

Head of Employment

Job Description and person specification

Role title: Head of Employment

Salary range: £37,000 - £40,000 (per year, depending on accreditation and experience)

Hours: Full time (37.5 hours per week, with flexibility for an exceptional candidate)

Contract: Permanent (4-month probation)

Annual leave: 31 days (28 days + 3 days Christmas closure)

Location: London hybrid, with the option of remote-only work for an exceptional candidate.

Reporting to: CEO.

About the Work Rights Centre

Work Rights Centre is a registered charity dedicated to ending in-work poverty by helping workers exit poorly paid, unprotected, and insecure employment. Founded by migrants, and for migrants, every day our multilingual team of advisers support beneficiaries to stand up to unscrupulous employers, apply for jobs, access benefits when they're struggling, and secure their immigration status. Since our foundation in 2016 we have supported over 4000 individuals, recovered over £150,000 in unpaid wages, and helped more than 750 EU citizens to secure their status in the UK after Brexit. We're just getting started.

We're looking for an expert colleague to join our team, and lead this important employment work with grit and grace.

About our Employment Rights clinics

Employment rights casework constitutes the core activity of the Work Rights Centre. Two teams of advisers operate in London and Manchester for five days and, respectively, on Saturdays. Common enquiries include assisting service users with recovering unpaid wages or fees, challenging unfair dismissals, or combatting workplace discrimination. We value depth and strive to support our beneficiaries through every stage of the employment justice process. We also recognise that many of them experience complex issues. This is why, with help from a dedicated team of volunteers, our advisers also assist service users in accessing welfare in times of crisis, improving their professional mobility with CV and career development advice, and understanding their entitlements as migrant workers. Most service users are EEA migrants and ethnic minority Britons who work at the low-paid end of the labour market. Consequently, we employ a diverse, multilingual team, who can relate to their lived experience, and embody the charity's values of justice, mobility, and inclusivity.

Responsibilities

There are two main responsibilities in this position: leading on employment rights casework, and supporting the wider development of the organisation.

1. Leading on employment casework

As our employment expert, we would like you to lead on employment advice and casework. You will be working alongside an excellent, multilingual team of advisers. In most cases, they will approach you with a full picture of the case, client files and consent, looking to you to chart the best course of action, delegate, and supervise as needed. In other cases, you will fully manage the relationship with the client. Overall, we expect you to:

- Assess the client's needs, including employment status, literacy, and equalities data.
- Chart the optimal course of action to advance their interests, and communicate it clearly to the client, managing expectations, timelines, and milestones.
- Gather all necessary consent-forms, where needed.
- Log case data in the charity's case management system, ensuring that files are stored in a secure drive.
- Take the action suitable for the client needs identified. This will range from providing advice, to conducting casework - including writing to employers, filling in tribunal forms, and where necessary liaising with external advisers.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues, delegating, supervising, and signing-off as necessary.
- Following up after the consultation to determine whether the needs identified have been met.

In every aspect of your work we expect you to follow the standards set by the Solicitors Regulation Authority and the Advice Quality Standard, and to keep records accordingly.

2. Contributing to development

As Head of Employment, you will have the opportunity to contribute to our strategy through joint work with the senior management team. We want to see you apply your skills towards the wider development of the charity, looking to improve our service, our profile, and our impact. We count on you to:

- Seek to continuously improve our employment service – through templates, revisions of our case management process, and suggesting and/or delivering training to upskill our team.
- Stay up to date with developments in employment law, and support colleagues in the comms team to turn them into public-facing materials (infographics, FAQs, info sessions).
- Identify systemic issues arising from changes to employment law / guidance, and support colleagues in the policy team in formulating appropriate responses.
- Maintain a good relationship with key stakeholders in the employment policy and advocacy arena, acting as an ambassador for the Work Rights Centre at all times.

Flexibility. There is a lot to learn, and to offer, at the Work Rights Centre. The charity has grown substantially since our foundation in 2016, both in terms of casework, policy influencing, and media interventions. This relies on our ability to remain agile. We trust you to be responsive to our changing needs, and to adapt your workload and undertake any other duties that may be reasonably required.

Person specifications

Qualifications

- qualified employment solicitor eligible to practice employment law in England, regulated by the SRA.

Knowledge and experience

- Three years' + experience providing high quality employment legal advice and representation.
- Experience of dealing with appeals and other complex casework.
- Experience of working in a team, delegating, and supervising, as needed.
- Knowledge of, and empathy with, the backgrounds and experiences of migrants and other vulnerable workers.

Skills

- Excellent case management skills, demonstrating an ability to quickly gather case facts, draft clear summaries, chart an action plan, and meet milestones.
- Strong client management skills, including courtesy, professionalism, an ability to set realistic expectations and keep the client informed of case progress.
- Ability to prioritise tasks, delegate when necessary, and deliver in a timely fashion.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Good IT skills, including Word and Excel.

Personal attributes

- Confident and resourceful, you can work to a high standard with minimal supervision.
- Enthusiastic and proactive, you are self-motivated by a strong sense of justice.
- You have a real commitment to the aims and values of the Work Rights Centre.

Desirable

- Experience with strategic litigation.
- Familiarity with Modern Day Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism.
- Familiarity with immigration law and the intersections of employment and immigration.
- Knowledge of a language other than English.

Even if you are not sure whether you have all the experience, if you have the qualification, share our commitment to excellent immigration advice, and trust your ability to make a positive contribution to our team, we encourage you to express interest.

How to apply

Please send your CV and Cover Letter to olivia.vicol@workrightscentre.org by 23:59 on Sunday, 27th of August, and don't hesitate to reach out with any queries about this opportunity.

FAQs

What are my professional development opportunities?

The Work Rights Centre has a real culture for learning and upskilling. We have a dedicated training budget and encourage team members to attend training from reputable professional organisations.

What other benefits do staff get?

We offer enhanced sick pay for up to 30 days, and have worked hard to secure enough funding to support all staff who wish to start families, by offering 20 weeks of enhanced parental pay.

How is the Work Rights Centre funded?

Our main source of funding is grants from independent charitable foundations. Having started with zero capital in 2016, over the last years we have developed long-term relationships with some of the best-regarded funders in the UK, including Trust for London, Tudor Trust, the National Lottery, City Bridge Trust and many more. You can view a full list of our current funders on our [About us](#) page, and look up our financial record on the [Charity Commission's register](#).

How financially sustainable is the Work Rights Centre?

The Work Rights Centre is on a path of significant financial and organisational growth. For the last six years we have consistently increased our income and the size of our team. In the last financial year ending March 2022, we have grown our funding by 16% and we are projecting to grow substantially this year. You can learn more from our previous years' accounts on the Charity Commission's register.

Where is the Work Rights Centre headed in the next couple of years?

The Work Rights Centre has two strategic objectives for the next couple of years. First, consolidate our frontline work, by widening our team with highly qualified solicitors and advisers. Second, use frontline insights to formulate, and drive, an agenda for systemic change. In practice, systemic change means policy influencing, media interventions which raise the public profile of precarious work, but also strategic litigation.