

Employment Solicitor or Barrister

Job Description and person specification

Role title: Employment Solicitor or Barrister

Salary range: £38,000 - £40,000 FTE (per year, depending on accreditation and experience)

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

Contract: Permanent (4-month probation)

Annual leave: 32 days (28 days + Birthday Day Off + 3 days Christmas closure)

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

Reporting to: Head of Employment

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 with: 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.

We're looking for an experienced employment solicitor or barrister to join the charity, and bring their energy and skills to the employment legal team.

About our Employment Rights clinics

Employment rights casework is the bedrock of the Work Rights Centre. Every week our employment legal advisers support service users to recover unpaid wages, challenge unfair dismissals, or combat workplace discrimination. We value depth, and strive to support clients through every stage of the process, including tribunal representation with support from pro bono counsel. Most service users are migrant workers and ethnic minority Britons in low-wage jobs. Consequently, we employ a diverse, multilingual team, who embody the charity's values of justice, mobility, and inclusivity.

Training. Beyond individual remedy, we also believe that good legal information can change the culture of compliance as a whole, and lead to better outcomes for workers. For the past couple of years, our employment solicitors have delivered an acclaimed training-programme for advisers at over 30 third sector organisations. Building on the success of this project, we plan to grow our training-offering further, including by developing an employer-facing training programme.

Responsibilities

There are two main responsibilities in this position: providing employment legal advice and casework, and supporting the wider development of the organisation.

1. Providing employment legal advice and casework

Your main responsibility is to provide legal advice in the field of employment, in accordance with legislation, policy, guidelines and best practice standards. You will have your own caseload, where you lead on all client-facing communication, but also provide support to colleagues, including supervision and line management of more junior advisers. Your work will include, but is not limited to, the following duties:

- Conduct interviews with clients, identify legal issues, assess the client's case, provide advice, and manage client expectations.
- Where appropriate, represent clients in dispute resolution processes including in court hearings, settlement negotiations with employers, and ACAS early conciliation.
- Draft, analyse or review legal documents, including (but not limited to) claim forms/particulars of claims, responses, settlement agreements/COT3, witness statements, schedules of loss, preliminary hearing agenda, lists of issues, court directions/orders, applications, objections, client advice letters.
- Liaise with pro bono counsel and, depending on the case, other experts.
- Prepare and submit bundles ahead of and during hearings.
- Attend employment tribunal or civil court hearings to represent clients at case management preliminary hearings or attend preliminary/final hearings with counsel to assist/take notes.
- Meet deadlines and adhere to court 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.
- Manage, supervise, and support colleagues in the employment advice team, delegating and leading on legal work, as appropriate.

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 or The Bar Standards Board, and Advice Quality Standards, and maintain strict client confidentiality and excellent administrative records.

2. Supporting the wider development of the organisation

In addition to the client facing work you will be leading on, we would also like you to apply your skills to support the wider development of the charity. In a nutshell, this means using your skills to improve the quality and impact of our advice service, grow our profile, and support the charity's sustainability. To this end, we count on you to:

- Support the Head of Employment to improve our employment advice service – by creating or revising templates, and optimising case triage and case management process.
- Stay up to date with developments in employment law and employment issues, and support the charity to produce public-facing legal information to empower charity beneficiaries to understand and assert their rights (such as web pages, infographics, FAQs).
- Collaborate with colleagues in the communication team, as required, to support the charity to secure media coverage.
- Collaborate with colleagues in the policy team, as required, in evidencing systemic employment law issues, and formulating recommendations for policy change.
- Develop and deliver employment law training or consultancy, as required, to support the delivery of key charity projects or key earned income activities.
- Deliver secondary advice in employment rights to key allies in the third sector.
- 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.

General responsibilities

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

- Be an enthusiastic team player, and keep abreast of the overall work of the charity.
- Be competent in the use of IT software.
- Participate in regular supervisions with your line manager, value feedback, and be committed to your professional development.
- Be a supportive line manager for more junior advisers, empowering them to develop their skills and offering constructive feedback.
- 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

- Qualified solicitor or barrister eligible to practice law in England and Wales

Knowledge and experience

- Minimum two years of experience practising employment legal advice and representation.
- Experience of working in a legal team.
- Empathy for the experiences of migrants and other vulnerable workers.

Skills

- Excellent analytical skills - ability to conduct legal research and apply the law to the facts of a case.
- Strong client management skills, including courtesy, professionalism, an ability to set realistic expectations and keep the client informed of case progress.
- Excellent case management skills, demonstrating an ability to quickly gather case facts, draft clear summaries, chart an action plan, and meet milestones.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills; ability to communicate legal information in a readily understandable way to lay persons.
- Excellent time management, demonstrating an ability to meet tight deadlines.
- Good IT skills, including Word and Excel, and remote work systems.

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.
- 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 the aims and values of the Work Rights Centre.

Desirable

- Experience in developing and delivering training or professional development materials - desirable.
- Experience in County Court proceedings
- Familiarity with immigration law and/or 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 employment legal advice, and trust your ability to make a positive contribution to our team, we encourage you to express interest.

How to apply

To apply for the role, please send a CV and cover letter to recruitment@workrightscentre.org by **Sunday, 19th April**. It is important to tell us why you think your experience, skills and attributes meet the person specifications of this role, and why you would like to join our team. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to complete a short technical task. For more information, do not hesitate to get in touch.

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 a range of staff benefits including enhanced sick pay for up to 30 days, enhanced annual leave increasing with tenure (including Christmas office closure and Birthday day off), 5% pension contribution, 20 weeks of enhanced parental pay and more.

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, we now have long-term relationships with some of the best-regarded funders in the UK, including Trust for London, the Legal Education Foundation, the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, 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 eight years we have consistently increased our income and the size of our team. 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 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 and consultancy).