

## ABOUT YOUTH LEGAL

### Who we are

Youth Legal is an independent charity based in Wandsworth, assisting marginalised and vulnerable young people across the London area.

Youth Legal facilitates young people's access to justice through high quality young person-friendly legal advice, support and education.

Our specialist legal advice is focussed on fighting for children and young people to be safe and secure, with appropriate housing and care.

### What we do

*We advise and represent* – standing up for young people's rights through the provision of high quality young person-friendly legal advice and holistic support.

*We support and empower* – giving young people the knowledge and skills to manage their problems and providing expert 2<sup>nd</sup> tier support to youth professionals.

*We campaign and influence* – fighting for change through strategic litigation and acting as an exemplar delivery model.

*We listen and engage* – enabling young people to hold ourselves and others to account.

Youth Legal believes that all young people should have their rights respected, be able to secure equal access to justice and be able to achieve a successful transition to adulthood.

### Our Work

We employ a small staff team at our offices in Clapham Junction in South-West London.

Our work includes providing:

- high quality specialist legal advice tailored for young people in Housing, Community Care, Debt and Money Advice and Immigration.
- training for young people and their support workers in young people's rights and responsibilities
- an advice line
- a 2<sup>nd</sup> tier telephone advice service for grass root organisations
- strategic litigation

### Youth Legal is renowned for our expertise in:

HOUSING

Assistance for young people facing homelessness, possession proceedings / eviction and other problems with landlords.

#### DEBT AND MONEY ADVICE

Advice on credit debts, rent arrears, council tax arrears, utility bill arrears, available debt solutions and income maximisation, to get young people's finances back into shape and provide them with the confidence to manage their finances in the future.

#### WELFARE BENEFITS

Basic, non-specialist advice on welfare benefits issues relating to disability, employment support allowance, housing benefit and rights of residence in relation to our Housing and Community Care cases. If specialist advice is required, we refer out.

#### IMMIGRATION

In 2021 we initiated a new immigration advice service, with seed-corn funding from the London Borough of Wandsworth. We provide legal advice for young people and families with children who do not have leave to remain, or need to obtain settled status or apply for British nationality. We aim to regularise young migrants' immigration status so that they can resettle in safety and rebuild their lives.

#### Our Values

Youth Legal's six *core values* are as follows:

***Rights-based*** – all our work is rooted in young people's legal and human rights

***Expert*** – all our advisers are highly experienced, skilled and qualified to provide legal advice specifically to young people

***Compassionate*** – we listen to young people, take them seriously and care about them and their futures

***Committed*** – we go the extra mile to ensure our clients secure justice

***Inclusive*** – we prioritise those in greatest need and work to redress inequality

***Collaborative*** – our staff, Trustees and Youth Advisory Board work closely together, and we partner with many other organisations to meet young people's needs

## JOB DESCRIPTION / PERSON SPECIFICATION

<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	Housing/Community Care Caseworker SQE trainee
<b>SALARY:</b>	Up to 36,335 depending on experience - pro rata
<b>ACCOUNTABLE TO:</b>	Senior Solicitor, Director, Board of Trustees
<b>LINE MANAGED BY:</b>	Senior Solicitor

It is a full time permanent post - 35 hours per week.

The post holder will be required to work 5 days a week and to work hybrid, at the Youth Legal offices at least 3 days a week and remotely from home from 10am-6:00pm. Youth Legal currently operates Legal Aid Agency contracts in housing and community care.

### MAIN OBJECTIVES:

- To undertake casework in relation to young people's housing and/or community issues
- To ensure the quality of legal advice is of an appropriately high standard
- To manage the organisation of their casework
- To provide advice, casework and representation in the category of housing and/or community care law
- To have experience in legal aid work and billing legal aid (but training can be provided to the right candidate).
- Be able to demonstrate commitment to legal aid work and social welfare law
- To have good knowledge and experience of civil litigation procedure

### Planning and development

- 1 To advise the Senior Solicitor/Lawyer/Caseworker on staffing and service delivery issues.
- 2 To participate in the Youth Legal's initiatives as appropriate.
- 3 To coordinate activities, procedures and systems so as to promote common policies and practices.

### Own Casework

- 4 To provide specialist legal advice and assistance on a wide range of:
  - a. housing problems, including homelessness, allocations, disrepair, possession proceedings, racial harassment, race discrimination, homophobia and acts of discrimination against transgender and non-binary people, security of tenure and private sector problems, and/or:
  - b. community care problems including provision under the s17, s20, s23C of the Children Act 1989, Care Act 2014 and other related community care issues.
- 5 To undertake a full range of County Court and High Court litigation and advocacy on behalf of individuals and client groups.
- 6 To assist in outreach sessions as and when required.
- 7 To raise target-based income for Youth Legal through Legal Aid Agency funding of cases and by claiming costs from other parties where possible.

- 8 To keep up-to-date with changes in housing and/or community care and associated legislation through attendance at training courses and by reading relevant housing and community care law journals.
- 9 To undertake casework administration including Legal Aid Agency administration and to bill cases promptly.
- 10 To engage in project work, campaigning, training, publicity and information work and support to other agencies as required.

### **Team Work**

- 11 To encourage good team work and lines of communication between all members of staff.
- 12 To participate in Team meetings where the day-to-day work is discussed and prioritised.
- 13 To work in accordance with the agreed procedures and decisions.
- 14 To act as a legal resource to caseworkers and other staff and to workers in other agencies. To provide training when necessary.
- 15 To collaborate with staff of other agencies and local community groups in undertaking work to advance the interests of Youth Legal's clients and influence practice and policy in their favour.
- 16 To provide second tier advice by email or telephone to other advisers who are working on behalf of young people or other client groups of Youth Legal.

### **Social Policy**

- 17 To be alert at all times to the social policy implications of issues presented by clients.
- 18 To take appropriate action to influence social policy in regard to these issues.

### **General**

- 19 To undertake work in accordance with the Solicitor Practice Rules with regard to the rules and principles of professional conduct and the agreed practice of Youth Legal.
- 20 To work with professional supervision from Youth Legal's Senior Solicitor and with accountability to the Board of Trustees.
- 21 To attend various meetings with staff and stakeholders including the meeting of the Board of Trustees if required.
- 22 To identify and implement own training and development needs to keep up to date with relevant legislation, specialist skills, IT and career progression including becoming or maintaining LAA Supervisor status.
- 23 To observe Youth Legal's Confidentiality Policy at all times.
- 24 To undertake all duties within the letter and the spirit of Youth Legal's Equality and Diversity Policy at all times.
- 25 To assist in cover arrangements during the absence of other members of staff or at times of pressure.
- 26 To undertake your own typing, filing, word processing and time recording of cases.
- 27 To undertake any other duties as may be reasonably be required by Youth Legal.

### **Special Features**

- 28 In addition to the tasks and duties listed in this job description to undertake such duties as may be identified and which are generally compatible with the functions of the post.
- 29 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 in accordance with the Staff Development Policy.

## **Person Specification Housing and/or Community Care Caseworker**

### **Essential**

- At least 2 years full time equivalent experience within housing and/or community care law
- Experience of conducting litigation from start to finish including representation in court
- Ability to draft varied documents from Protocol letters, court orders in housing and/or community care law
- Ability to run a varied caseload and to meet billing and outcome targets
- Proven ability to work in and contribute to a small, dedicated team
- Skill and knowledge to manage files efficiently and effectively and to keep accurate records of the time s/he spends on the work undertaken
- Good knowledge of the Legal Aid scheme and CCMS
- An ability to deal sympathetically and effectively with a wide variety of vulnerable young clients and communicate difficult technical and legal terms
- Commitment to equal opportunities
- Ability to act as a legal resource to staff, volunteers and to workers in other agencies
- Be self-administering and computer literate
- Work well under pressure and be well organized
- Desire to become a solicitor via the SQE route

### **Desirable**

- Have experience of working with young people aged between 16-25 with disabilities, those who are in care or are care leavers, refugees and unaccompanied asylum seeking minors, (young) carers and families with children who are destitute with no recourse to public funds
- Able to encourage strong lines of communication with Youth Legal stakeholders and team
- Experience of working in an ethnically diverse community.
- Experience in providing telephone advice and 2<sup>nd</sup> tier advice
- Experience in fundraising
- An interest in developing and pioneering litigation
- Willingness to learn other areas of law
- Ability to meet LAA Supervisor standard now or in the future

*Please submit a completed application form, along with your CV and covering letter, to [valerieclark@youthlegal.org.uk](mailto:valerieclark@youthlegal.org.uk) by 6pm 4<sup>th</sup> November 2024.*