**Job description**

**Job title:** Paralegal

**Department:** Human Rights

**Location:** London

**Reporting to:** Partner and Senior Associate

**Hours:** 9:30am – 5:30pm, Monday to Friday.

**Contract:** Permanent

**About the role:**

The post will assist the Partner and Senior Associate Solicitor working on claims for abuse, both cases of non-recent childhood sexual and physical abuse; cases of current abuse or neglect in health, education and social care settings, including on behalf of clients who have been subjected to excessive restraint or seclusion in schools or health/care settings; and personal injury claims for workplace sexual violence.

The work involved will be varied and, at times, highly challenging. It will ideally suit a Paralegal who has relevant experience and / or interest in this area of law and is highly resilient given that working with and for this client group can be emotionally challenging at times.

The successful candidate should have excellent organisational and document management skills, be adept at time management and prioritisation, and be able to effectively support two supervisors who run demanding caseloads, diarising and planning work to meet deadlines, whilst working flexibly when needed as part of a wider team.

**Overall purpose for this role**

A Paralegal within the Abuse team is expected to provide legal support and perform delegated legal tasks under the supervision of the Partner and Senior Associate.

**Main duties and responsibilities**

* Communicate with clients, some of whom are vulnerable and may have communication difficulties, to provide case updates and answer queries.
* Draft / assist in drafting letters and documents, such as letters of notification / claim, witness statements and instructions to experts and Counsel.
* Accurately review and prepare summaries / chronologies of medical, social care, financial and other records and defendant disclosure.
* Request and obtain background records and assist with the gathering of evidence.
* Prepare Legal Aid applications under supervision.
* Complete various other case funding documents / fee agreements and client care letters.
* Undertake legal research tasks.
* In the absence of supervising fee-earner, ensure that urgent matters are referred to appropriate personnel.

**File/Case Management**

* Support the qualified fee-earners in the team at client meetings; take thorough, accurate attendance notes.
* Assist with case management by file reviews, the preparation of accurate file notes, assisting to monitor limitation and service deadlines.
* Deal with routine applications to the Court such as for anonymisation of the identity of the claimant.
* Assist with billing and recovery of legal costs. Prepare court and other documents for the approval of the fee earner.
* Organise and prepare court and other bundles.
* Attend court on applications, trials etc. when requested to do so.

**Client relations**

* Communicate effectively and empathetically with clients, Litigation Friends and witnesses via telephone, e-mail and in person, to take instructions and provide updates.
* Appropriately discuss sensitive material and topics with clients, sometimes to address distressing material, whilst tailoring communication to the clients’ needs.
* Dealing with new client enquiries when required.

**Information Technology**

* To utilise I.T. to provide a quality, cost effective and efficient service to clients.

**Training**

* To keep up-to-date by attending in-house seminars and webinars, through research, reading and attending courses if appropriate.
* To ensure that adequate training is received to be able to gain maximum benefit from the firm’s investment in Information Technology.

Any other tasks as might be required from time to time, including routine filing and general administrative work, although this is principally a fee-earning and not an admin-based role.

**Performance Measured By**

* Effective support of the Supervising Fee-earners.
* Efficiency in dealing with work and accuracy of work produced.
* Ability to work with initiative; maintaining a flexible and positive approach.
* Personal development and contribution to the overall objectives of the firm and the team.
* Good attendance and timekeeping.

**Person Specification**

**Essential**

* Excellent written and verbal communication skills, and the ability and sensitivity to tailor these to the intended audience.
* Genuine interest to work with a leading claimant law firm and passionate about providing access to justice to all.
* Relevant knowledge of domestic civil law and procedure and interest in this area of law (the area of civil litigation for sexual and physical abuse; mistreatment of vulnerable children and adults).
* Excellent organisational skills and the ability to plan and prioritise tasks to meet deadlines set by supervisors, whilst working flexibly when needed as part of a wider team.
* Emotional resilience given that working with this client group can be emotionally challenging at times.
* Experience in using a variety of relevant IT packages (MS Word, Excel, Case Management Systems, Outlook).

**Desirable**

* Relevant legal work experience in sexual and physical abuse will be highly advantageous.
* A good working knowledge of the operation of the LAA scheme would be highly desirable.

**To be demonstrated by (in application, covering letter and assessment / interview):**

* Strong academic background with academic legal qualification (Law Degree or GDL etc.) but LPC / SQE is not necessary.
* Previous legal experience in civil litigation in the courts of England and Wales, ideally personal injury and / or human rights claims.
* Legal or non-legal work experience working with or on behalf of vulnerable individuals and / or a challenging client group, and evidence of resilience and the ability to build trust and confidence / manage difficult situations and conversations.
* Proven ability to organise and prioritise a complex workload and work to tight deadlines in a team environment.