

Head of Immigration

Job Description and person specification

Role title: Head of Immigration

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 charity 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.

As one of only a handful of charities with a Russian-Ukrainian caseworker, we're at the forefront of the UK's response to the humanitarian crisis. We're looking for an expert colleague to join our frontline team, and lead this important immigration advice work with grit and grace.

Our immigration work

Brexit. Work Rights Centre started providing immigration advice in 2019, when it became apparent that Brexit would exponentially increase demand for immigration support. From our original focus on employment, we upskilled our frontline team with OISC Level 1 (limited to EUSS) and focused on supporting our beneficiaries to secure their status under the EU Settlement Scheme.

Ukraine. The end of free movement and the humanitarian crisis unleashed by the war in Ukraine have added a different level of complexity, and urgency, to our work. We increasingly hear from beneficiaries who are looking to come to the UK using the Family Scheme or Homes for Ukraine route, but also from Ukrainians and other migrants who are in the UK on short term visas, or undocumented and in need of urgent support to regularise their status. This is likely the beginning of a long-term trend, where good immigration advice and smart policy interventions are more important than ever.

Responsibilities

There are two main responsibilities in this position: leading on immigration casework, and supporting the wider development of the charity's strategic work on immigration.

1. Leading on immigration casework

As our immigration expert, we would like you to lead on immigration advice and casework. You will be working alongside an excellent, multilingual team of advisers (5 FTE), who have substantial experience in supporting migrant workers and a good understanding of the Home Office response to the Ukraine war. 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 immigration 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 application filling and letter writing, communicating with the UKVI or Home Office, and where necessary liaising with external solicitors and 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 adhere to the standards set out by OISC and AQS to deliver high quality immigration advice, and to keep up to date with OISC CPD requirements.

2. Contributing to development

As Head of Immigration, you will have every 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 at how to improve our service, our profile, and our impact. We count on you to:

- Seek to continuously improve our immigration 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 immigration law, and support colleagues in the comms team to turn them into public-facing materials (infographics, FAQs).
- Identify systemic issues arising from changes to immigration law/guidance, and support colleagues in the policy team in formulating appropriate responses.
- Maintain a good relationship with key stakeholders in the immigration 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 immigration solicitor or adviser accredited at OISC level 2 or above.

Knowledge and experience

- Three years' + experience providing high quality immigration advice and representation, in compliance with OISC standards.
- Good knowledge of asylum and refugee law, human rights law and Withdrawal Agreement.
- Experience of dealing with refusals, appeals and other challenges to Home Office decisions.
- Experience of working in a team, delegating, and supervising, as needed.
- Knowledge of, and empathy with, the backgrounds and experiences of asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants.

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

- Qualified to IAAS Level 2 with Supervisor Accreditation.
- Knowledge of strategic litigation.
- 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. Successful candidates will be notified shortly after the deadline, and interviews will be conducted from 29th of August. We seek to appoint a candidate as soon as reasonably possible, and are prepared to accommodate hybrid working to ease their transition into the post.

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.