



Legal Aid Agency, Housing Law Solicitor

Job pack

Thank you for your interest in working at Central and East Northamptonshire Citizens Advice. This job pack should give you everything you need to know to apply for this role and what it means to work at Citizens Advice.

In this pack you'll find:

- Job Advertisement
- Our values
- 3 things you should know about us
- Overview of Citizens Advice and Central and East Northamptonshire Citizens Advice
- The role profile and personal specification
- Terms and conditions
- What we give our staff



Central and East
Northamptonshire

Job Advertisement

Housing Law Solicitor (Legal Aid Agency Contract)

An exciting opportunity for an experienced housing solicitor to join Central and East Northamptonshire Citizens Advice (CENCA), delivering housing and debt advice, advocacy and court representation.

Housing Law Solicitor

Salary: £35,000 - £40,000 pa

Hours per week: 37 hours per week (part time hours will be considered)

Fixed term contract to August 2022 (with possibility of extension)

Responsible to Head of Service

Location: Northampton (remote working is possible, but you must be able to provide court representation in Northamptonshire)

About the role

As Housing Law Solicitor, you will be responsible for interviewing clients using sensitive listening in order to get to the root of the issues. This is a key role, in which you will be expected to empower clients and provide high quality advice, whilst maintaining the structure of meetings and delivering great customer service.

About you

We are seeking an individual with a strong passion for housing law and who shares our core values. As the ideal candidate, you will have:

- 3 year post qualified solicitor certificate
- Met the Legal Aid Agency Supervisor Standard
- Ability to use IT systems and packages, with knowledge of AdvicePro and resources in the provision of advice, record keeping and document production
- Knowledge of the benefits systems including Legal Aid Agency income thresholds

About us

CENCA has a **vision for a fair society for all, with lives well lived**. A key aspect of this is for people to be able to improve their lives because they know and understand their rights and responsibilities. We deliver Citizens

Advice services to over 8,000 people a year in Northants, via 10 projects and services and we are on target to deliver £6million of income gains for our clients in 2020/2021.

At CENCA, we expect our staff to stand up for equalities, communicate for impact and strive to make a personal difference.

Benefits

- 25 day's annual leave (plus bank holidays)
- 5% Employer's Contributory Pension Scheme
- Enhanced sickness benefit after one year's service
- Flexible working hours to the requirement of the role
- Comprehensive training and Ongoing Development
- Free parking for agreed roles

How to apply

If you are interested in this opportunity and would like to find out more, please visit our website www.cencab.org.uk where you can download a job and application pack, or email recruitment@cencab.org.uk

Application Forms and Diversity Monitoring Forms should be returned to recruitment@cencab.org.uk

For an informal discussion about the role, please contact Chloe Morris on 07375 049717

Please note, CVs will not be accepted.

Closing date: 5th November 2021

We reserve the right to end this recruitment process early if suitably qualified candidates apply before the closing date.

Our values

We're inventive. We're not afraid of trying new things and learn by getting things wrong. We question every idea to make it better and we change when things aren't working.

We're generous. We work together, sharing knowledge and experience to solve problems. We tell it like it is and respect everyone.

We're responsible. We do what we say we'll do and keep our promises. We remember that we work for a charity and use our resources effectively.



3 things you should know about us

- 1. We're local and we're national.** We have 6 national offices and offer direct support to people in around 300 independent local Citizens Advice services across England and Wales.
- 2. We're here for everyone.** Our advice helps people solve problems and our advocacy helps fix problems in society. Whatever the problem, we won't turn people away.
- 3. We are listened to - and we make a difference.** Our trusted brand and the quality of our research mean we make a real impact on behalf of the people who rely on us.

How Central and East Northamptonshire Citizens Advice works

We help and provide advice for residents of Northampton, Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire.

We offer a multi-channel service with face to face, telephone and online facilities via web chat to allow clients to access the support in the way that is right for them. *Our Face to face services are currently suspended due to Coronavirus restrictions.*

We help people find a way forward

We can all face problems that seem complicated or intimidating. At Citizens Advice Central and East Northamptonshire, we believe no one should have to face these problems without good quality, independent advice.

We give advice to thousands of people every year

When we say we're for everyone, we mean it. People rely on us because we're independent and totally impartial.

Last year, Citizens Advice Central and East Northamptonshire helped over 8,000 people on over 20,000 issues. In 2020 we are on target to gain over £6 million pounds of income for our clients and area by providing advice.

Our clients discuss Benefits, Debt, Housing, Money, Employment, Family, Consumer and other issues with us throughout the year.

We also give advice on consumer rights on our [consumer helpline](#), and give [pension guidance](#) to people aged over 50.

Please see www.cencab.org.uk for further information about us. **We**

make a difference

Overview of Citizens Advice

The Citizens Advice service is made up of Citizens Advice - the national charity - and a network of around 300 local Citizens Advice members.

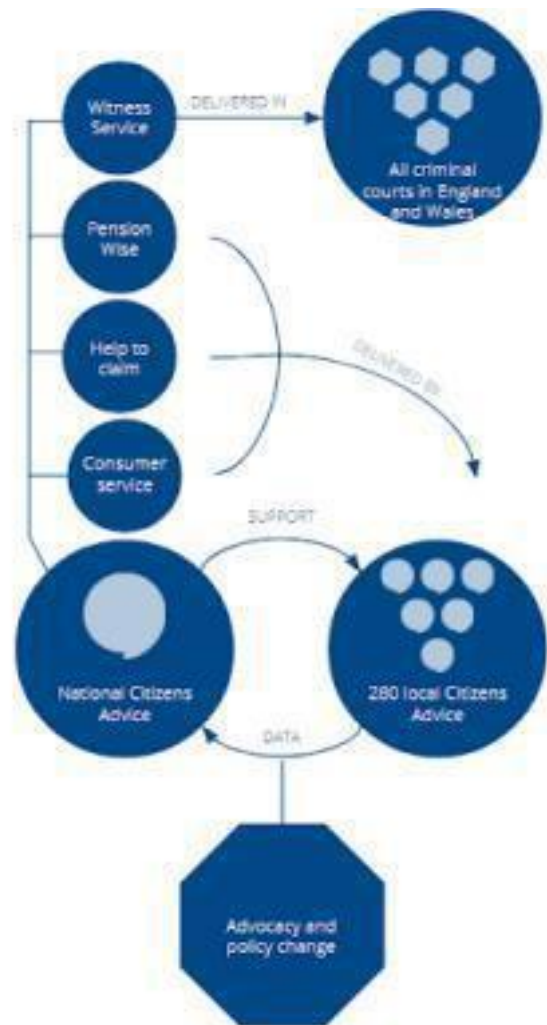
This role sits within our network of independent charities, delivering services from

- over 600 local Citizens Advice outlets
- over 1,800 community centres, GPs' surgeries and prisons

They do this with:

- 6,500 local staff
- over 23,000 trained volunteers

Our reach means 99% of people in England and Wales can access a local Citizens Advice within a 30 minute drive of where they live.



The role

We now have an opportunity for a 3 year post qualified housing solicitor to join the charity as a Legal Aid HOUSING LAW SOLICITOR to deliver and oversee high level housing and debt advice, advocacy and court representation.

The Housing Law Solicitor will need to meet the Legal Aid Agency Supervisor Standard, be an authorised litigator with a current practising certificate and have a passion for this area of law. We are looking for someone who will share our core values and who has the desire to provide high quality advice and great customer service.

You'll have the ability to interview clients using sensitive listening and questioning skills to get to the root of the issues and empower clients, whilst maintaining structure and control of meetings.

Role profile

1. Casework/Legal Advice and Representation

- To maintain and manage over time a certificated Legal Aid service in Housing advice that complies with all Legal Aid Agency requirements under the civil legal aid scheme and also the Specialist Quality Mark standard.
- To maintain an active caseload, including litigation, which enables homeless people, and those with housing problems, to enforce their rights in law. This includes litigation in test cases and issuing cases to judicial review and injunction applications.
- Provide casework covering the full range of Housing advice as expected by the Legal Aid Agency.

Advice areas include the following:

- Security of tenure
- Eviction and possession proceedings
- Housing benefit

- Homelessness and re-housing
- Debt, rent and mortgage arrears
- Relationship breakdown and domestic violence
- Neighbour disputes
- Rental agreements
- Harassment and illegal eviction
- Representation at Court
- Disrepair
- Anti-Social Behaviour cases
- To carry out follow-up casework and litigation including research where necessary/appropriate.
- To agree and manage a caseload of referrals from internal staff and external agencies within a designated procedure and to ensure this work meets quality standards.
- To meet work in progress and billing targets set by management.
- Prepare and present cases to the appropriate statutory bodies, tribunals and courts as appropriate.
- Assist clients with other related problems where they are an integral part of their case and refer to other advisers or specialist agencies as appropriate.
- Make outreach visits as necessary.
- Provide advice and assistance to other staff and volunteers across the whole range of Housing advice issues
- Ensure that all casework conforms to the CENCA's Office Manual and the SQM standard.
- Use the CENCA's electronic case management system (currently Advice Pro Legal) and maintain case records for the purposes of continuity of casework, information retrieval, and statistical monitoring and report preparation.
- Ensure that all work conforms to the CENCA's systems and procedures.
Work in close partnership with other staff and volunteers.

2. Working with team members and quality

- Work as part of a team and other Housing caseworkers and paralegals to perform their work and develop their own skills and abilities.

- Where appropriate, review the work of other staff and volunteers to ensure it meets relevant quality assurance standards.
- Provide technical legal support and act as consultant to other advisers where necessary.
- Monitor and regularly review quality of work from case records/file notes.
- Assist in developing and maintaining standards of service delivery.

3. Social policy

- Assist with social policy work by providing information about clients' circumstances.
- Provide statistical information on the number of clients and nature of cases and provide regular reports to the Chief Executive.
- Monitor service provision to ensure that it reaches the widest possible client group.
- Alert other staff and volunteers to local and national issues and contribute to Research and Campaigns work.
- Record outcomes as required by CENCA.

4. Professional development

- Keep up-to-date with legislation, case law, policies and procedures relating to Housing advice and undertake appropriate training.
- Read relevant publications.
- Attend relevant internal and external meetings as agreed with the Chief Officer.
- Prepare for and attend supervision sessions/team meetings/management team meetings as appropriate.
- Assist with initiatives for the improvement of services.

5. Administration

- Self-administering.
- Responsible for billing.
- Review and make recommendations for improvements to CENCA's systems.
- Contribute to the maintenance of local information systems.
- Ensure contract compliance for audit purposes and across all publicly funded cases.
- Use IT for statistical recording, record keeping and document production.
- Keep up to date with policies and procedures relevant to the CENCA's work and undertake appropriate training.
- Attend internal and external meetings as agreed with the Chief Executive team.
- Maintain close liaison with relevant external agencies.
- Maintain a library of reference material and case law.

6. Public relations

- Liaise with statutory and non-statutory organisations and represent the CENCA to outside bodies as appropriate.

7. Other duties and responsibilities

- Carry out any other tasks that may be within the scope of the post to ensure the effective delivery and development of the service.
- Demonstrate commitment to the CENCA's Equality and Diversity policy and other aims and policies, e.g. Safeguarding, Information Assurance and Confidentiality.
- Abide by health and safety guidelines and share responsibility for your own safety and that of colleagues.
- Promote and represent CENCA in a professional manner at all times.
- Be willing to challenge the status quo in a professional manner to remove barriers / blockers that stop people successfully completing their work, or the organisation reaching its full potential, be it from internal or external factors.
- Lead from the front and by example.
- Be prepared to wear "more than one hat" when necessary.
- Promptly escalate and resolve service affecting issues that arise.

Person specification

Please refer to each of the points in the Person Specification to demonstrate your suitability for the role and explain what approach you would take to increase your knowledge base if necessary. Training can be provided for the person who best meets the Citizens Advice ethos and compliments our Leadership Team.

Essential Criteria

1. Three year post qualified solicitor certificate
2. Experience of using sensitive listening and questioning skills to get to the root of the issues and empower clients, whilst maintaining structure and control of meetings with them
3. Experience of giving and receiving feedback objectively and sensitively and a willingness to challenge constructively
4. Ability to use telephony and IT systems to deliver services across multiple channels for example web chat and telephone
5. Ability to use IT systems and packages, with knowledge of AdvicePro and resources in the provision of advice, record keeping and document production
6. Good IT knowledge with an ability to support clients with their online claim application
7. Ability and willingness to work as part of a team
8. A commitment to continuous professional development, including a willingness to develop knowledge and skills in advice topics
9. Ability to work in outreach settings with an understanding of information assurance and safety in those settings
10. Experience of developing and maintaining positive working relationships with external stakeholders
11. Ability to commit to and work with the aims, principles and policies of the Citizens Advice service
12. A thorough up to date understanding of equality and diversity and its application to the provision of advice
13. Experience of monitoring and maintaining standards for advice provision and quality assurance
14. Knowledge of the benefits systems including Legal Aid Agency income thresholds
15. Ability to carry out accurate benefit check calculations
16. Basic knowledge of multiple enquiry areas to aid with identifying
17. emergencies and making referrals where appropriate

18. In accordance with Citizens Advice national policy we will require the successful candidate to be screened by the DBS and have BPSS checks. However, a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to your being able to take up the job.
19. Willingness to contribute to CENCA and national Citizens Advice Research and Campaigns
20. Exceptional communication and organisational skills and the ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing
21. Ability to work with a variety of organisations, to earn and maintain the trust of those people with whom the organisation deals

Terms and conditions

- 25 day's annual leave, pro rata (plus bank holidays)
- 5% Employer's Contributory Pension Scheme
- Enhanced sickness benefit after one-years' service
- Flexible working hours to the requirement of the role

What we give our staff

- Comprehensive training
- Access to quality training materials
- Ongoing Development
- Annual Appraisals
- Regular reviews with line management
- Free parking for agreed roles

Closing date is 5th November 2021 but we reserve the right to end the recruitment process early if suitable applicants apply before the closing date.

Application forms are available on our website

www.cencab.org.uk

All completed application forms should be sent to
recruitment@cencab.org.uk

For an informal discussion about the role, please contact Chloe Morris

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