

# Job description

**Job title:** Housing Advisor

**Reports to:** Manager of Advice Services

**Salary:** £36,000 (pro rata for part time) plus benefits

**Contract:** permanent, full time or part time (21-35 hours)

## About us:

The Cardinal Hume Centre works to prevent and tackle youth and family homelessness. We:

- Provide a home with support for up to 39 young people
- Support children and families in housing or other need
- Offer housing and welfare rights advice to help people keep or find a stable home and to manage their money
- Advise and coach people to find work, learning or training
- Provide immigration advice to help people secure their legal right to remain in the UK to access homes, work and benefits.

Last year we helped over 1200 people including nearly 600 families and 230 children and young people, aiming to break the cycle of homelessness and poverty from a young age. Our approach is personalised, acknowledging the unique complexities of each individual through six key services: residential; family support, legal advice, employment, education and immigration advocacy.

The Centre is based within five minutes' walk from Parliament but works in an area where homelessness in nearly all its forms has increased. Around 3,600 children from Westminster are housed in temporary accommodation. Over 25% of children live in poverty. Families face unaffordable housing costs, a challenging labour market and rising levels of crime.

With an annual income in the region of £3.5 million, the Centre currently employs around 65 dedicated members of staff and around 45 volunteers.

## About the role:

The overall purpose of this role is to provide a structured advice and information service to clients of the centre in housing law, housing options and aspects of welfare benefits that relate to housing and homelessness. The role will also provide second tier advice in housing law for generalist advisors and non-housing specialists in the centre.

### **Job description:**

1. To manage a specialist housing caseload, ensuring casework is recorded in a timely manner and in line with agreed quality standards.
2. To provide emergency housing advice to clients in crisis.
3. To work together with the other members of the Advice team, providing basic housing advice and referring to our Housing Advisors when necessary.
4. To work in partnership with clients, informing them and empowering them to problem-solve and make informed decisions about their future.
5. To work as part of the wider Advice and Assessment teams ensuring effective cover in services including dealing with emergencies when required.
6. To ensure clients are offered an integrated holistic service by working closely with the other teams in the centre.
7. To build and maintain good relationships with statutory and other partners and to work together with them to get the best outcomes for our clients and to monitor unmet need locally so that this can be addressed.
8. To participate in the development and delivery of referral partnerships and outreach services, in order to reach the most vulnerable families and young people within the local community.
9. To keep up to date in all relevant matters relating to housing and related social welfare law, actively participating in training and development opportunities.
10. To share key information about developments in housing with the wider centre and provide second tier advice and training in housing law to staff and volunteers who are not housing specialists.
11. To provide line management to volunteers, where required.
12. To monitor outcomes against agreed standards and produce statistical information, reports and case studies when required.
13. To actively seek feedback from clients, colleagues and stakeholders and to use this feedback to improve the service.
14. To promote a safeguarding culture, applying best practice to ensure the safety of all clients, particularly children and young people and adults who may be vulnerable

### **Person specification**

#### **Essential:**

1. Proven specialism in housing advice.
2. Experience and knowledge of housing law, including homelessness and allocations, security of tenure and possession proceedings, rights following relationship breakdown and disrepair.
3. Knowledge of current housing options open to homeless people.
4. A good understanding of welfare rights provision, particularly Housing Benefit and Universal Credit.
5. Extensive experience of direct work with vulnerable people, including those experiencing or threatened with homelessness.
6. An understanding of and empathy with the difficulties faced by homeless people and those living in insecure or unsuitable accommodation.

7. Experience of acting as an advocate for vulnerable clients and engaging with bureaucracy on their behalf.
8. Awareness of child and adult safeguarding procedures.
9. Excellent communication skills, both verbal and written.
10. Strong skills in networking and the ability to build effective working relationships with partner agencies.
11. Willingness to work flexibly including periodic work out of office hours.
12. Experience of case management systems and processes.
13. Ability to set boundaries, challenge appropriately, and to manage conflict positively and constructively.
14. Willingness to learn new skills and share them with colleagues.
15. A strong commitment to the Centre's mission, values and behaviours; a strong belief in the value of every individual.

**DESIRABLE:**

- A legal qualification.
- Detailed knowledge of welfare rights law and experience of welfare rights casework.
- Experience of advising young people and families.
- Experience of supervision of volunteers and/or paid staff.
- Ability to speak a second language.

**Our people - we believe each person matters:**

**Our clients**

Our clients guide everything we do. We're here to help children, families and young people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, or clients who have urgent needs that can be met at the Centre and not elsewhere.

**We value every person; this is central to our work**

We seek to develop trusting relationships with our clients. We rely on them to help us improve and develop our services so we include them wherever possible in our work.

**Our staff and volunteers**

Our staff and volunteers are diverse in their backgrounds, and their skills and experience. Many have lived experience of the challenges our clients face. We are proud of our warm welcome and our team's commitment to support people facing disadvantage to escape the cycle of poverty and homelessness.

The Centre's [website](#) has more about our work including our [approach](#), our [plans](#) and our [values](#) and behaviours.