

Trainee Solicitor (Immigration and Employment)

Role title: Trainee Solicitor (Immigration and Employment)

Salary: £30,000 - £32,000

Contract length: Fixed Term for 2 years

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

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

Location: London hybrid (1 day per week working in the office)

About the Work Rights Centre

Work Rights Centre is a charity that helps migrants and disadvantaged Britons access employment justice and improve their social mobility. We do this by providing: free legal advice that changes lives; tools that empower people to understand and assert their rights; and campaigns that challenge the systemic causes of injustice in the long-term with research, parliamentary advocacy, and strategic litigation.

Our legal advice team addresses the most urgent aspects of socioeconomic disadvantage. Every year we recover thousands of pounds in unpaid wages for workers who were exploited by unscrupulous employers, and support hundreds of people to understand and secure their status in the UK. As one of very few charities with legal expertise at the intersection of employment and immigration, we are leading the way in representing migrant workers on employer-sponsored visas, and have received ample media coverage for our advocacy in this space.

About Legal Advice team and the role

Our employment and immigration legal advice teams are the bedrock of the charity. Supervised by our Heads of Immigration and Employment, both experienced solicitors, our legal advisers provide free expert advice and casework. Common enquiries include assisting clients with recovering unpaid wages, challenging unfair dismissals, or supporting them in regularising their immigration status. Most clients are migrant workers, including those on sponsored and seasonal work visas, and marginalised Britons who work at the low-paid end of the labour market. Consequently, we employ a diverse, multilingual team, who can relate to clients' lived experience, and embody the charity's values of justice, mobility, and inclusivity.

As Trainee Solicitor you will have the opportunity to make a true impact on people's lives by providing excellent legal advice and case work, working on a stimulating range of issues across two wide areas of law - Immigration (in Year 1) and Employment (in Year 2).

Responsibilities

1. Providing advice and casework in immigration and employment law

Your main responsibility is, under close supervision of a solicitor, to provide legal advice and casework to clients in the field of immigration law (in Year 1) and employment (in Year 2), in accordance with legislation, policy, guidelines and best practice standards. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Assess the client's needs, including immigration status, literacy, and equalities data.
- Chart the optimal course of action to advance the client's interests, and communicate it clearly to the client, managing expectations, timelines, and milestones.
- Take the action suitable for the client needs identified. This will range from providing advice to conducting substantive casework, which will include application filling and letter writing, communicating with the Home Office or the employer, and where necessary liaising with external solicitors and advisers.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues, supporting others as necessary.
- Meet deadlines and adhere to the Home Office's, court's and other directions/orders.
- Communicate with clients, ensuring they are updated on case developments.
- Stay up to date with available external advice and representation services, and signpost or refer clients as appropriate.
- Maintain excellent case records, including well-organised case folders and recording of outcomes such as financial awards/tribunal decisions.
- Keep up to date with legal and social policy developments, changes in employment law and other areas of law pertinent to the charity's employment rights clients.

In every aspect of your work we expect you to adhere to the charity's policies, follow the standards set by the Solicitors Regulatory Authority, IAA and Advice Quality Standards, and maintain strict client confidentiality and excellent administrative records.

2. Social justice project

Throughout the traineeship you will work on an independent social justice project aligned with your personal interests and objectives of the charity. This might entail legal research, sourcing strategic cases, or compiling data on the impact of the current policies. This work will give you an opportunity to conduct strategic legal work and understand the wider systemic contexts. Details of the project will be agreed with your supervisor at the start of the traineeship.

3. Supporting the wider development of the organisation

We count on you to be a team player and support the delivery of wider strategic goals that can improve the charity's sustainability, the quality of our service, and the impact of our work. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Work with the team to support the delivery of strategic objectives. This may include contribution to communications, research, and policy work.

- Demonstrate a willingness and readiness to take on strategic non-legal work, for example delivery of outreach, or training.

General responsibilities

In addition to your key duties, we expect you to:

- Keep abreast of the overall work of the charity.
- Be competent in the use of IT software.
- Participate in regular supervisions and an annual appraisal, and to be committed to one's own professional development.
- Occasionally work unsociable hours around hearings and other highly time sensitive and strategic objectives.
- Occasionally travel across, and outside of London.
- Maintain other administrative records as required, in compliance with accreditations and funding bodies, and charity internal reporting and financial management requirements.

Flexibility. There is a lot to learn, and to offer, at the Work Rights Centre, and the charity has grown substantially since our foundation in 2016. 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. This job description is provided as a guide to the role. It is not intended to be an exhaustive description of duties and responsibilities. It will be subject to periodic revision as the emphasis on and ways of working within the role changes.

Person specifications

Qualifications

- Completed and passed (or expect to pass by 14 March 2026) the Legal Practice Course (LPC)
OR have an undergraduate degree and completed and passed SQE Part 1.

Knowledge and experience

- Some experience of working with marginalised migrant communities
- Some experience of working in a team, and progressing towards shared objectives.
- Lived or learned experience of the issues facing vulnerable migrants.

Skills

- Good case management skills, demonstrating an ability to quickly gather case facts, draft clear summaries and accurate advice, 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.
- Good analytical skills - ability to conduct legal research and apply the law to the facts of a case
- Ability to prioritise tasks, delegate when necessary, and deliver in a timely fashion.

- Excellent written and verbal communication skills; ability to communicate legal information in a readily understandable way to lay persons.
- Good IT skills, including Word and Excel, and remote work systems.

Personal attributes

- Confident and resourceful, you can work independently to a high standard
- Enthusiastic and proactive, you are self-motivated by a strong sense of justice.
- Collegial, you recognise the value of teamwork and shared objectives.
- Flexible, you are prepared to work longer hours if necessary, for example evenings and weekends/assist with broader objectives of the organisation.
- You have a real commitment to social justice, and the aims and values of the Work Rights Centre.

Desirable

- Familiarity with Modern Day Slavery and the National Referral Mechanism.
- Knowledge of a language other than English.

Even if you are not sure whether you have all the experience, if you have the necessary qualifications, 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.

FAQs

What is our organisational culture?

We are a small (14 FTE) but ambitious team, and have often been told we punch above our weight. We made a conscious decision to build an organisation that is not only founded by and for migrants, but that also brings together a wealth of legal, research, policy, and comms expertise. This is what makes the Work Rights Centre special. We have a culture where intellectual agility and comradeship go hand in hand.

What are my professional development opportunities?

The Work Rights Centre has a real culture for learning and upskilling. You will be able to learn from three experienced solicitors, exercise your skills as an adviser, and progress your career in a friendly and supportive environment. By the end of two years you will have had the chance to complete your SQE2 training and gain the required practical experience to fully qualify as a solicitor. The fellowship programme will cover the cost of both your solicitor legal training and additional wide-skills training, as well as providing you with additional well-being support. Please find a full list of benefits on the [Legal Education Foundation website](#).

What other benefits do staff get?

We offer enhanced sick pay for up to 28 days, additional leave days during Christmas office closure, and 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 trusts and 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, the Legal Education Foundation, the National Lottery, City Bridge Foundation 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 eight years we have consistently increased our income and the size of our team. In the previous financial year ending March 2024, we have grown our funding by circa 45% and we are projecting to grow substantially this year again. You can learn more from our 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 three strategic objectives for the next couple of years. First, use our rare mix of employment and immigration legal expertise to support under-represented migrant workers to access justice. Second, use this frontline intelligence to call for reforms to the labour enforcement and work migration system, with parliamentary advocacy, careful media interventions, and strategic litigation. Third, work towards improving the charity's long-term sustainability by growing our earned income (including from training).