

March 2023

Recruitment of Supervising Solicitor (Public Law)

Dear Applicant

Thank you very much for your interest in applying for the role of Supervising Solicitor (Public Law or Claims against Public Authorities) at the Public Interest Law Centre. Since becoming independent in 2019, PILC has gone from strength to strength, registering as a charity in 2020 and gaining Lexcel accreditation the following year. We are now tendering for legal aid contracts in public law, claims against public authorities and housing. We have grown by carefully expanding our strategic priorities. Our litigation team is currently made of 10 colleagues, including 5 solicitors. We are now recruiting for a role to take over an existing caseload to initially provide cover for maternity leave but the post-holder will also have an opportunity to develop their own work and we hope the role extends beyond the initial period advertised.

In this pack you will find:

- Background information
- Role description
- Person specification
- Application form
- Equality & Diversity form

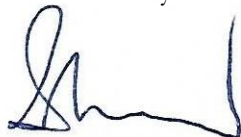
After reading the enclosed information should you have any further questions please visit our website or otherwise contact Dermot Morrow on 07727 609 682 or dermot.morrow@pilc.org.uk.

Make sure to address as many of the points listed in the person specification as you are able. If you need more space, please limit your personal statement to **no more than two additional supplementary pages**. Please do not send CVs as these are not considered. Your completed application form should be returned by email to jobs@pilc.org.uk.

The closing date for applications is **9am on Friday 14th April** and we anticipate holding interviews on either Wednesday 19th or Friday 21st April.

I wish you the very best of luck!

Yours sincerely



Dermot Morrow
Operations Manager
Encs.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION



PUBLIC LAW | HUMAN RIGHTS | LEGAL ACTION

The Public Interest Law Centre (PILC) was initially set up in 2016 as a project of Lambeth Law Centre, starting by representing core participants in the Undercover Policing Inquiry (UCPI). PILC became independent in 2019 and started to act as an agent of Camden Community Law Centre (CCLC) for Legal Aid purposes. This hosting arrangement will continue until PILC acquires its own Legal Aid contracts, which we anticipate happening by 1st September. PILC is now registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in England and Wales (No: 1192355).

Mission

The Public Interest Law Centre exists to challenge systemic injustice through legal education, strategic litigation, research and advocacy. We specialise in public law, actions against public authorities and public inquiries, bringing cases to court for individuals and grassroots groups who have been treated unfairly. We hold government and public bodies to account, challenging unlawful policies and practices. We see this work as vital in the context of austerity, Local Authority funding cuts, the expansion of the Hostile Environment and an increasingly authoritarian state. We will not rest until we see a fairer and more equal society.

Our Approach

PILC is a legal organization located at the grassroots. This is not a market choice: rather, it is where we come from and where we believe social change begins. This commitment forms the basis of our distinct identity as a Law Centre rooted in communities fighting for social justice.

We work in solidarity with people affected by systemic issues to build their power whilst highlighting their experience. Our priorities and the direction of our strategic litigation are set by these relationships. Strategy is formulated together with the individuals and groups we represent, whom we support through legal education to ensure that the process is transparent and meaningful throughout. Working this way implies a recognition that process and outcomes are not separate; we aim to integrate litigation within a broader movement for social justice.

We work in collaboration with grassroots groups, campaigns and frontline organisations through a legal hub model, building capacity through legal education and advocating through legal action in key priority areas: racial justice and migrants rights; housing/homelessness; violence against women; the impact of austerity; and state surveillance.

Achievements & Activities

PILC has achieved significant policy change through its litigation work. We regularly successfully challenge Home Office policy, Local Authority housing allocation policies and act for community groups challenging gentrification policies in their local areas. In 2020-21, we represented Ricky Tomlinson, Arthur Murray and Brian Williams (members of the Shrewsbury 24) in their Court of Appeal case, which saw their 47-year old convictions quashed. We use civil claims to strategically secure justice for our clients

PILC continues to represent a number of individuals and groups in the Undercover Policing Inquiry, including the Stop the War coalition and ex-members of the SWP. We have also been instructed to act as solicitors to the independent Inquiry into the collusion of Unite the Union officers or officials in the operation of blacklists in the construction industry.

We have been instructed by a number of organisations in the Covid 19 Public Inquiry, where we are representing Southall Black Sisters, Solace Women's Aid, IWGB and UVW as Core Participants.

PILC also delivers its work through funded projects in key priority areas. These projects are not separate from PILC's legal representation and strategic litigation. In fact, they often provide additional resources to develop and maintain relationships with vulnerable individuals, grassroots groups and frontline organisations. They also enable us to deliver on some of the Legal Hub model which complement formal legal work, such as training, capacity-building and second-tier advice.

Our People

PILC is co-led by Jean Demars (Director) who oversees strategic, operational and financial management and Paul Heron (Legal Director) who oversees legal matters, which includes Inquiries work, casework management, litigation strategy and Legal Aid contract management. He is further supported by Helen Mowatt (Supervising Solicitor in Public Law) and Dermot Morrow (Operations Manager) who complete the management team. PILC currently employs twelve staff, including 5 solicitors.

With the recruitment of a solicitor to provide maternity cover for our work with migrants and minoritised communities, we look to maintain the continuity and strength of our litigation

casework. We also look forward to gaining the fresh insight and experience from a new member of the team.

Registrations and memberships

PILC is registered with the Solicitors Regulation Authority and the Law Society. We are also a member of the Law Centres Network, AdviceUK and the Legal Aid Practitioners Group.

ROLE DESCRIPTION

Job ref: PILC/2.2/2023

JOB TITLE:	Supervising Solicitor (Public Law)
SALARY:	£44,000 - £50,000 per annum
HOURS:	35 hours per week
CONTRACT:	24 months (with the possibility of extension)
BENEFITS	25 days holiday per year with 5% occupational pension contribution
LOCATION:	Bethnal Green, E2 and remotely as required
ACCOUNTABLE TO:	Legal Director
DIRECT REPORTS:	Paralegal, Caseworker and Trainee Solicitor
MAIN PURPOSE:	To work on existing practice and develop body of work in public law and claims against public authorities with a focus on migrants' rights and racial justice.

Introduction

We are seeking a dynamic solicitor to join the team and takeover an exciting case-load focusing on migrants rights, as well as developing their own work in this area and beyond.

The post-holder will supervise the delivery of the Legal Aid contract in Public Law and provide infrastructural public law support to grassroots groups and frontline organisations advising and supporting migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, which will form the basis to develop strategic litigation in collaboration.

We expect you to manage all aspects of litigation, carrying your own caseload and responsibility to facilitate billing. You will also be expected to maintain and develop relationships and work with grassroots organisations. You will be supported by PILC's experienced litigation team. The role offers an opportunity to incorporate policy work, particularly where it can support litigation or wider strategic aims of the organisation.

You will be an experienced solicitor (with PQE 3+) and have solid experience in Public law, Claims against Public Authorities and a strong knowledge of Immigration Law. You will be supported by an experienced paralegal, who you will supervise along with supervising two other members of our litigation team.

Main Responsibilities

- Conduct legal casework in Public Law and Claims against Public Authorities
- Ensure sustainability of casework by adhering to financial targets and billing promptly
- Develop excellent relationships with beneficiaries and partners, including frontline and grassroots groups
- Identify public law issues and develop strategic litigation in line with PILC's mission
- Supervise the delivery of the Legal Aid contract in Public Law
- Line manage a paralegal, case worker and trainee solicitor

Specific duties include:

Legal Advice and Representation

- Obtain accurate information and instructions from clients, analyse the legal and practical aspects of their claims and obtain the necessary documents/evidence to provide preliminary advice on prospects of success/costs & funding
- Provide advice, casework, representation and advocacy services to clients directly on public law, housing, homelessness, planning law matters and claims against public authorities
- Interview clients and witnesses, draft statements, prepare court bundles
- Brief counsel, attend conferences and court with counsel
- Analyse and advise on strategy, tactics, and how best to achieve the most successful outcome for each client according to the particular circumstances of their case
- Enable clients to make informed decisions based on advice on legal and other appropriate considerations e.g. costs, funding and risks of litigation
- Ensure the timely and effective deployment of others involved in the matter e.g. expert witnesses, counsel, cost draftsmen
- Monitor all aspects of the case on behalf of the client and advise on whether subsequent developments affect views previously expressed
- Be aware of deadlines in all cases and adhere to time limits, to take necessary steps to protect the client's position
- Endeavour, where appropriate, to achieve settlement pre-litigation; otherwise to conduct litigation through to trial or earlier settlement and to deal with post trial/settlement considerations such as costs and enforcement proceedings, and to consider whether any decision should be appealed
- Comply with the Solicitors Regulation Authority's standards of professional conduct and ethics and, in particular, with the strict requirement of confidentiality of client's affairs, at all times.

Client Care

- Deal with clients in a sensitive, professional and compassionate way
- Identify clients' objectives and seek to further them in a manner consistent with all professional and ethical obligations
- Anticipate as well as respond to clients' needs and demands.

Administration & Billing

- Prepare and manage funding applications to the Legal Aid Agency
- Maintain a full and orderly file with comprehensive attendance notes of all meetings, attendances and telephone calls
- Comply with the LAA's Case Involvement and Supervision Standards, including file reviews and supervision
- Maintain such financial records and financial information as may be required by the Solicitors Regulation Authority or the Law Centre, including providing calculations of work in progress from time to time
- Facilitate claims for costs on an *inter partes* basis and from the Legal Aid Agency
- Adhere so far as possible to annual billing and performance targets
- Conduct file reviews as per PILC's Independent File Review procedure.

Team Work and Partnerships

- Work closely with PILC solicitors to identify matters requiring Judicial Review and strategic litigation
- Provide line management to allocated staff in line with PILC's performance management policy
- Provide supervisory casework support to trainees, caseworkers and solicitors as required
- Work effectively with non-legal staff including operations manager and finance officer
- Attend and contribute to regular and special team meetings and discussions
- Maintain and develop excellent relationships with frontline agencies and grassroots groups to enable effective joint working.

Social Policy

- Remain alert to the social policy implications of issues presented by clients
- Contribute to taking appropriate action to influence social policy in regard to these issues.

Other duties

- complete and maintain as necessary any professional documentation or records (such as a Practising Certificate) as the Solicitors Regulation Authority or any other professional body may require
- Engage in regular managerial supervision
- Attend training internally and externally as agreed with the Legal Director and maintain a record of all training undertaken and CPD points
- Undertake other duties which may be regarded within the nature of the post, in discussion with the Director.

Organisational standards

The post holder will be expected to meet the following organisational standards in how they undertake their work and conduct themselves in the post.

Professional Development

The post holder will:

- participate in the PILC team review and supervision processes as appropriate
- attend courses on new legislation, specialist skills and the use of information technology relevant to the role
- keep up to date with the changes in relevant legislation
- undertake such training as is necessary as to maintain the standards required.

Equality and Diversity

The Law Centre's clients are largely on low incomes and come from a diverse range of minority ethnic groups. The post holder will be expected to show a particular interest in working with this client group and to show an understanding of equality and diversity issues. The post holder will have regard at all times in the planning and execution of their duties to the Law Centre's Equality & Diversity Policy and will implement that policy faithfully.

Review of this role

This job description is to provide guidance and direction. It is not an inflexible document, nor is it intended to limit the range of duties which could reasonably be expected of the post holder. The job description will be reviewed at each appraisal.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Job ref: PILC/2.2/2023

SUPERVISING SOLICITOR (PUBLIC LAW)

	Requirement	Essential	Desirable
1.	Qualified Solicitor with a minimum of 3 years' post-qualification experience in Public Law and/or Claims against Public Authorities able to meet LAA supervisor standards	✓	
2.	Experience of acting for clients from migrants and minoritised communities within the UK and knowledge of the specific issues they face	✓	
3.	A solid understanding of the key principles of Public Law, Claims against Public Authorities and relevant legal procedures in judicial review and civil litigation	✓	
4.	Demonstrable experience of conducting cases in Public Law and Claims against Public Authorities from initial advice to trial, including drafting pre-action protocol letters, instructions and witness statements	✓	
5.	Experience of undertaking publicly funded work and knowledge of legal aid procedures	✓	
6.	Experience of acting for clients from all backgrounds, and an ability to deal sensitively with and communicate effectively with vulnerable clients	✓	
7.	A demonstrable commitment to access to justice and an interest in PILC's key priority areas	✓	
8.	Experience of supervising a Paralegal or Trainee	✓	
9.	Excellent time management skills, demonstrated by an ability to organise and prioritise a complex workload and meet tight deadlines	✓	
10.	Good interpersonal skills, including excellent communication skills both verbal and written	✓	

11.	Extensive experience in file management, including the preparation of accurate attendance notes, time recording and good knowledge of billing procedures	✓	
12.	Understanding of the social setting and impact of the law and a commitment to achieving change for social justice	✓	
13.	A commitment to the Public Interest Law Centre's Equality & Diversity Policy	✓	
14.	Ability to be self-servicing with competent use of the suite of Microsoft Office 365 apps as well as online-based case management systems	✓	
15.	Demonstrate willingness to work as part of the Law Centre's team and carry administrative and other duties shared amongst the staff	✓	
16.	Experience as a Legal Aid Agency Public Law or Claims against Public Authorities supervisor		✓
17.	Current level 2 (Senior Caseworker) accreditation under the Law Society's Immigration and Asylum Accreditation Scheme ('IAAS')		✓
18.	Experience of grassroots campaigning or activism		✓
19.	A willingness and commitment to engaging in work that promotes PILC externally		✓