

Job Description

Employment Solicitor

Work Rights Centre is a registered charity dedicated to ending in-work poverty by helping workers exit poorly paid, unprotected, and insecure employment. Every day advisers at our Employment Rights and Employability Clinics help vulnerable people access their work rights, and support them in improving their professional mobility. Founded in 2016, we have helped over 3,000 individuals to recover unpaid wages, challenge unfair dismissals, and find more secure employment.

About our Employment Rights and Employability clinics

Employment rights casework constitutes the core activity of the Work Rights Centre. Two teams of advisers operate in London and Manchester for five days and, respectively, two days a week. Common enquiries include assisting service users with recovering unpaid wages or fees, challenging unfair dismissals, or combatting workplace discrimination. We value depth and strive to support our beneficiaries through every stage of the employment justice process. We also recognise that many of them experience complex issues. This is why, with help from a dedicated team of volunteers, our advisers also assist service users in accessing welfare in times of crisis, improving their professional mobility with CV and career development advice, and understanding their entitlements as migrant workers. Most service users are EEA migrants and ethnic minority Britons who work at the low-paid end of the labour market. Consequently, we employ a diverse, multilingual team, who can relate to their lived experience, and embody the charity's values of justice, mobility, and inclusivity.

Responsibilities

There are two main responsibilities in this position: supervising the work of employment rights advisers who are not legally qualified, and managing your own caseload. Additionally, we are looking for a team player who will contribute to the wider development of the organisation.

1. Supervising employment rights casework across the clinic

Our clinic team includes three full time and three part time advisers. They are well trained and experienced, and have recovered over £113,000 in unpaid wages and fees to date, but none of them hold a legal qualification. We are looking for a legally qualified colleague to supervise the more complex aspects of their casework, and improve our service overall. In practice, this includes things like:

- Advising on case strategy – such as when to opt for mediation, litigation, or case closure.
- Reviewing case-specific documentation for ongoing cases.
- Reviewing case files for closed cases – to identify areas for improvement.
- Working with the team to improve overall practice – by providing and recommending training, and/or internal policy updates.

2. Taking on Employment rights casework

We are also looking for a team member who will confidently manage their own caseload, advocate on behalf of and represent Work Rights Centre clients before tribunals and other courts, instructing and working with counsel in cases in the higher courts, as required. In summary, we expect that for each client you will take several steps.

- A. A standardised assessment of the client's eligibility and needs, including work conditions, financial need and literacy, as well as equalities data.
- B. Ensuring that the client signs all necessary consent-forms.
- C. Logging case data in the charity's bespoke case management system, and ensuring files are stored in a secure drive.
- D. Taking the action suitable for the client needs identified.
- E. Following up after the consultation to determine whether the needs identified have been met.

You will also ensure compliance with the Solicitors Regulation Authority and the Advice Quality Standard, and keep records accordingly.

3. Development

Most of your work will focus on conducting and supervising casework. But there will be occasions to develop the organisation more broadly. This will include meeting key stakeholders (such as other third sector organisations involved in the fight for employment justice), and holding information sessions. Development work is all about cultivating good relationships and learning from other stakeholders. We count on you to represent the Work Rights Centre, and uphold our dedication to providing an excellent service.

We also count on you to be a team player, and support the organisation when and as required. This may include tasks such as:

- Preparing public legal information in the area of employment law (including text for infographics, how-to guides and FAQs to be displayed on the charity's website);
- Identifying law, policy and practice issues arising in the area of employment law, and suggesting appropriate responses;
- Contributing to and participating in media interviews.

Person specifications

It is essential that you possess the legal qualification and professional experience to manage complex cases in a professional, timely fashion. In practice, we are looking for a colleague who can demonstrate the following.

- Qualified solicitor eligible to practice employment law in England, regulated by the SRA, with at least 4 years PQE in employment law (essential).
- A record of supervising others' casework (essential).
- Excellent case management skills, demonstrating an ability to quickly gather case facts, draft good case summaries, plan actions proportionate to the needs of each case, and meet milestones (essential).
- Excellent client management skills, including courtesy, professionalism, an ability to set realistic expectations and keep the client informed of case progress (essential).

- Excellent self-management skills, demonstrating an ability to deliver on different strands of work, prioritise tasks, delegate when necessary, and deliver in a timely fashion (essential).
- Excellent written and oral communication skills (essential).
- Good IT skills, including an ability to work in Word and Excel to a high standard, and conduct casework remotely (essential).
- Experience in working with vulnerable adults (desired).
- Familiarity with Modern Day Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism (desired).
- Familiarity with immigration law and the intersections of employment and immigration (desired).
- Knowledge of a language other than English (desired).
- Passion for, and commitment to, our charitable mission (essential).

Fundamentally, even if you are not sure whether you have all the experience, if you have the legal qualification, share our passion for employment justice, and trust your ability to make a positive contribution to our team, we encourage you to express interest. This job comes with a steep learning curve, but you will be trained, guided, and made to feel like a part of the organisation. We can also discuss flexible work arrangements.

Pay, schedule and duration

Schedule. The position is for 22.5h (3 days) a week, starting December 2021/January 2022.

Location. The place of work is flexible. We have the systems to accommodate remote casework and communication with the team, and can accommodate a fully remote position for an exceptional candidate. However, we encourage presence at our London Office for a minimum of one day a week, to facilitate work with vulnerable clients. The office is equipped with screens and PPE, and the team is committed to providing a safe and stimulating working environment. Occasionally, development activities may take place across London in areas with well-established migrant communities.

Pay. The gross salary for this position is £36,000/year pro rata.

Training. We are committed to supporting staff in accessing the training they need to ensure their CPD.

Duration. This position is funded for a period of 12 months. The Work Rights Centre has every intention to continue supporting it, and will seek to extend this, subject to funding.

Line manager

The line manager for this position is Dr. Dora-Olivia Vicol, Charity Director.

How to apply

Please send your CV and Cover Letter to olivia.vicol@workrightscentre.org by Tuesday, 30th November.