

Legal Manager – National Immigration Advice Project

Responsible to: Asylum Services Manager

Location: Bradford, Manchester, Birmingham or London, flexible remote working available, some travel will be required to Bradford and West Yorkshire.

About Refugee Action

This is an exciting time for Refugee Action. We are a national charity with more than 40 years' experience of empowering people who've survived some of the world's worst regimes to secure the protection and support that they need to live with dignity and respect and build a new life in the UK. We do this by providing expert advice and casework, building the capacity of partner organisations and campaigning on the policies that affect them.

Our vision for a welcoming UK has never been more important. It's a crucial time to be part of Refugee Action as we come to the end of our current strategy (2019-22) and embark on our next strategic period. We will do this through securing systemic change through our campaigns to change government policies, our direct services, and our work to strengthen and connect other service delivery organisations.

We will also continue with our commitment in our strategy to do far more to learn from and shift power to refugees and people seeking asylum. We are also striving to be an actively anti-racist organisation.

Background

The National Immigration Advice Service (NIAS) is a newly launched service at Refugee Action. It provides Immigration advice and casework support to vulnerable people seeking asylum and migrants who are receiving support from Refugee Action's Asylum Crisis services. The service delivers immigration advice and casework up to OISC Level 2. Clients will be referred internally from these services which operates in London, Birmingham, Manchester and Bradford.

The NIAS sits at the heart of Refugee Action's Asylum Services stream of work recognising the important of holistic support to people seeking asylum and vulnerable migrants who face destitution and crisis. The service provides immigration advice and casework in areas where people seeking asylum face barriers to legal aid funding namely further submissions to the Home Office (limited remit), Family & Private life applications, limited Domestic Violence applications and other compelling cases for vulnerable migrants who have a route to obtaining legal status.

Job description



The service works to fundamental values of legal tenacity and courageousness, taking on the difficult cases and not giving up.

The service will also be at the forefront of Refugee Action's ambitions around shifting power to those with lived experience of the immigration and asylum system. The service intends to embed Expert by Experience legal trainees within the service delivery team to increase representation of those with lived experience into the legal sector and to work with the legal sector to provide more opportunities to those with lived experience of the immigration and asylum system.

The service employs three staff members: The Legal Manager, the Immigration and Advice Casework Co-ordinator and the Legal Administrator.

Purpose of post

- To manage the National Immigration Advice Project, its staff and to supervise all legal advice and casework
- To manage, develop and lead Refugee Action's Immigration Advice strategy regarding the provision of immigration advice and casework for Refugee Action and our agenda to shift power within the immigration sector and to provide legal expertise to Refugee Action's partners to increase immigration advice capacity.
- To be the organisational lead for OISC regulation
- To support the financial sustainability of this work by liaising with our Fundraising and Business Development teams around our Immigration Advice Strategy and our work to Shift Power

Main duties and responsibilities

For service delivery

- Develop and Lead Refugee Action's Immigration Advice Strategy, liaising with the Good Practice and Partnerships team to ensure opportunities for collaboration and joint working that advance Refugee Actions Immigration Advice Strategy are created and delivered.
- Lead the National Immigration Advice Service, to ensure delivery of high quality and courageous legal services that reflect current best practice in immigration law advice and casework..
- Identify areas for potential strategic litigation.
- Hold overall supervisory responsibility for all immigration advice and casework.
- Hold organisational responsibility for ensuring compliance with the OISC's Code of Standards and liaise with the OISC as necessary.
- Line manage specific casework roles, as required.

Job description



- Provide legal advice and casework to people seeking asylum and other vulnerable migrants.
- Work with interpreters to ensure effective communication with clients
- Coordinate the induction, training, registration and supervision of volunteers to assist in delivering a service to clients (in partnership with the National Volunteer Manager and the Frontline Immigration Advice Project)
- Liaise and communicate with other Refugee Action teams to enable holistic casework support for individual clients.
- Develop and maintain effective working relationships with external legal representatives and partner organisations
- Represent the work of the National Immigration Advice Service to key external partners and stakeholders
- Develop and deliver plans for monitoring the impact and activities of the service
- Keep full, accurate and up-to-date case records and statistical data
- Safeguarding at all times confidentiality of information relating to clients
- Carrying out administrative tasks in the support of the work of the project such as contributing to reports for funders
- Supporting the development of a sustainable strategy and funding base for this work, supported by RA's Fundraising and business development teams
- Management of the National Immigration Advice service budget
- Lead and deliver our organisational approach to trainee immigration law placements for refugee law graduates including supervising and signing off qualifying work experience (QWE) for trainee solicitors.

For the Charity

- To play an active role in one or more Refugee Action working groups as required.
- To liaise with other Teams in Refugee Action as appropriate.
- To attend regular team meetings, in person or remotely (for example, over Microsoft Teams, Zoom etc), in order to share information, monitor services and foster effective and supportive Team working.
- To participate in supervision, appraisal and training as agreed with the Manager.
- To carry out administrative tasks in support of own work (e.g. word- processing, use of excel, filing).
- To carry out other duties consistent with the nature of the post, and in furtherance of the project.
- Maintain organisational confidentiality at all times, including in relation to clients.
- To carry out all the above in accordance with the aims, values and policies of Refugee Action, in particular, confidentiality, impartiality and Equal Opportunities.

The above duties will be prioritised by the role's manager in consultation with the post-holder. The post-holder may be asked to re-organise his/her work in order to help the agency to respond to changes in type or extent of needs of refugees, which can arise from time to time. This would be done in a way consistent with the purposes of the post and in consultation with the post-holder.

Candidate specification

All experience may be paid or voluntary, full or part-time, in the UK or overseas. Candidates will be short-listed on the following specifications:

The successful candidate will be a solicitor with immigration experience. We may also consider applications from barristers with immigration experience, caseworkers or paralegals with IAAS accreditation at Level 2 and OISC Level 3 advisers. *(If candidates do not have OISC accreditation they must be willing to work towards OISC accreditation at least to Level 2 starting within the first few months of being in role.)*

Experience, skills, understanding and knowledge

- Understanding of immigration and asylum appeals and of the working practices and procedures of the First-tier and Upper tribunals.
- Experience of supervising and trainee solicitors, paralegals or other regulated immigration advisers and at least 2 years' experience of doing so is preferable
- Knowledge of the OISC regulatory system and its requirements
- Awareness of how immigration status can intersect with other areas of law, particularly housing, welfare and benefits, employment law and family law.
- Ability to work in partnership with other organisations in the legal and charity sectors.
- Ability to manage a busy and emotionally demanding advice service, including providing support for staff and volunteers.
- Experience of exploring sensitive and personal information during meetings with clients in order to carry out assessments and the ability to do this in a respectful and appropriate manner.
- Ability to work with interpreters
- An insight and understanding of some of the barriers refugees and people from racialised groups face when seeking progression within an organisation.
- Understanding of how to work effectively with a range of funders as partners and collaborators.

In addition to the above, candidates will be interviewed on the following if they are short-listed. Candidates need not write about these points in the application form.

- Insight into the needs, experiences and hopes of asylum seekers, refused asylum seekers and refugees in the UK
- Excellent project management skills including a flexible and innovative approach to piloting new working methods.

Job description



- Experience and understanding of cultural diversity and the ability to work with people from a range of different cultures
- Willingness to positively contribute to Refugee Action's work to become a truly Anti-Racism organisation.
- Ability to plan and manage workload within tight timeframes including case management experience.
- Excellent oral and written communication, influencing and interpersonal skills.
- Ability to complete forms, keep paper and computer-based records and produce clear, detailed reports, including reports to funders
- Understanding of and commitment to key advice principles such as confidentiality, impartiality and non-directive approaches and a commitment to equality of opportunity
- Ability to demonstrate a constructive approach to working in an operational context to achieve strategic goals
- Ability to be administratively self-sufficient, including the ability to record data for monitoring purposes.

Job description



Terms and conditions of employment

This post is offered on a permanent basis with funding currently secured until 31st March 2025. The following conditions of service will apply:

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| Salary | £37,568 to £40,578 (Salary band 6, NJC pts 39 - 42). Plus £3,782 Inner London Weighting if based in London. All new employees will normally start at the bottom of the salary band. |
| Location | London, Bradford, Manchester or Birmingham, flexible remote working available. Some travel to Bradford and within West Yorkshire will be necessary |
| Annual increments | Increments of one point per annum to the maximum of the band are paid on the 1 April. To qualify the post holder must be confirmed in post and employed since the first of the previous October. |
| Pension | Refugee Action will contribute 8% of gross basic salary, plus £50 per month (pro rata for part time staff) into a pension plan. |
| Holidays | 24 days per year plus public holidays (pro rata for part-time posts). Holiday entitlement increases to a maximum of 31 days per year, reached within 5 years of employment (pro rata for part-time posts). |
| Hours of Work | 35 hours per week (excluding lunch breaks). |
| Probation | This post will have a probationary period of six months. |
| Notice | One month's notice of termination of employment on either side. |
| Disability | We are committed to making every reasonable adjustment to the workplace or working arrangements so as to accommodate people with disabilities. |
| Child care vouchers | Staff members are able to purchase childcare vouchers through the payroll. This offers a saving as they are exempt from tax and NI. Limits on the value of the vouchers staff can purchase are set by the government and reviewed annually. |
| Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) | All Refugee Action staff are subscribed to use a 24 hour confidential support line. Face to face counselling can also be arranged with the EAP's trained counsellors if appropriate. |
| DBS: | Employment in this post may be subject to satisfactory police clearance being obtained. Because of the nature of the work for which you are applying, this post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (exception) Order 1975 and you are therefore not entitled to withhold information about convictions which for other purposes are 'spent' under the provision of the Act. |