



**Housing
Rights**

Recruitment Pack

Solicitor

Closing date: 7 May 2024 at Midday

when everyone has a **home**

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WELCOME

from our CEO

Thank you for your interest in the role of Solicitor at Housing Rights.

This recruitment pack provides details of the work we do, the role of Solicitor and what we are seeking from candidates.

We are proud of the difference we make to people's lives in preventing homelessness and helping them with their housing problems. Last year, we helped over 13,000 people in Northern Ireland.

The commitment and dedication of our staff across all departments helps us achieve this. We are proud of our expert, passionate staff team.

In return, Housing Rights supports staff to develop their knowledge and careers. We offer flexible working, hybrid working and a generous leave entitlement. We work hard to ensure staff are working in a positive environment which promotes wellbeing and reflects our values.

The work of Housing Rights is becoming more critical in this unprecedented time. I hope the opportunity to join us is one that will interest and excite prospective candidates.

Kate M'Carley



when everyone has a **home**

WHO WE ARE

We improve lives by tackling homelessness and housing problems in Northern Ireland. We believe a good quality affordable home can be a building block to a stable life. We believe that everyone should have a home.

WHAT WE DO

We help people in Northern Ireland live in safe, suitable, and affordable homes. We provide services for the public and professionals working in housing.

Our services include:

- housing advice via our helpline
- online housing advice and information via our website
- advocacy and legal representation
- housing mediation
- advice and support for people in or leaving prison
- specialist support for young people at risk of homelessness
- advice for landlords
- support for generalist advice agencies
- policy and participation service to positively influence decisions made about housing and homelessness
- training and events for housing and advice professionals

THE DIFFERENCE WE MAKE

Over the course of 2022-2023 we supported people in Northern Ireland with housing and homelessness problems.



Prevented homelessness

We helped prevent homelessness for a total of 1,398 households



Improved skills and knowledge

100% of attendees felt attending our training improved their housing skills and knowledge



Provided advice

We provided advice, advocacy, and representation services to 13,517 households



Improved housing circumstances

9 out of 10 people who used our helpline reported their housing circumstances had improved



Improved wellbeing

7 out of 10 people who used our helpline reported an improved sense of wellbeing

OUR VALUES

I appreciate the growing diversity of the staff in Housing Rights
-Housing Rights Staff Survey 2023

Equality



Cooperation



Independence



Quality



Respect



Agility



OUR BENEFITS AND CULTURE

We offer our staff the following benefits:

Housing Rights is more a vocation than a job
-Housing Rights Staff Survey 2023



hybrid and flexible working



tailored learning and development plan



generous holiday allowance



enhanced employer pension scheme with free life assurance



accessible location and free parking



fun events for staff engagement



access to employee wellbeing services

Accreditations:

I think overall Housing Rights has a great culture and the staff as a team are brilliant
-Housing Rights Staff Survey 2023

- ✓ Living Wage Employer
- ✓ BS 76006 in Learning & Development
- ✓ BS 76006 Diversity & Inclusion
- ✓ Investing in Volunteers



WORKING AT HOUSING RIGHTS:

Results of our 2023 staff survey show:



5% increase in staff satisfaction in the last 5 years!



Categories staff were most satisfied with:

1. My work
2. Inclusion & Fair Treatment
3. Wellbeing and Engagement



Kerry Logan - Participation and Policy Coordinator

“I love working alongside and learning from my colleagues right across the organisation at Housing Rights – it is a fab team, made up of people who are passionate about social justice and constantly going above and beyond to support people experiencing housing problems or homelessness.”



Eamon Sheridan - Housing Adviser (Young People)

“By providing effective advice and advocacy for my client’s I have witnessed first-hand how our services can positively impact their lives.”



Bronagh Flynn - Business Development Coordinator

“I love the variety of my job and the people I work with. I work across the whole of the Housing Rights team and others within the housing sector every day. This allows me to help shape new projects and services that will help our clients and support the wider Housing Community - to ensure everyone has a home.”



Mischka James - Helpline Coordinator

“I love the ethos and strong mission of the organisation that fits well with my own personal values. I see first-hand the difference that I can make in helping people resolve their housing problems and prevent homelessness. Everyone works together as a team and I always feel supported by my colleagues.”

ABOUT THE ROLE

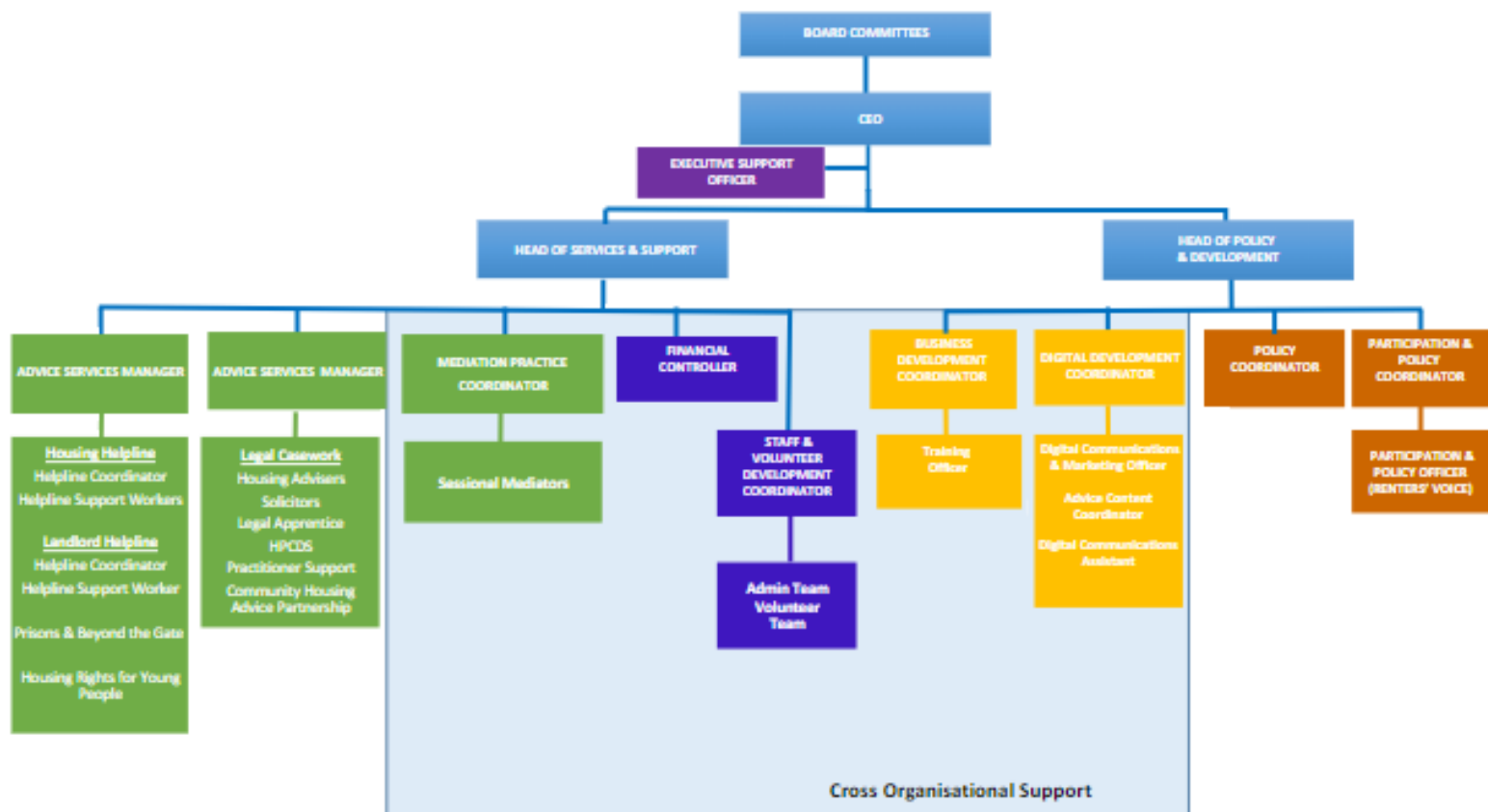
As a solicitor with Housing Rights, you will provide specialist legal support including advocacy and legal representation to Housing Rights clients, primarily by undertaking casework and legal guidance in:

- homelessness
- housing debt
- housing issues

You will:

- represent our clients before courts and where appropriate tribunals, instructing and working with counsel in cases in the higher courts
- provide other Housing Rights' advisers with legal advice and opinion on individual cases and general points of law
- take the lead role for the identification, coordination and development of strategic casework within Housing Rights

ORGANISATIONAL CHART



JOB DESCRIPTION

Purpose:

To further the mission and goals of Housing Rights by:

(i) providing specialist legal support primarily by undertaking casework and also by providing legal guidance.

Key Duties:

SERVICE DELIVERY

Casework

- to research relevant legislation/caselaw and in accordance with Housing Rights casework strategy to maintain a caseload of clients, including test cases, of clients requiring legal representation
- to represent Housing Rights clients before courts and where appropriate tribunals, and to instruct and work with counsel in cases in the higher courts
- to provide advice for individuals and agencies on the core areas of homelessness, housing debt and matters relating to renting accommodation through Housing Rights advice line
- to provide a specialist advocacy and representation service on all aspects of housing related to the organisation's core areas of work
- to adhere to legal and organisational requirements, including the Lexcel quality standard, in the provision of advice, advocacy and representation

Support & Consultancy

- to provide other advisers with legal advice and opinion on individual cases and general points of law
- to take the lead role for the identification, coordination and development of strategic casework within Housing Rights
- to provide an appropriate support/referral service for agencies

JOB DESCRIPTION

continued

Training & Legal Information

- to contribute to Housing Rights training events and seminars as appropriate
- to contribute to Housing Rights events, and to events of other organisations (seminars, workshops) as appropriate
- to contribute to Housing Rights internal publications, content & comms team, website articles and to contribute to other publications as appropriate
- to provide support to Housing Rights staff and others where appropriate, by checking accuracy of information and training materials

Research & Policy

- to monitor developments in housing and other relevant areas of law, policy and practice
- to contribute to the development of housing legislation and policy through the provision of practice-based comment
- in consultation with policy colleagues to respond to appropriate consultation documents and policy statements

Financial & Administrative

- to use the legal aid scheme and liaise with appropriate staff where necessary to comply with regulations governing legal aid, to include, but not limited to, applying for legal aid, seeking appropriate authorities and reporting to the Legal Services Agency NI to recover outlays and secure professional fees where necessary
- in cooperation with any other solicitor that may be employed by Housing Rights to aim to achieve any income-based targets that may be set by the organisation
- to keep detailed financial records and seek the appropriate prior authority and report and prepare statement of bill where necessary in accordance with professional standards where monies or outlay are obtained/expended in any cases
- to ensure compliance with the Law Society of Northern Ireland's principles of legal accounting
- to keep records to an appropriate standard of advice and casework for management, funders and in accordance with the relevant professional standards, for example, the standards required by Lexcel, the Legal Services Agency NI and Law Society of Northern Ireland where appropriate

JOB DESCRIPTION

continued

- to use information technology and be largely self servicing in its application where relevant to the work of the legal service
- to be responsible for the management of case files including the accurate inputting of relevant case details onto the organisation's computerised case recording system

QUALITY ASSURANCE

- to support the development and implementation of quality policies within the legal service
- to contribute to the retention of the Lexcel quality award
- to ensure compliance with relevant policies and procedures in the delivery of the legal service
- to implement the Housing Rights 'Lexcel Quality Management System' in relation to the legal service
- to bring any relevant quality assurance issues / opportunities for improvement to the attention of the Head of Operations

COMMUNICATIONS

- to ensure effective communication between the legal service, advice teams, management and all other organisational services
- to act as an effective spokesperson, including with the media, for the organisation as required
- to represent Housing Rights at external events and present a positive and professional image

DEVELOPING SELF AND OTHERS

- to plan, allocate and organise own workload
- to monitor and evaluate own work
- to develop self to enhance performance
- to contribute to training and development activities for colleagues

DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

- to create, develop and maintain effective internal working relationships
- to create, develop and maintain effective working relationships with service users/external agencies and relevant stakeholders
- to lead, facilitate and contribute to meetings/group discussions

JOB DESCRIPTION

continued

OTHER

- to act in accordance with the agreed values of the organisation
- to ensure the policy and procedure of the organisation, with respect to Equal Opportunities and Health and Safety, are observed
- to undertake any other duties, consistent with the post which may from time to time be required by the Advice Services Managers
- to attend meetings of the Board/sub committees as appropriate and to prepare written reports and documents as required

The duties of the post will be subject to review in accordance with the needs of the organisation.

PERSONAL SPECIFICATION

Job title	Solicitor
Grade	NICS SO £32,880-£34,011 pro rata (under review)
Hours of work	18.5 hours per week
Responsible to	Advice Services Manager

Education / Training

Essential

- *legally qualified as a solicitor in NI at the time of application
- *current practising certificate (or entitlement to obtain one) from the Law Society

Desirable

- *at least one year's experience working in housing or the voluntary sector
- *a minimum of one year's experience in NI working in a legal environment

Relevant experience

Essential

- *demonstrated experience and knowledge of High Court & County Court procedures in NI
- *demonstrated experience and knowledge of policies, practices & procedures involved in the administration of civil legal aid
- *demonstrated experience of personal representation in a formal environment on behalf of clients eg. Court, Tribunals

Desirable

- *demonstrated experience of providing advice to the public on social welfare issues particularly housing issues
- *demonstrated experience of compliance with the Lexcel quality standard
- *demonstrated experience and knowledge of Judicial Review procedure in NI
- *demonstrated experience of written representation/ advocacy on behalf of clients e.g. use of formal complaints/ appeals procedures to statutory bodies
- *demonstrated experience of personal representation in a formal environment on behalf of clients (eg Court, Tribunal) in relation to housing issues
- *knowledge of housing legislation, policy and practice in N.I
- *knowledge of Human Rights Act and Equality Legislation in Northern Ireland
- *demonstrated knowledge and experience of principles of legal accounting

PERSONAL SPECIFICATION

continued

Skills / Attributes

Essential

- excellent written & verbal communication skills, to meet the casework, consultancy, training & information and policy requirements of this post
- demonstrated ability to work on own initiative and as part of a team
- demonstrated ability to plan work and meet deadlines
- demonstrated ability to present a positive and professional organisational image

Desirable

- *skills in the use of I.T. Systems e.g. Microsoft Office applications and/or computerised case management systems
- excellent interpersonal & presentation skills
- excellent organisational skills
- demonstrated ability to follow policies and procedures

Values

- a commitment to the values of Housing Rights

Other

- flexible approach to working hours

****denotes shortlisting criteria***

TIMELINES

Advertise	.....	22 April 2024
Closing date	.....	7 May 2024 at Midday
Interview	.....	9 May 2024

INTERVIEW PANEL

Aisling Cunningham	.....	Housing Rights
Jill Downing	.....	Housing Rights
Amy Lyness	.....	Housing Rights

Complete and return the application and equal opportunities monitoring forms by the closing date.

You can submit the forms by:



recruitment@housingrights.org.uk



Emma Kinghan, Administration Officer, Housing Rights, The Skainos Centre, 239 Newtownards Road, Belfast BT4 1AF

If you need us to make any reasonable adjustments to help you during the recruitment process, please let us know.

Housing Rights greatly values diversity and we actively encourage applications from all sections of the community.