

Recruitment of a Gentrification Project Lead/Paralegal/Solicitor

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the role. This 12-month fixed-term maternity cover is ideal for a community organiser with legal experience, or a qualified legal professional eager to build strong community organising skills, with a focus on strategic litigation rooted in community-led struggle.

We welcome applications from people with relevant experience gained from both traditional and non-traditional backgrounds, including academia and research.

The successful candidate will be a motivated and confident communicator who has, or can quickly develop, knowledge of public, planning, housing and environmental law. The role uniquely combines legal work with campaigning and community organising to practically support communities nationwide resisting gentrification and displacement.

In this recruitment pack, you'll find:

- Background information about PILC
- Information on the selection process
- A detailed role description and person specification
- An application form
- An Equality & Diversity monitoring form

To apply, please complete the application form and equality and diversity form and return them via email to jobs@pilc.org.uk by **Thursday 5 March 2026 at 12pm**. Please note that we do not accept CVs.

We strongly welcome applicants from the global majority and actively encourage applications from individuals who are Black, Asian, or from other racially minoritised communities. We also welcome candidates from marginalised backgrounds, including disabled people, LGBTQ+ individuals, and those with lived experience of migration, poverty, or the care system.

If you meet the essential criteria for the role but feel unsure about applying, we encourage you to reach out to us via email and we would be happy to answer any questions you have.

We are committed to ensuring our recruitment process is accessible to everyone. If you require the job description, application form, or any other materials in a different format, please don't hesitate to contact us at jobs@pilc.org.uk.

Thank you for your interest in the position and we hope to hear from you soon.

Warm regards,

R. Dempster-Johnson
People Manager

BACKGROUND INFORMATION



The Public Interest Law Centre (PILC) was initially set up in 2016 as a project of Lambeth Law Centre and became independent in 2019. PILC has been operating its own Legal Aid Contract since 1 September 2023, enabling the Law Centre to act in Public Law, Claims against Public Authorities and Housing Law cases. PILC is registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in England and Wales (No: 1192355).

Mission

The Public Interest Law Centre exists to challenge unlawful state practice and systemic injustice through legal representation, strategic litigation, research and legal education. 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, challenge unlawful policies and practices, and promote access to justice for marginalised individuals and communities. We will not rest until we achieve a fairer and more equitable society.

Strategic Objectives

Our current strategic plan (2024-27) is divided into three parts:

1. *Seeking justice through legal action:* We use the law as a tool in the fight for social change, not as an end in itself. Taking the government and public bodies to court can be a powerful way for communities to demand justice.
2. *Developing PILC's movement lawyering approach:* We put the power of the law into communities and social movements so they can fight back.
3. *Consolidating PILC's organisational growth:* We know the best way to deliver on our mission is to have a strong infrastructure for an effective, compliant and sustainable organisation.

Our Approach

PILC is a legal organisation 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 collaboration with grassroots groups, campaigners and frontline organisations through a legal hub model building capacity through legal education and advocating through strategic legal action across three overlapping priority areas:

- state accountability,
- housing, land and community assets,
- racial justice and migrants' rights.

Most people we support cut across these areas, e.g. domestic abuse survivors – sometimes with NRPF – seeking housing safety. We build on these cases to develop strategic litigation and challenge wider policies and practices. Taking the government and public bodies to court can be a powerful way for communities to demand justice. We use the law as a tool in the fight for social change rather than an end in itself.

Some of the individuals and communities we work with include:

- Social Justice activists subjected to state surveillance
- Migrants targeted by racist policies and socio-economic discrimination
- Gypsies, Roma and Travellers seeking safe and suitable living conditions
- Council Estate residents at risk of displacement due to regeneration
- Survivors of domestic abuse in housing need
- Local residents defending public services and spaces, e.g. Children's Centres

PILC prides itself in building most of its litigation from issues arising from lived experience or identifying patterns in frontline workers' casework, thereby joining the individual to the strategic. Although strategic litigation is no silver bullet, our approach to movement lawyering connects us to the individuals and communities we defend, making us an integral part of a broader social justice movement.

Our work

State Accountability

- We currently represent 12 organisations across various modules of the UK Covid-19 Inquiry covering interrelated issues relating to survivors of domestic abuse, racialised communities and migrants, outsourced workers and privatised social care and health services.
- We represent a number of individuals, groups and organisation in the Undercover Policing Inquiry, including Youth Against Racism in Europe, a former Labour MP, Troops Out movement, the Stop the War coalition and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament (CND).

- We also have several cases supporting Palestine Solidarity in the UK and holding the British state to account for its complicity in the genocide in Gaza.

Housing, Land and Community Assets

Our work in this area is wide ranging and include existing and developing projects:

- [supporting survivors of domestic abuse access safety through adequate housing](#);
- our [gentrification project](#), which mainly supports council estate residents facing demolition and displacement as well as supporting market traders facing eviction through planning and environmental law;
- [defending Gypsies & Travellers pursuing a nomadic way of life](#) through legal representation in housing and planning;
- [keep public land in public hands](#) through the defence of open spaces in London.

Racial Justice and Migrants' Rights

As successive governments introduce ever more regressive, headline grabbing, anti-migrant laws and policies, we recognise that many are also suffering as a result of entrenched systems and policies designed to limit belonging and freedoms for migrants. Our work largely seeks to address these long-standing structures and the root causes of injustice which trap migrants in poverty and exclusion, often for decades.

We are working closely with grassroots groups and frontline partners towards:

- dismantling racist Hostile Environment policies, which affect migrants' ability to live in dignity;
- addressing barriers to settlement in the UK, which trap people in the grip of the Home Office; and
- ensuring that access to socio-economic and work-based rights are not determined by immigration status.

Our People

PILC is co-led by Jean Demars (Director), who oversees strategic, operational, and financial management, and Helen Mowatt (Legal Director), who leads on all legal matters, including inquiries work, casework management, litigation strategy, and Legal Aid contract oversight. They are supported by Ross Dempster-Johnson (People Manager), completing the Senior Management Team. PILC currently employs 22 staff members, including the Senior Management Team.

Fundraising

Fundraising plays a vital role in enabling PILC to deliver its mission. While much of our legal casework is funded through legal aid, grant funding from trusts and foundations is essential to the delivery of our strategic plan and in enabling our movement lawyering approach to flourish through our grassroots and frontline partners.

Quality Standards

The Law Centre is accredited by the Law Society's Lexcel Quality Mark and certified under the Cyber Essentials Plus scheme, which protects against common cyber threats. Both accreditations are subject to an annual technical assessment.

Registrations and memberships

PILC is registered with the Solicitors Regulation Authority and the Law Society. We are also members of the Law Centres Network.

SELECTION PROCESS

Shortlisting

We will shortlist applicants for interview based on the information provided in their application form. When reviewing applications, we will be looking for evidence that you have:

- Submitted a completed application form and equality and diversity monitoring form by the deadline: **Thursday 5 March 2026 at 12pm.**
- Clearly demonstrated how you meet the essential criteria outlined in the Person Specification, using examples where possible
- Provided relevant detail about your work history, experience, and training, including explanations for any employment gaps

Interviews will be offered to candidates who most closely demonstrate the skills, experience, and behaviours required for the role.

Interviews

Interviews will take place in person at our offices in Cambridge Heath, London (E2) during the week commencing **Monday 9 March 2026.**

The interview will be a structured panel interview, with questions linked directly to the Person Specification. This helps ensure the process is fair, consistent, and focused on what matters most for the role.

There will also be time for you to ask questions about the role, the team, and the organisation.

A Two-Way Conversation

We want the interview to feel like a conversation, not an interrogation. It is a two-way process: you are also deciding whether this role and organisation are right for you.

You are welcome to:

- Add anything you feel your application didn't capture
- Use phrases such as *"I didn't get a chance to mention..."*
- Ask honest questions about the role, culture, or expectations

We genuinely want you to feel informed and empowered throughout the process.

Adjustments and Accessibility

We are committed to making our recruitment process inclusive. If you require any reasonable adjustments at any stage, please let us know and we will do our best to accommodate your needs.

Communication and Outcomes

We will contact all applicants by email after the closing date to confirm whether their application has progressed to the next stage.

Unfortunately, we are unable to provide individual feedback to candidates who are not shortlisted for interview.

Candidates who are shortlisted will be contacted by email as soon as possible after the closing date, once the panel has completed the shortlisting process.

Following interviews, all candidates will be informed of the outcome.

Candidates who are not appointed at interview stage are welcome to request feedback, and we will be happy to provide constructive feedback to support future applications.

Doc Ref: 4.4

JOB REFERENCE: PILC/2/2026



ROLE DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE	Gentrification Project Lead/Paralegal/Solicitor
SALARY:	£33,903 - £47,464 (depending on experience, skills and qualifications)
HOURS:	Full Time, 35 hours per week
CONTRACT:	12-month fixed term, maternity cover
BENEFITS:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 25 days holiday per year with 7% employer pension contribution, plus additional time off over Christmas when our office closes• Flexible working around our core hours of 10am – 4pm• Friendly, collaborative and truly inclusive culture• Laptop and mobile phone• Access to our 24-hour Employee Assistance Programme• Support and supervision• Learning and development budget• Enhanced support when you need it most, including enhanced sick pay
LOCATION:	Cambridge Heath, London, E2 / Hybrid – Two days per week in the office
ACCOUNTABLE TO:	Director
DIRECT REPORTS:	None
START DATE:	Ideally by 1 May
PURPOSE:	To deliver and develop the Gentrification Project in accordance with its workplan, allowing for flexibility as the work evolves. The post holder will work closely with the Director, a supervising solicitor and paralegal, and with residents and campaigners impacted by gentrification, to develop legal action and provide legal education.

This is a rare opportunity to participate in a bold and growing project working at the intersection of law, organising, and housing justice. The role brings together strategic legal work, research and information, community liaison, and grassroots organising, grounded in public, planning, housing and environmental law.

The post is candidate-driven, offering real scope to shape the work around your skills, interests, and political commitments, while contributing to a vibrant and innovative project that supports communities across the country facing gentrification and displacement and aims to build long-term capacity and change.

Main Responsibilities

- Contribute to the delivery of a movement lawyering project that uses the law as a tool to

support community-led resistance to gentrification and displacement.

- Work directly with communities affected by housing injustice, providing early legal information and support and helping to identify opportunities for legal and strategic action.
- Support the development of legal casework and strategic litigation, particularly Judicial Review, arising from community struggle.
- Nurture and build on the project's strong relationships with grassroots groups, campaigners, and partner organisations across the housing and land justice sector.
- Combine legal work with organising, campaigning, research, and public legal education to strengthen community power and scrutiny of planning and regeneration processes.

Specific Duties

Community Engagement & Frontline Work

- Deliver a workplan of community engagement and frontline work which includes:
 - Engaging with individuals and communities affected by gentrification through outreach, referrals, and nurturing existing relationships.
 - Deliver legal education to residents and campaigners, providing clear and accessible information about legal processes and options to enable informed decision-making about the direction of their campaigns.
 - Act as a link between communities and the legal team, ensuring community priorities and perspectives shape legal work.
 - Support community-led strategies and campaigns alongside legal interventions.

Legal Support & Strategic Litigation

- Work closely with the supervising solicitor and paralegal to identify matters with potential for strategic litigation. Should the successful candidate be a qualified solicitor, there may be scope to lead on cases
- Support legal research, case preparation, and investigation in public, planning, and environmental law, including Judicial Review.
- Undertake or commission research on planning policy, housing law, and environmental impacts relevant to the project, in line with a workplan.

Capacity Building & Collaboration

- Help develop and maintain accessible resources and tools for communities and campaigners on planning, housing, and legal rights.
- Deliver or support workshops, briefings, and information sessions for communities and sector partners.
- Collaborate with leading organisations, networks, and campaigns across the housing and land justice sector.

Campaigning, Learning & Policy

- Remain alert to the broader social and policy implications of issues arising from community

work and legal cases.

- Contribute to discussions on how legal work can support wider campaigning, policy change, and movement-building goals.
- Support learning, reflection, and innovation within the project.

Other duties

- Participate in team meetings, supervision, and organisational learning.
- Engage in relevant training and continuing professional development.
- Undertake other duties consistent with the nature of the role, in discussion with the line manager.

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

Gentrification Project Lead/Paralegal/Solicitor

	Requirement	Essential	Desirable	Method of assessment
1.	A strong commitment to housing justice and community-led resistance to gentrification and displacement.	✓		Application / Interview
2.	Alignment with movement lawyering principles, including using the law as a tool to support organising, collective power, and systemic change.	✓		Application / Interview
3.	An understanding of, and sensitivity to, the structural inequalities experienced by marginalised communities, particularly in relation to housing, land, and planning.	✓		Application / Interview
4.	Experience working directly with communities, grassroots groups, or campaigners, particularly those affected by housing injustice, regeneration, or displacement.	✓		Application / Interview
5.	Excellent written and verbal communication skills, suitable for community engagement, internal collaboration, and partnership working.	✓		Application / Interview
6.	Strong research skills, including the ability to analyse legal, policy, or planning documents and present findings clearly.	✓		Interview
7.	Experience providing clear, accessible information or advice to non-specialist audiences, including explaining complex processes in plain language.	✓		Interview
8.	Ability to build trusting, respectful and collaborative relationships with community members and partners.	✓		Interview
9.	Highly organised, with the ability to manage multiple deadlines and manage multiple strands of work, responding flexibly to community needs.	✓		Interview
10.	A working knowledge of, or strong interest in, public law, planning law, housing law, or environmental law.	✓		Application / Interview
11.	An understanding of how legal processes (such as planning decisions or Judicial Review) can be used strategically to support campaigns and community action.	✓		Interview

12.	Ability to identify issues with potential for strategic legal or campaigning intervention.	✓		Interview
13.	Confidence working as a bridge between communities and legal professionals, ensuring community priorities inform legal strategy.	✓		Interview
14.	A willingness to learn and engage in professional development.	✓		Application / Interview
15.	A commitment to the Public Interest Law Centre's Equality & Diversity Policy.	✓		Application / Interview
17.	Demonstrate willingness to work as part of the Law Centre's team and carry administrative and other duties shared amongst the staff.	✓		Interview
18.	Experience of working in a legal, human rights or advocacy organisation.	✓		Application
19.	A relevant qualification or training in law, planning, community organising, or a related field.	✓		Application
20.	Experience delivering workshops, training sessions, or public legal education.		✓	Application / Interview
21.	Experience developing accessible resources, toolkits, or guidance for communities or campaigners.		✓	Interview