



Release is a charity providing front-line services to people who use drugs and those in recovery. This contact brings unrivalled in-depth knowledge of the problems caused by the present legislation and how this could be significantly reduced. Our campaigns are derived from the experiences of our clients, so we advocate for the reform of the UK drug laws to bring about a fair and compassionate legal framework for drug use in our society.

APPLICATION GUIDANCE

We invite applications for the solicitor/barrister post from those who share our commitment to supporting the legal and human rights of people whose lives are affected by drug use and drug policy. As a member of our dynamic legal team, based in London, your responsibilities will include:

- Delivery of legal advice at legal surgeries based in drug and alcohol treatment centres in London;
- Casework resulting from the legal surgeries;
- Legal advice to the public and professionals about legal issues connected with drug use (training will be provided);
- Updating our specialist publications;
- Recruitment and supervision of volunteers
- Contributing to our commentary on drugs legislation;
- Assisting with the development of our website and other IT-related service initiatives and their legal compliance.

Requirements for the post include:

- Successful completion of Training Contract or Pupillage
- Preferred 1 years' experience of providing social welfare legal advice and assistance or housing litigation in a professional setting but applications also welcomed from those working outside these areas of law.

The successful candidate will have a **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)** check upon appointment.

Closing time & date:	Rolling recruitment
Interviews to be held:	Throughout 2022
Start date:	As soon as available
Salary:	£29,636 - £35,934 pa (based on PQE & experience) + 3% pension contribution
Contract Type:	Permanent
Holidays:	29 days plus public holidays
Location:	London (Initially working from home)

To apply for the position, please send a current CV and a covering letter/supporting statement detailing why you are suitable for the position to recruitment@release.org.uk

Applicants are strongly advised to use the supporting statement as the opportunity to relate their skills to the job description and person specification.

For an informal and confidential discussion regarding the position, please contact the Head of Legal Services – Kirstie Douse kirstie@release.org.uk

** For this job, Release will only consider applications from those who already have the right to live and work in the UK. This is because, in order for Release to apply successfully for a work permit, we need to show that there are no suitable candidates who are normally resident in the UK or are nationals of the European Economic area (EU States plus Norway and Iceland). See the Home Office Immigration & Nationality Directorate (www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk) for information on the UK Government's immigration policy.

Release is committed to promoting equal opportunities

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: Solicitor/ Barrister

LINE MANAGED BY: Supervising Solicitor/Head of Legal Services

OVERVIEW

This is a full time position (35 hours per week). The post holder can work through a mixed model of home working with a minimum 2 days per week in the office. At the moment, the post holder will be required to deliver via telephone and/or teleconferencing a minimum of 2 services at drug treatment/day centres per week providing legal services to clients of the centre. **Please note that once the services safely reopen then in-person delivery will resume.** The services delivered at the centres include legal advice, assistance and representation with particular focus on welfare benefits, housing and debt matters. The post holder will also be required (after a period of induction and/or training) to provide advice on Release's national legal helpline. This usually entails providing advice on issues pertaining to the criminal law and criminal justice system related to drugs offences. In addition to the delivery of legal services, the post holder will also be required to assist with the policy work undertaken by the organisation. The working hours are 10am – 6pm Monday to Friday with a one hour lunch break.

MAIN OBJECTIVES

- To deliver high quality legal services to clients of drug treatment centres in the London area.
- To provide advice, casework and representation in the category of welfare benefits, housing and debt.
- To provide legal advice on the national helpline to those impacted upon by the drug laws or have legal problems due to their drug use (training will be provided).

Delivery of legal services

- 1 To attend 2-3 drug treatment centres per week to provide legal services to clients of the centre.
- 2 To provide legal advice and assistance on a wide range of welfare benefit matters, housing law and debt. This will include dealing with cessation of benefits; benefit appeals; overpayments; backdated claims; homelessness applications; rent arrears; debts with creditors including commercial debts/ court fines/ overpayments.

- 3 To provide representation at First Tier Social Security Tribunals.
- 4 Undertake casework where appropriate to do so and refer to solicitor firms where necessary.
- 5 To keep up-to-date with changes in relevant areas of law through own research and attending training.
- 6 To provide legal advice on the national helpline as and when required.
- 7 To engage in project work, training, publicity and information work as required.
- 8 To undertake your own typing, filing and word processing.
- 9 To undertake regular reviews of all new and ongoing clients.

Volunteer Programme

- 10 To assist the Head of Legal Services in recruiting volunteers to the legal volunteer programme.
- 11 Provide supervision and training to legal volunteers.

Policy Work

- 12 To assist the Head of Legal Services and the Executive Director in setting and developing both operational and strategic policies.
- 13 Provide commentary on legal developments within the context of drug legislation and policies.
- 14 Feed into public consultations which impacts on drug policy and/or people who use drugs.

General

- 15 To work effectively, co-operatively and in a supportive manner with colleagues at Release and other organisations with which it works.
- 16 To keep accurate and up to date records and ensure that all communications, written and oral, are of a professional standard. To creatively use telephone, email and website for communicating legal advice and information.
- 17 Represent the organisation in a positive and professional manner.
- 18 To undertake any other duties as may be reasonably required by senior management at Release.

Person Specification:

Successful shortlisted candidates will meet the following criteria. The selection panel will assess each applicant against these criteria. The primary method(s) of assessment are indicated after each criteria as follow:

- (C) - Curriculum Vitae and Supporting Statement;
- (I) - Interview;
- (E) - Essential;
- (D) - Desirable

		Experience, Skills and Knowledge required	Essential or Desirable	Assessed
Experience	1.	Successful completion of Training Contract/ Pupillage	E	C
	2.	At least 12 months experience of providing legal advice and assistance in one or more of the following areas: welfare benefits, housing, debt <u>OR</u> criminal law(this may be as part of the training contract)	D	C I
	3.	Willingness to train in other areas of laws, beyond current experience	E	C
	4.	Experience of delivering legal advice to clients in a professional setting	E	C I
	5.	Experience in civil and human rights work	D	C I
	6.	Experience in the writing and development of targeted literature aimed at both clients and other professionals	D	C I
Skills & Abilities	7.	Good organisational skills and the ability to plan, prioritise and time manage work	E	C
	8.	Excellent communication skills, both written and oral	E	C I
	9.	Ability to work both in a team and independently	E	C I
	10.	Good computer literacy	E	C
Knowledge & Understanding	11.	Committed to safeguarding and promoting the civil and human rights of drug users and other marginalised groups in society.	E	I
	12.	An understanding of current drug laws and policy issues	D	C I
	13.	An understanding of vulnerable marginalised groups	E	I
	14.	An understanding and commitment to equal opportunities in both the workplace and in service delivery.	E	I
	15.	Ability to stay calm under pressure and maintain a sense of humour	E	I