and supervisors at least quarterly interrogated work in progress spreadsheets and look for inactive matters.
- Monitor and keep track of all LAA rejects and claims for uplifts – monitor the KPI data from the LAA
- In appropriate cases liaise with the relevant caseworker to draft and submit appeals against LAA rejects and to prepare matters for resubmission
- Deliver costs updates and training to caseworkers on changes and matters that come to light within the monitoring process. Promote and disseminate areas of good practice to improve billing performance. Liaise with external cost draftspersons to provide further training (once backlog cleared)

Documentation

- Draft and maintain a Billing and Costing guide that can be used to cover common issues and processes within the organisation and to be of assistance to other not for profit legal advice agencies.

Outreach

- Liaise and assist the LLST and other legal advice organisations to develop sustainable billing coordination for the sector.

Personal and professional development

- To collate and exchange examples of good practice to share with partner organisations to promote best practice.
- To attend courses on billing and costing, specialist skills and the use of information technology
- To participate in project review meetings as required
- To actively participate in supervision and appraisal and team activities to promote high standards and continuous development.
- Liaise and help support any reference group that is set up to support this project

Equal opportunities

- To support and adhere to the organisation's equal opportunities policy and to always act in an ethical manner that upholds the good reputation of the organization.

Other

- To attend staff meetings as required.
- To undertake other duties which are generally compatible with the functions of the post.
- To comply with the organisation's policies and procedures, particularly those relating to safeguarding, health and safety, confidentiality and security, as set out in the Office Manual as well the policies of other relevant partner organisations.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

POST: **Freelance / In-house Costs Lawyer / Billing Co-ordinator**

Essential to the role

- Experience of working within a legal aid practice
- Understanding of court procedures and costs rules
- Understanding of the legal aid costs rules and billing procedures
- Experience of drafting and coordinating legal costs claims and, in particular, legal aid bills
- Knowledge of the legal aid online and CCMS systems
- High degree of accuracy and checking in any work that is carried out
- Good IT skills and, in particular, confident with Microsoft Office and databases including case management systems
- Excellent organisational skills, including maintaining paper and electronic filing systems
- Ability to communicate clearly in writing, in person and on the telephone
- Ability to work well as part of a team and form effective working relationships with others
- Ability to work well under pressure and prioritise effectively when there are competing demands on time
- Ability to work on your own initiative
- Ability to maintain confidentiality
- Willingness to travel to the different locations of the project and work with the different partners
- Willingness to travel within London

Highly Desirable for the role

- GCSE or equivalent at Grade C or above in English and Mathematics
- Ability to hold your own with other professionals
- Understanding of the legal aid costs rules and billing procedures
- Experience of supervising volunteers in basic office procedures