



## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

**JOB TITLE:** Legal Advisor

**SALARY:** £28, 401 - £32, 094 p.a. (inc. ILW)

**LINE MANAGED BY:** Head of Legal Services

### **OVERVIEW:**

This is a full time position (35 hours per week). The post holder will be based at the Release offices but will be required to attend 2-3 drug treatment centres per week to provide legal services to clients of the centre. The service delivered at the centres is a legal advice, assistance and representation provision with particular focus on welfare benefits, housing and debt matters. The post holder will also be required to provide advice on Release's national legal helpline; this usually entails providing advice on issues pertaining to the criminal law and criminal justice system. Further to the delivery of legal services the post holder will also be required to assist the Head of Legal Services and the Executive Director on policy work undertaken by the organisation. The office hours are 10am – 6pm Monday to Friday.

### **MAIN OBJECTIVES:**

- To deliver high quality legal services to clients of drug treatment centres in the London area.
- To provide advice, casework and representation in the category of welfare benefits, housing and debt.
- To provide legal advice on the national helpline to those impacted upon by the drug laws or have legal problems due to their drug use.

### **Delivery of legal services**

- 1 To provide legal advice and assistance on a wide range of welfare benefit matters, housing law and debt. This will include dealing with cessation of benefits; benefit appeals; overpayments; backdated claims; homelessness applications; rent arrears; debts with creditors including commercial debts/ court fines/ overpayments.
- 2 To provide representation at Social Security Tribunals.
- 3 Undertake casework where appropriate to do so and refer to solicitor firms where necessary.
- 4 To provide advice on legal matters as they relate to drugs, via the national helpline.
- 5 To keep up-to-date with changes in relevant areas of law through own research and attending training.

- 6 To provide legal advice on the national helpline as and when required.
- 7 To engage in project work, training, publicity and information work as required.
- 8 To undertake your own typing, filing and word processing.
- 9 To undertake regular reviews of all new and ongoing clients.

### **Volunteer Programme**

- 10 To assist the Head of Legal Services in recruiting volunteers to the legal volunteer programme.
- 11 Provide supervision and training to legal volunteers.

### **Policy Work**

- 12 To assist the Head of Legal Services and the Executive Director in setting and developing both operational and strategic policies.
- 13 Provide commentary on legal developments within the context of drug legislation and policies.
- 14 Feed into public consultations which impacts on drug policy and/or people who use drugs.

### **General**

- 15 To work effectively, co-operatively and in a supportive manner with colleagues at Release and other organisations with which it works.
- 16 To keep accurate and up to date records and ensure that all communications, written and oral, are of a professional standard. To creatively use telephone, email and website for communicating legal advice and information.
- 17 Represent the organisation in a positive and professional manner.
- 18 To undertake any other duties as may be reasonably required by senior management at Release.

## Person Specification:

Successful shortlisted candidates will meet the following criteria. The selection panel will assess each applicant against these criteria. The primary method(s) of assessment are indicated after each criteria as follow:

- (C) - Curriculum Vitae and Covering Letter;
- (I) - Interview;
- (E) - Essential;
- (D) - Desirable

Experience, Skills and Knowledge required			Essential or Desirable	Assessed
Experience	1.	Educated to graduate level or equivalent and holding BVC or LPC	E	C
	2.	Knowledge and understanding of either criminal law (and relevant aspects of civil and human rights law) or welfare benefits, debt and housing	E	C I
	3.	Willingness to train in other areas of laws, beyond current experience	E	C
	4.	Experience of delivering legal advice to clients in a professional setting	E	C I
	5.	Experience in civil and human rights work	D	C I
	6.	Experience in the writing and development of targeted literature aimed at both clients and other professionals	D	C I
Skills & Abilities	7.	Good organisational skills and the ability to plan, prioritise and time manage work	E	C
	8.	Excellent communication skills, both written and oral	E	C I
	9.	Ability to work both in a team and independently	E	C I
	10.	Good computer literacy	E	C
Knowledge & Understanding	11.	Committed to safeguarding and promoting the civil and human rights of drug users and other marginalised groups in society.	E	I
	12.	An understanding of current drug laws & policy	D	C I
	13.	An understanding of vulnerable marginalised groups	E	I
	14.	An understanding and commitment to equal opportunities in both the workplace and in service delivery.	E	I
	15.	Ability to stay calm under pressure and maintain a sense of humour	E	I