

Southwark Law Centre

Job Description

Job Title: Public Law Supervising Solicitor

Salary: NJC scale SP29 – 33, £44,235 - £47,925 (pro rata if part time, starting salary dependent on experience)

Hours: Full time (35 hours per week). Applications for 28 hours per week will also be considered.

MAIN OBJECTIVES:

- To provide high-quality specialist advice, casework and representation in public law, including judicial review.
- To act as a Legal Aid Agency supervisor for the Public Law category and ensure that public law work meets applicable Legal Aid Agency, professional and organisational standards.
- To supervise and support public law casework undertaken across the Law Centre's practice areas.
- To contribute to the development, quality and sustainability of the Law Centre's public law practice.
- To provide training and second-tier support to Law Centre staff, community organisations and other advice agencies.
- In the first year of the post, to act as maternity cover for the existing public law supervisor.

PRINCIPAL TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Advice, Casework and Representation

- To manage a complex caseload covering a range of public law matters, including judicial review.
- To interview and advise clients face-to-face, by telephone, video call and email.
- To undertake legal research and prepare correspondence, representations, submissions and court documents.
- To identify, assess and pursue potential judicial review and other public law challenges.
- To represent and advocate for clients in dealings with public bodies and other relevant agencies.
- To conduct litigation and work effectively with counsel and other legal professionals where appropriate.
- To maintain up-to-date knowledge of relevant legislation, case law, procedure and developments in public law.
- To supervise public law casework undertaken across the Law Centre's practice areas, providing advice and guidance on case strategy, merits, procedure and legal aid funding.
- To support colleagues across the Law Centre to identify cases where public law remedies may be available.

Supervision

- To act as a designated Public Law supervisor for the purposes of the Legal Aid Agency Standard Civil Contract.
- To supervise public law casework and provide technical guidance and support to solicitors, trainees and caseworkers undertaking public law work.
- To work collaboratively with other supervisors to ensure appropriate allocation and oversight of public law work and consistent standards of supervision across the law centre.
- To handle complaints regarding public law work.
- To participate in arrangements to ensure adequate supervisory cover, including during periods of leave or absence.
- To undertake file reviews and other quality assurance activity in accordance with Legal Aid Agency, Lexcel and Law Centre requirements, and assist in preparation for and response to LAA, Lexcel and SRA audits.
- To support colleagues across the Law Centre to identify potential judicial review and other public law challenges.

Maternity Cover (first year in post)

- To lead the public law team including casework supervision of public law caseworkers and paralegals.
- To participate in the annual business planning process.
- To attend regular meetings of the Senior Management Team.

Practice Development and Quality Assurance

- To contribute to the development and growth of the Law Centre's public law practice.
- To identify emerging public law issues affecting the communities served by the Law Centre and opportunities for strategic litigation.
- To work with colleagues across the Law Centre to identify cases in which public law remedies may be available.
- To contribute to the development of precedents, practice notes and other resources to support high-quality public law casework.
- To contribute to monitoring the quality, volume and financial performance of the public law practice.
- To maintain effective relationships with counsel, other Law Centres, advice organisations and specialist public law practitioners.
- To assist the Director and colleagues in maintaining relationships with funders and external partners.

Administration and Compliance

- To maintain accurate and up-to-date case records and electronic files in accordance with Legal Aid Agency, Lexcel, professional and Law Centre requirements.
- To maintain accurate and timely records of time spent on casework and other work, and to comply with the Law Centre's case management and billing procedures.
- To ensure that publicly funded casework is conducted in accordance with Legal Aid Agency requirements, including the appropriate use of delegated functions and CCMS.

- To contribute to file reviews, audits and other quality assurance and compliance processes.
- To contribute to monitoring and reporting on the Public Law service, including the preparation of case studies and information required by funders.

Training and Support

- To provide specialist public law advice, guidance and second-tier support to colleagues across the Law Centre.
- To design and deliver training and workshops on public law and related issues for Law Centre staff, community organisations, advice agencies and other professionals.
- To support the development of colleagues undertaking public law work, including through case discussion, feedback and sharing legal and practice developments.
- To contribute to the development and maintenance of precedents, guidance and other resources to support high-quality public law casework.

Professional Development

- To participate in regular supervision and appraisal and to contribute constructively to the Law Centre's supervision and performance management arrangements.
- To maintain the knowledge and skills required for the role and to keep up to date with developments in public law, legal aid, professional practice and relevant areas of social welfare law.
- To identify and address learning and development needs and undertake relevant continuing professional development in accordance with professional and organisational requirements.

Teamwork and Service Development

- To work collaboratively with other supervisors and colleagues across the Law Centre to ensure effective supervision, coordination and development of public law work.
- To attend and contribute to staff, team and other relevant meetings.
- To contribute actively to the planning, development and continuous improvement of the Law Centre's Public Law service.
- To contribute to the development and sustainability of the Public Law service, including identifying opportunities for new casework, partnerships and funding where appropriate.
- To identify emerging and systemic public law issues affecting the Law Centre's clients and communities and contribute to the Law Centre's wider policy, strategic litigation and access to justice work where appropriate.
- To develop and maintain effective working relationships with community organisations, advice agencies, other Law Centres, counsel and other relevant external organisations and professionals.

General

- To uphold and promote the aims, principles and values of Southwark Law Centre, including its commitment to equality, diversity and access to justice.

- To comply with the Law Centre's policies and procedures and with relevant professional and regulatory requirements.
- To work outside normal office hours occasionally where reasonably required and with appropriate notice.
- To undertake other duties reasonably consistent with the nature and level of the post.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential

1. Qualified solicitor in England and Wales with a current practising certificate.
2. Substantial recent experience of public law casework and judicial review.
3. Experience of urgent judicial review proceedings and applications for interim relief.
4. Experience of public law challenges arising from immigration and asylum matters.
5. Meets, or is able immediately on appointment to meet, the Legal Aid Agency supervisor requirements for the Public Law category.
6. Significant experience of conducting publicly funded casework and using CCMS.
7. Experience of conducting complex public law litigation, including assessing merits, preparing judicial review challenges and working with counsel.
8. Experience of supervising legal casework and supporting the professional development of other caseworkers.
9. Ability to manage a substantial and complex caseload while meeting court, statutory and procedural deadlines.
10. Strong knowledge of public law principles, judicial review procedure and relevant legislation and case law.
11. Ability to identify public law issues arising across different areas of social welfare law.
12. Ability to maintain high standards of file management, time recording and compliance with LAA, SRA, Lexcel and organisational requirements.
13. Ability to meet reasonable casework and chargeable-hours targets while maintaining high standards of client care.
14. Excellent written and oral communication skills, including the ability to explain complex legal issues clearly to clients and colleagues.
15. Ability to provide effective supervision, constructive feedback and guidance to colleagues.
16. Ability to build effective relationships with counsel, external agencies, community organisations and other stakeholders.
17. Ability to use IT and electronic case-management systems effectively.
18. Commitment to the aims and principles of Southwark Law Centre and to equality, diversity and access to justice.

Desirable

1. Experience of Administrative Court and/or Upper Tribunal litigation.
2. Experience of public law challenges relating to planning, education, housing/homelessness, asylum support, or community care.
3. Experience of conducting damages claims against public bodies, particularly SSHD, either connected with public law proceedings or stand alone;
4. Experience of supervising trainees, solicitors or caseworkers.
5. Experience of file review, peer review or legal-aid quality assurance.
6. Experience of delivering training and second-tier advice.
7. Experience of strategic litigation or using casework to support policy and campaigning work.
8. Ability to speak a community language.
9. Lived experience relevant to the communities served by the Law Centre.