

Housing Caseworker/Solicitor

Recruitment Pack 2022

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# Introduction

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Caseworker or 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 and have 6 caseworkers with well over 75 years’ experience between them.

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 offer a paid service for Immigration work that is outside the scope of legal aid.

We provide the Duty Scheme in the County Court for people who do not already have a solicitor and face losing their home through county court possession proceedings.

We are actively seeking a committed and enthusiastic Housing Caseworker or Solicitor with the potential of taking on other areas of 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 Senior Solicitor, 6 PT caseworkers, one administrator (FT) and a Centre Director (PT). The areas of Law that we 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.

Luton Law Centre is funded by grants and Legal Aid contracts, and charitable donations.

# Background to the Role

We are seeking a full-time **Housing Solicitor/Caseworker** to join our small, friendly, team.

Applicants should have a minimum of two years’ experience of Housing law, and ideally some experience of Community Care law.

Ideally the postholders will have LAA Supervisor status, but we are prepared to support the right candidate to achieve this status.

We run a wide range of Housing cases covered by Legal Aid including a significant amount of representation work as part of the Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme. Our Housing Caseworkers/Solicitors also provide advice through our specialist telephone advice line on a rota basis.

The post-holder will be an integral part of the team that delivers our Housing Legal Aid Agency contract, participating in the rota for the Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme, and providing advice through our specialist telephone advice line.

We are open to job share; we have a full-time post available.

## Time Commitment

We are seeking a candidate who can offer 35 hours per week. We are open to a job share and/or a certain degree of flexibility. Additional hours may be required when necessary. No overtime is payable but time off in lieu may be agreed.

## Location

The postholder will be based at our office in Luton town centre (hybrid working)

## Remuneration

The full-time salary is £25,000 - £32,000 depending on experience and qualifications. Job Share welcome

Annual Leave

30 days annual leave (FTE), including statutory holidays.

## Term

The position is permanent.

## Closing Date

The closing date for applications is 5pm on Tuesday 30 August 2022. Applications should be sent by email to pgilson@lutonlawcentre.org.uk

# Job Description Housing Caseworker/Solicitor

## Purpose and Role

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Job Title: | Caseworker/Solicitor |
| Reports to | You are accountable to the Senior Solicitor and the Centre Director. For advice and casework matters, you are supervised by the relevant Area-of-Law Supervisor where applicable. |
| General | * With other staff you are required to maintain a legal service in social welfare law suited to the needs of the people of Luton.
* To provide specialist legal advice and casework services in the following area(s) of law: Housing
* You will adopt a flexible approach in dealing with the legal problems of individual and group clients and assist them to pursue a non-legal remedy where appropriate.
* You will implement the Law Centre's equality and diversity policy both internally and in the delivery of services to the public.
* You will at all times comply with the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) Rules of Professional Conduct relating to the conduct of a solicitor's practice, and with the instructions of any supervising solicitor given pursuant to those Rules.
* With other staff you will be required to maintain a sound administrative structure for the Law Centre.
* You will be involved, with other staff, in promotional work and publicity for the Law Centre
* You will give information and advice to the general public through the Law Centre’s telephone advice sessions and face-to-face interviews with individuals.
* With other staff, to assess and determine unmet legal need, particularly within your specialist areas and develop, organise and maintain a legal service to meet that need.
* On occasions, you may be required to work outside normal office hours, for which time off in lieu will be given.
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| Casework | * Where appropriate you will take up casework on behalf of clients, negotiate on their behalf, conduct litigation and represent them at all levels.
* You will work to the appropriate Quality Standard, by using the procedures set out in the Law Centre’s Office Manual.
* Where appropriate you will ensure that a CW1 is signed, or that Legal Aid is applied for, and that disbursements and costs are claimed.
* You will maintain accurate records of your work and time, to ensure compliance with contracts, and enable staff and the Board of Directors to monitor and evaluate the service.
* In particular you will do everything possible to ensure that you meet any targets or required outputs that are set in respect of contracts and grant funding.
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| Knowledge and keeping up to date | * You will maintain an up to date knowledge of the relevant law and an awareness of current legal issues. You will participate in and assist with any systems to ensure that all Law Centre staff are kept up to date with relevant issues and developments.
* You will accept supervision from other staff as appropriate and undergo training where necessary.
* You will help to publicise the law and educate users of the Law Centre about legal issues likely to have a significant effect on them.
* You will make contact with local voluntary organisations, especially those representing ethnic minorities and disadvantaged groups. You will act as a legal resource and offer advice to those organisations to enable them to expand the services they currently offer. You may be required to attend meetings of other organisations and address them on legal issues. You may be required to assist with training needs analysis and development of training courses.
* You will consult with staff and volunteers, and offer them support, supervision and training where needed.
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| Management and Administration  | * You will help to ensure that work is covered where necessary due to the absence of other staff members.
* You will attend and participate in staff meetings and abide by decisions of the staff group.
* You will attend Board of Directors meetings when required to do so and with other staff report regularly to the Board of Directors and be accountable to it for the running of the Law Centre and the provision of services to the public.
* You will assist in preparing annual reports of the Law Centre and in collating information in support of applications for funding.
* You will be responsible for your own administrative, clerical and typing tasks, although some assistance and support is available from the Law Centre’s administrators and volunteers.
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|  |
| Location | The job is based at Luton Law Centre 15 New Bedford Road, Luton, LU1 1SA |
| Hours of work | The jobholder will work a 35-hour week. Additional hours may be required when necessary. No overtime is payable but time off in lieu may be agreed.  |

# Person Specification

## Essential Criteria

1. A solicitor or caseworker.
2. Significant and recent post-qualification casework, representation and advocacy experience in Housing law.
3. Experience of undertaking work in a legal aid practice and a detailed understanding of legal aid eligibility requirements and legal aid applications, including using CCMS.
4. Knowledge of and ability to run case files in accordance with Lexcel or Specialist Quality Mark.
5. Excellent IT skills including ability to use the MS Office suite and case management software.

## Desirable Criteria

1. Significant and recent post-qualification casework, representation and advocacy experience in an additional area of law in particular Community Care.
2. Knowledge and awareness of broader access to justice issues.

## Personal Style, Skills and Qualities

* Demonstrates 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.

# 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 by 5pm Tuesday 30th August 2022.

You can also send by post to arrive by Tuesday 30th August 2022 to:

Pauline Gilson

Centre Director

Luton Law Centre

Community House

15 New Bedford Road

Luton LU1 1SA

Please do not hesitate to call with any questions you may have. You may speak to the Centre Director on 01582 482000.

# Application Form for post of Housing Caseworker/Solicitor

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

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **B** | **Eligibility** |
| 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 |
| When are you free to take up a post? |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **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** |
|  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **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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| **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 |  |

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| --- |
| **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 |  |

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| --- |
| **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 |  |  |  |

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| --- |
| **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 |  |