

Senior Solicitor

Recruitment Pack 2021

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# Introduction

Thank you for your interest in becoming the Senior Solicitor with Luton Law Centre.

Luton Law Centre was formed in 1989. We are a member of the Law Centres Network, and a [not-for-profit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Not-for-profit) [legal practice](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legal_practice), a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. We are independent, and the work of the Centre is governed by an elected Board of Trustees.

The Law Centre movement has been active in the UK since the 1970s. As a movement, we specialise in the areas of civil law most relevant to disadvantaged communities and offer specialist legal advice, casework, and representation in these areas of law. Our role is to assist people who cannot afford a lawyer and increase the delivery of legal aid and areas of law to the most vulnerable people. Although the extent and scope of legal aid has decreased in recent years, Luton Law Centre remains a key resource in our community.

As Luton’s specialist Legal Advice Agency, we give professional, confidential legal advice and assistance.

We offer three areas of law, Housing, Community Care, and Immigration and Asylum.

For each area of law, we offer a free advice line twice a week. Anyone can phone us at these times to get immediate and free legal advice about housing issues, getting the right care and support at home, or about immigration and asylum.

We offer detailed casework and representation for clients who are eligible for legal aid in Housing, Community Care, Immigration and Asylum. We also receive grant funding from Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation as part of the London Luton Airport Ltd Community Investment Fund, the Community Justice Fund and a number of charitable trusts. We hold the Lexcel Quality Mark.

The Senior Solicitor will work closely with the Centre Director to provide overall direction to and supervision of the legal work of the Law Centre. They will also provide advice, casework and representation in housing, community care or immigration and asylum law.

We look forward to your application.

Pauline Gilson

Centre Director

Luton Law Centre

# About Luton Law Centre

## What We Believe

We believe that Luton Law Centre is a valuable local resource and that society is stronger when everyone has access to justice, regardless of their means.

We use our legal expertise to stand up for the rights of disadvantaged people.

## Our Objectives

The Objects of the Charity are

1. to relieve poor persons resident or working in a designated area by providing such persons with legal advice, assistance, representations, and services which they could not otherwise obtain because of lack of means.
2. to advance the education of qualifying persons in relation to the law and legal issues and to make the law known and accessible to them.
3. to advance any charitable purposes beneficial to the qualifying persons and their community.

## What We Do

We focus on providing legal services to people who may be marginalised in society, or who are experiencing discrimination.

Our clients are from a wide variety of ethnic minority community groups.

Most of our clients are disadvantaged.

Our aim is to discover the underlying cause of problems and take a holistic approach to solving those problems for both the client and the community.

We can’t solve all the problems through legal work, so we maintain a high level of awareness of the services available in the area and refer our clients to those services where appropriate for other specialist support.

We are staffed by a Centre Director, a Senior Solicitor, 6 solicitors/caseworkers and an administrator. The areas of Law that we currently cover are:

* Housing
* Community Care
* Immigration and Asylum

We offer a free advice line in each area twice a week and provide detailed casework and representation for clients.

# Background to the Role

We are seeking a full-time Senior Solicitor to join our small, friendly team.

Applicants should have a minimum of three years’ experience as a practising solicitor and preferably 2 years’ experience as an LAA Contract Category Supervisor in housing, community care, immigration and asylum law, public law, welfare benefits, employment or discrimination.

The post-holder will provide overall direction to and supervision of the legal work of the Law Centre including ensuring compliance with professional standards and contract requirements.

The post-holder will also conduct casework in a relevant area of law.

Time Commitment

We are seeking a candidate who can offer 25 to 35 hours per week. Additional hours may be required when necessary.

## Location

The post holder will be based at our office in Luton (hybrid working during the pandemic)

## Remuneration

The full-time salary is £36,000 to £39,000 (FTE) depending on experience and qualifications.

## Term

The position is permanent.

## Closing Date

The closing date for applications is 5pm on Tuesday 11 January 2022.

## Interviews

Interviews will be held during the week commencing 17 January 2022.

Job Description Senior Solicitor

**Contract**: Permanent, 25-35 hours per week

**Salary:** £36,000 to £39,000 (FTE)

**Annual Leave:** 30 days annual leave (FTE), including statutory holidays

**Reports to**: the Centre Director

**Location:** Community House, 15 New Bedford Road, Luton, LU1 1SA (hybrid working)

**Duties**

***Casework & Supervision***

* Ensure that legal aid caseworkers and supervisors are competent to undertake their roles.
* Ensure that the documented supervision systems and file reviews are undertaken effectively and in accordance with the Law Centre’s policies and procedures.
* Ensure that trainee solicitors receive proper and adequate training.
* Ensure that all casework undertaken is compliant with the SRA Standards and Regulations; the legal aid contract, the relevant quality standard (Lexcel or the SQM); and such other rules and requirements as may be relevant.
* Conduct your own casework in a relevant category of law, including a legal aid caseload, for approximately 3-4 days per week.

***Systems and Processes***

* Ensure that the Centre’s systems, processes and controls are robust, up-to-date and compliant with the SRA Standards and Regulations; OISC Rules; the legal aid contract; the relevant quality standard (Lexcel or the SQM); and such other rules and requirements as may be relevant.
* Ensure that the Centre’s templates (and particularly the client care letter, file closure letter and complaints procedure) are up-to-date and compliant with SRA and OISC requirements.
* Ensure that the client information remains confidential and that client files are handled and stored in accordance with GDPR and the Law Centre’s policies and procedures (including archiving).
* Ensure that the Law Centre is fully compliant with the SRA Accounts Rules and, in particular, that:
  + There are full and up-to-date client ledgers
  + That client account reconciliation is undertaken and signed off at least every 5 weeks
  + That a client account audit report is files with the SRA where required
  + That any balance on client account at the end of a case is either returned to the client or according to SRA regulations as quickly as possible.

***Breaches and Complaints***

* According to the complaints policy in place at the time investigate any complaint about the quality of work or compliance with the SRA, LAA or other rules and to:
* Respond to the complaint.
* Where fault is discovered, to review and implement systems to ensure that the same issue is less likely to occur in future.
* To monitor breaches and determine whether any breach should be reported to the SRA, LAA, OISC or ICO and to work with the Director and Trustees in preparing any such report.

***Insurance and Reserves***

* Ensure that the Law Centre holds professional indemnity insurance that provides adequate and appropriate cover in respect of the services that the Law Centre provides or has provided.
* Work with the Director to ensure that the Law Centre holds sufficient reserves to ensure that, on closure, there are adequate funds available to ensure that:
* staff can be paid to properly transfer client files, protecting client interests;
* monies held in the client account can be properly transferred or otherwise lawfully dealt with;
* client files and other confidential information can be securely stored in accordance with Centre policies and procedures;
* other confidential client information (including information on computers and mobile devices) can be securely archived or destroyed.

Person Specification

**Required**

1. At least three years’ experience as a practising solicitor.
2. Good working knowledge of Legal Aid Agency (LAA) contracts.
3. Good working Knowledge of the SRA Standards and Regulations (including the SRA Accounts Rules) and the OISC Code of Standards.
4. Good working knowledge of the legal aid contract and relevant quality standard (Lexcel or the SQM).

**Desirable**

1. Proven track record of effective staff management and supervision.
2. At least 2 years’ experience as an LAA Contract Category Supervisor in housing, community care, immigration and asylum law, public law, welfare benefits, employment or discrimination.
3. Experience of working with a board of charity trustees, awareness of GDPR and data security.
4. Ability to manage own time and particularly as between casework role and senior solicitor role.
5. Good working knowledge of the SRA Competence Statement and how that should influence training and development within the Centre.
6. Excellent IT skills including ability to use the MS Office suite and case management software.
7. Knowledge and awareness of broader access to justice issues.
8. Experience of working in a community-based organisation in a community with diverse populations and cultures.

**Personal Style, Skills and Qualities**

* Demonstrates enthusiasm, passion, drive and determination.
* Demonstrates integrity, honesty and flexibility.
* Demonstrates active listening skills and is open to the views of others.
* Highly developed sense of legal professionalism and a commitment to access to justice with excellent client care skills.
* Evidence of commitment to personal learning and professional development.
* Commitment to contributing to, and appreciation of, Luton Law Centre’s Equality and Diversity Policies.

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# How to Apply

Please apply using the application form. Please do not send your CV.

You should refer to the documentation in filling out the application form and show how you meet the person specification and can demonstrate the skills that we are seeking.

### Ways to Complete the Forms

1. You can fill the form directly in this pdf using the free Adobe Acrobat Fill & Sign Tool. You can find instructions at <https://helpx.adobe.com/acrobat/using/fill-and-sign.html#fill_your_PDF_form>
2. Alternatively, you can download a Word Version of the required forms at <http://www.lutonlawcentre.org.uk/vacancies/> or request the forms from the office on 01582 482000.
3. You can also download or request the forms and fill in by hand.

### Send Your Application.

Please send your completed application form to: [pgilson@lutonlawcentre.org.uk](mailto:pgilson@lutonlawcentre.org.uk)

**The deadline for applications is 5pm on Tuesday 11 January 2022.**

Please do not hesitate to call with any questions you may have. You may speak to Pauline Gilson, the Centre Director, on 07702 884562.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **A** | **Personal Details** | | |
| Name |  | | |
| Address |  | | |
| Postcode | |  |
| Email |  | | |
| Daytime telephone |  | Evening telephone |  |
| May we contact you during the day? | | YES | NO |

# Application Form for post of Senior Solicitor

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **B** | **Eligibility** | | | | | | |
| When are you free to take up a post? | | | | |  | | |
| Do you need a work permit or permission from the Home Office to take up this post? | | | | | YES | | NO |
| National Insurance No.: | | | | |  | | |
| Do you have any criminal convictions?  *If yes, please give details in your covering letter.*  This should exclude any spent convictions under Section 4(2) of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, unless the job for which you are applying involves working with vulnerable adults or children in which case cautions, bindovers, pending prosecutions, spent and unspent convictions must be declared. A criminal conviction is not necessarily a barrier to appointment. A Criminal Records Bureau check will be undertaken. | | | | | YES | | NO |
| Are you subject to any disciplinary or other restrictions through a professional body (e.g. SRA)?  *If yes, please give details in your covering letter.*  This is not necessarily a barrier to appointment. | | | | | YES | | NO |
| Do you have any disability for which you need special provision?  *If yes, please give details in your covering letter.* | | | | | YES | | NO |
| **C** | **Referees (Please give the contact details of two referees)** | | | | | | | |
| **May we contact your referees prior to offering you the post?** | | | | **Yes** | | **No** | | |
| 1. **Name** |  | | | | | | | |
| Role |  | | | | | | | |
| Address |  | | | | | | | |
| Postcode | |  | | | | | |
| Email |  | | | | | | | |
| Daytime telephone |  | Evening telephone |  | | | | | |
| 1. **Name** |  | | | | | | | |
| Role |  | | | | | | | |
| Address |  | | | | | | | |
| Postcode | |  | | | | | |
| Email |  | | | | | | | |
| Daytime telephone |  | Evening telephone |  | | | | | |

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| **D** | | | **Employment History**  Please give your employment history, including periods of unemployment or time caring for dependants etc. Please indicate whether full-time, part-time, paid, or voluntary, and give dates, starting with the most recent. Continue on additional sheets where necessary. | |
| **From** | **To** | **Employer & Contact Details** | | |
|  |  |  | | |
| **Job Title** | |  | | |
| **Reason for Leaving** | |  | | |
| **Salary at this post** | |  | | |
| **Duties/Responsibilities** | | | | |
|  | | | | |
| **From** | | **To** | | **Employer & Contact Details** |
|  | |  | |  |
| **Job Title** | |  | | |
| **Reason for Leaving** | |  | | |
| **Salary at this post** | |  | | |
| **Duties/Responsibilities** | | | | |
|  | | | | |
| **From** | | **To** | | **Employer & Contact Details** |
|  | |  | |  |
| **Job Title** | |  | | |
| **Reason for Leaving** | |  | | |
| **Salary at this post** | |  | | |
| **Duties/Responsibilities** | | | | |
|  | | | | |
| **From** | | **To** | | **Employer & Contact Details** |
|  | |  | |  |
| **Job Title** | |  | | |
| **Reason for Leaving** | |  | | |
| **Salary at this post** | |  | | |
| **Duties/Responsibilities** | | | | |
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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **E** | | **Education and Training** | |
| **From** | **To** | | **School/college/university/training provider** |
|  |  | |  |
| **Courses Completed/Qualifications Gained** | | | |
|  | | | |
| **From** | **To** | | **School/college/university/training provider** |
|  |  | |  |
| **Courses Completed/Qualifications Gained** | | | |
|  | | | |
| **From** | **To** | | **School/college/university/training provider** |
|  |  | |  |
| **Courses Completed/Qualifications Gained** | | | |
|  | | | |
| **From** | **To** | | **School/college/university/training provider** |
|  |  | |  |
| **Courses Completed/Qualifications Gained** | | | |
|  | | | |

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| **F Please outline why your skills and experience match our person specification and skills requirement. You may continue on another sheet to a maximum of 2 A4 sheets.** |
|  |

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| --- | --- |
| I declare that the information given on this form, and in the covering letter provided with it, is correct to the best of my knowledge and understand that by signing this form I give consent to my personal information being recorded and stored in line with the Luton Law Centre Privacy Policy (available online). | Signature |
| Date |  |

# Recruitment Monitoring Form

When we advertise for posts, we like to be able to monitor and check that we are attracting a wide variety of applicants. It is helpful to us if you can complete and return this form, together with your application.

This monitoring form is detached from your application as soon as we receive it, and none of the information contained in it is used for any selection or election purposes.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **General Information** | | | | | | | | |
| Are you | Female |  | Male |  | Other |  | Prefer not to say |  |
| Are you aged | Under 25 |  | 25-40 |  | 40-60 |  | Over 60 |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **How do you describe your ethnic origins?** | | | | | |
| White British |  | White/Black Caribbean |  | Indian |  |
| White Irish |  | White/Black African |  | Pakistani |  |
| White Other |  | White/Asian |  | Bangladeshi |  |
| Black Caribbean |  | Mixed Other |  | Asian Other |  |
| Black African |  | Chinese |  | Other |  |
| Black Other |  |  |  | Prefer not to say |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Do you have a disability?** | | | |
| Not considered disabled |  | Cognitive impairment |  |
| Physical impairment |  | Long-standing illness or condition |  |
| Sensory impairment |  | Other |  |
| Mental Health Condition |  | Prefer not to say |  |
| Learning disability/difficulty |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Religion** | | | |
| Buddhist |  | Muslim |  |
| Christian |  | Sikh |  |
| Hindu |  | Other - please specify |  |
| Jewish |  | Prefer not to say |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Sexual Orientation** | | | | | |
| Bisexual |  | Gay Woman/Lesbian |  | Gay Man |  |
| Heterosexual/Straight |  | Other |  | Prefer not to say |  |