

Housing Caseworker / Trainee

Thank you for your interest in working at Leeds Citizens Advice & Law Centre (LCALC). In this job pack you will find information about:

- Leeds Citizens Advice & Law Centre
- The national Citizens Advice service
- The Law Centres Network
- The job description/person specification and the team the role is within
- Benefits of working for Leeds Citizens Advice & Law Centre
- Our approach to equality and diversity
- The application process

Timescale for applications:

- Closing date: Monday 3rd August at 9am
- Interviews will be held from Wednesday 12th August onwards

Applications received after this time and date will not be considered. Please also note that CVs are not accepted as part of the application process.

Due to high levels of interest in our roles, we are unable to respond individually to applicants who are not invited to interview. If you do not hear from us by Monday 10th August, you should assume you are not being invited to interview on this occasion.

Applications should be sent to:

jobs@citizensadviceleeds.org.uk



Leeds Citizens Advice & Law Centre

Leeds Citizens Advice & Law Centre is a local charity working for a fairer society where people are free from the effects of poverty and social injustice. We help individuals, families and communities by offering free advice and representation and challenging systemic injustice.

We have deep roots in the local community, dating back to 1939 when we first opened our doors, and have been providing advice to Leeds residents ever since. Our status as a Law Centre is more recent, having joined the Law Centres Network in 2024, but is built on our long experience in working for social justice, locally and nationally.

Leeds Citizens Advice & Law Centre is the largest provider of free and independent advice in the city, helping 35,000 people a year through telephone, online and face-to-face services delivered at over 20 locations citywide. We have around 70 employees and 30 volunteers.

We deliver a wide range of advice services including:

- Generalist advice covering Benefits, Debt, Employment, Housing, Immigration and other social welfare law matters.
- Casework/legal advice in Benefits, Debt, Housing and Immigration.
- Outreach advice sessions for people experiencing mental health issues and for families with young children.
- Energy advice (addressing fuel poverty and energy efficiency).

Leeds CALC has strong partnerships with organisations in Leeds and across the region, working together to increase access to justice and strengthen the advice sector as a whole.

The role

Job title	Housing Caseworker / Trainee Housing Caseworker
Location	Leeds / Hybrid
Salary	Qualified NJC Salary Scale Points 18-22 (£31,536 - £33,698) Trainees NJC Salary Scale points 7-12 (£26,402 - £28,597)
Hours	Full-time (35 hours per week)
Reports to	Specialist Services Director

We are seeking a Housing Caseworker to be part of our established advice team. You will play a key role in ensuring our clients receive good quality housing advice, via a range of communication channels including face to face, telephone and digital. Working closely with the Housing Solicitor and Money Advice Team, you will advise clients on a range of housing issues, including homelessness, possession and eviction, disrepair, and renters' rights.

You will have experience of providing housing advice for a wide range of clients, assisting them to achieve the best outcome for their circumstances. An understanding of eligibility and scope for legal aid would be an advantage.

The role is also open to applicants interested in a trainee position. This would suit an experienced generalist adviser or caseworker looking to specialise in housing. You should be organised, with the ability to work independently. Strong verbal and written communication skills are essential as is the ability to listen, engage and empathise with vulnerable clients.

Job description & person specification

Main purpose and scope of job

The post holder will deliver housing advice and casework for a wide range of clients, assisting them to achieve the best outcome for their circumstances, including identifying and making referrals to the housing solicitor for legal aid.

The caseworker will manage and maintain an active caseload providing a comprehensive advice, advocacy and casework service on all matters relating to Housing.

Duties and responsibilities

1. Advice and casework

1.1 Provide advice and casework covering the full range of Housing issues including housing status, housing options, homelessness, renters' rights, possession and eviction,

disrepair and housing conditions, deposits, and complaints.

1.2 Act for the client where necessary and communicate with third parties to progress a case.

1.3 Advise and assist clients with homelessness applications, identifying and challenging negative decisions.

1.4 Advise and assist clients with threatened or actual eviction, advising on possession notices, warrants for eviction, and court claims including counter claims.

1.5 Ensure income maximisation through applications for discretionary housing payments, and identify related advice issues, signposting and making referrals for support as appropriate.

1.6 Identify cases which are in scope for legal aid and complete eligibility checks, making referrals to the Legal Team as appropriate.

1.7 Assist clients with other related problems where they are an integral part of their case and refer to other in-house advisers or specialist agencies as appropriate.

1.8 Deliver advice through a variety of channels including face to face (drop in and appointments), telephone or digital channels.

1.9 Ensure advice is provided in accordance with contractual requirements.

1.10 Ensure that individual targets are met in order to contribute to team targets.

1.11 Provide good quality advice to clients, ensuring that all advice and casework conforms to Advice Quality Standards as appropriate, and follows organisational procedures.

1.12 Provide additional cover for sessions in cases of staff absence.

2. Research and Campaigns

2.1 Assist with research and campaigns work by providing information about clients' circumstances through the appropriate channel.

2.2 Maintain professional relationships with local agencies to further good quality advice, research and campaigns work.

2.3 Alert other staff to local and national issues.

3. Professional Development

3.1 Keep up to date with legislation, policies and procedures relating to advice and attend appropriate training.

3.2 Attend relevant internal and external meetings as agreed with the line manager.

3.3 Identify own training needs and agree with line manager training and development activities to be undertaken.

3.4 Prepare for and attend supervision sessions.

4. Other duties and responsibilities

4.1 Contribute to monitoring and evaluation of the service.

4.2 Use IT for case recording, document production, statistical recording and other information required for reports on the service.

4.3 Promote the aims and principles of the Citizens Advice service.

4.4 Abide by and assist in the implementation of organisation policies and procedures including Health and Safety, IT, information assurance and equalities and diversity policies.

4.5 Present a professional appearance, help maintain an orderly working environment and act at all times to uphold the good reputation of Citizens Advice Leeds.

4.6 Carry out any other tasks that may be within the scope of the post to ensure the effective delivery and development of the service

Housing Caseworker / Trainee	Caseworker		Trainee	
	Essential	Desirable	Essential	Desirable
1. Recent and substantial experience of providing housing advice and/or casework to Advice Quality Standards.	✓			
2. Certificate in Generalist Advice Work or equivalent qualification.		✓		✓
3. An interest in and commitment to developing housing law casework skills.	✓		✓	
4. Good understanding of housing advice issues, such as possession and eviction action, homelessness, disrepair, and renters' rights.	✓			✓
5. Experience of managing a caseload and taking action on behalf of clients.	✓			✓
6. Experience of working in legal aid funded services.		✓		✓
7. Excellent written and verbal communication skills and the ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of clients, third parties and stakeholders.	✓		✓	
8. Proven ability and willingness to meet appropriate targets (quality and quantity) set by funders and the organisation.	✓		✓	
9. Excellent IT skills including experience of using case management systems to carry out daily duties (LCALC currently uses Google Workspace).	✓		✓	
10. Good literacy and numeracy skills relevant to the role, and ability to keep clear and accurate records.	✓		✓	
11. Excellent decision making, organisational and problem solving skills	✓		✓	

12. Positive approach to working in a team and contributing to wider organisation goals.	✓		✓	
13. Ability to work under pressure on a number of tasks and meet deadlines.	✓		✓	
14. Proactive approach to personal development and the updating of skills and knowledge.	✓		✓	
15. Professional work ethic: honest, conscientious, self-motivated and reliable.	✓		✓	
16. Demonstrable commitment to Leeds Citizens Advice & Law Centre's values of fairness, equality and social justice.	✓		✓	

Benefits of working for Leeds Citizens Advice & Law Centre

Leeds Citizens Advice & Law Centre offers a competitive remuneration package with additional benefits that support a positive work-life balance:

- 17. Full-time hours are 35 per week with a flexible working policy
- 18. Defined contribution pension scheme
- 19. Employee assistance programme with access to 24/7 telephone support
- 20. Annual leave entitlement starting at 25 days p.a. (plus bank holidays) and increasing with long service
- 21. Incremental pay awards
- 22. We are a Disability Confident Employer and a Mindful Employer
- 23. Located in the city centre, directly opposite the Combined Courts centre, with good transport links

Our commitment to equality and diversity

Leeds Citizens Advice & Law Centre is committed to providing a supportive and inclusive culture for our employees, volunteers, service users and other stakeholders.

We recognise the positive value of diversity, promoting equality and fairness, and challenging discrimination. We value the benefits of having a diverse workforce and will take steps to recruit from the widest pool of qualified candidates practicable, ensuring that employment opportunities are open and accessible to all on the basis of their individual qualities and personal merit.

Leeds Citizens Advice & Law Centre is a Disability Confident Employer and a Mindful Employer and we are committed to showing a positive and enabling attitude to employees

and job applicants with disabilities or mental health issues and our employee policies and benefits support that commitment.

The application process

- You will find details about our vacancies and how to apply on our website www.citizensadviceleeds.org.uk on the *Working for us* page. On this page you will find:
 - Job descriptions for current vacancies
 - Guidance on how to apply
 - Application form
 - Diversity monitoring form
- When you have filled in the application form please email it to us at jobs@citizensadviceleeds.org.uk
- You should also complete the anonymous diversity monitoring form on the *Working for us* page of our website
- If you are shortlisted for a role we will contact you to invite you to an interview. Interviews are carried out by a panel of 2-3 people and are usually face-to-face. Interviews may be carried out online if necessary.
- We may also ask you to undertake an exercise as part of the assessment process. This could include providing answers to case studies for advice roles, making a presentation for a management role, or other appropriate activity.
- Following the interview process you will be contacted to inform you if we are making an employment offer or not. This verbal offer will be followed by a written confirmation subject to the receipt of satisfactory references and completion of ID and other checks as required for the role.
- Verbal feedback will be offered to candidates who are unsuccessful at the interview but we do not provide written feedback.

Application form

Complete the application form and return it by post or email no later than the closing date referred to in the advert. If you return your application via email there is no requirement to send a hard copy in the post.

CVs will not be accepted as a substitute for the application form, unless specifically stated in the advert.

The application form plays a key part in our recruitment and selection process. We use the information you provide about your skills, experience, career and education history to decide whether or not to invite you for an interview. It is important that you complete the application form as fully and accurately as possible, ensuring that you give specific examples which demonstrate how you meet the criteria for the role for which you are applying.

Please provide one example for each criterion. Choose examples of past experience that clearly demonstrate what we are looking for, and be precise about what you did, how you did it and the outcome or result of your actions. Provide recent work examples wherever possible but examples from other aspects of your life such as voluntary work, school or college experiences, can also be given.

Disability Confident Employer

As an organisation that values equality, fairness and diversity, Leeds Citizens Advice & Law Centre encourages applications from candidates from all backgrounds. We are a Disability Confident Employer and signatories to the Mindful Employer Charter.

We commit to invite to interview all disabled applicants who meet the minimum (essential) criteria for the role. To opt into this scheme, please tick the relevant box on the application form. The essential criteria for the role are shown in the person specification. Please let us know if you have any access or adjustment needs as part of the recruitment process.

If you are invited to an interview we will ask you about any access needs or adjustments to the interview/assessment process that you may need. Please be assured we will be supportive in discussing reasonable adjustments with you at any stage of the recruitment process, although we cannot guarantee to be able to meet all requests.

Shortlisting outcomes

Shortlisted applicants will be invited for an interview. Some positions may require additional assessments (practical task/test or assessment centre) and information on this will be provided if you are invited to interview.

Entitlement to work in the UK

A job offer will be subject to confirmation that you are permitted to work in the UK in accordance with the provisions of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996. If you are invited to an interview you will be asked to provide evidence of your entitlement to work in the UK at that time.

Diversity Monitoring

Leeds Citizens Advice & Law Centre encourages and welcomes applications from suitably skilled candidates from all backgrounds. Monitoring recruitment and selection procedures is one way of helping us to ensure that there is no unfair discrimination in the way that we recruit people. To do this we need to know about the diversity profile of people who apply for posts at Leeds Citizens Advice & Law Centre. This information is given in confidence for monitoring purposes only and is not seen by anyone responsible for making recruitment decisions. However, if you would prefer not to answer any of the questions we ask, please leave them blank.

References

All job offers are subject to the receipt of two satisfactory references. One should be from your current or most recent employer (or your course tutor if you have just left education). The other should be someone who knows you in a work related, voluntary or academic capacity. Both referees should be able to comment on your suitability for the role. References will only be taken up for successful candidates following interview.

Criminal convictions

Anyone who applies to work within Leeds Citizens Advice & Law Centre will be asked to disclose details of unspent convictions during the recruitment process.

Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar you from working for Leeds Citizens Advice & Law Centre but we are not able to employ anyone with a conviction for a sexual offence against a child or vulnerable adult regardless of when the offence took place. All other convictions will be considered on an individual basis.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) disclosures are only requested where proportionate and relevant to the post concerned. If the post for which you are applying requires a DBS disclosure, this will be noted in the application pack.