



Access Social Care

Paralegal

(Individual Membership)

Job description

Accountable to: Legal Manager or Senior Legal Caseworker (enhanced)

Location: Home working with occasional need to travel

Type: Permanent full time (part time working will be considered)

Hours: Flexible (our full-time working week is currently 37.5 hours)

Salary: £24,500 per annum

Why Access Social Care Exists

Every day millions of older and disabled people are denied the social care they need. Most local authorities can't meet the growing demand for care, and none are confident they can meet their legal duties in the future. This affects all of us - we will all need social care at some point in our lives.

We all have a right to hold public bodies to account, but most of us cannot afford lawyers so rely on legal aid. The 92% drop in legal aid cases since 2010 means that we have nowhere to turn. Without access to justice, our rights do not exist. The rule of law is broken.

What we do

Access Social Care provides free legal advice and information for people with social care needs, helping achieve a better quality of life. We work with communities to increase knowledge of the law and our rights. We highlight the gap left by cuts to Legal Aid and provide advice for those who can't afford it.

With a 98% success rate, our network of lawyers provide access to justice when things go wrong. We collaborate with social services whilst ensuring legal obligations are met. We are working towards a future where social care is adequately funded and we all get the support we need.

We provide rights awareness training to front line managers, and legal advice and support to families and individuals. As well as providing access to justice, our aim is to drive system level change through evidence-led influencing and strategic casework.

This is an exciting time to join ASC. We have a new strategy and are growing quickly including across our senior leadership team. We have more than doubled in size and income since we started operating in April 2020 and we anticipate that this strong growth will continue for the duration of our next strategic period. We are dedicated to the people who need our help, but we also care deeply about our team and we think that work should be an exciting and satisfying place to be.

About the role

Our paralegal roles are ideal for individuals without prior legal or casework experience. As a Paralegal (Individual Membership), you will be responsible for conducting desktop audits of paperwork for those with care and support needs, as defined by the Care Act 2014. Additionally, paralegals at Access Social Care may assist one or more caseworkers or other legal staff with various administrative and casework tasks.

You will be encouraged to take on increasing responsibility throughout your employment. If you wish to progress and demonstrate sufficient progress, there could be an opportunity to advance to a Trainee Caseworker position within a year or so, depending on your prior experience and development at Access Social Care. You will have dedicated time for in-house and external training and will be encouraged to take responsibility for your own professional growth.

The casework we do is pre-action, including drafting letters before action and submissions. When we are unable to resolve issues, we refer cases to organisations with legal aid contracts for litigation. We provide advice primarily by telephone and digital platforms, with face to face interactions being very rare.

Responsibilities

1. Undertake desktop audits of paperwork including care assessments and care plans and make recommendations as to whether care and support needs are being met.
2. Assist with a range of tasks associated with case preparation and management under close supervision, including administrative tasks like arranging meetings with clients or counsel, and file keeping
3. Support our pro-bono clinics, Hubs, and legal projects as required, including those in relation to monitoring, evaluation and learning
4. Carry out research and build personal knowledge of community care law and social care issues

5. Assist in the development of written resources, training materials and similar
6. Support with community engagement, stakeholder outreach and communications
7. Keep up-to-date with all written and verbal communications (i.e. emails/messages/calls)
8. Abide by and promote Access Social Care's policies, particularly in relation to our strategy and governance around data protection and confidentiality, and comply with our case management processes, including time recording and case file management
9. Undertake relevant learning according to agreed personal development plan
10. Undertake such other tasks as may reasonably be required.

This list of tasks is not exhaustive and will be reviewed from time to time in discussion with the post holder.

Person Specification

All staff at ASC are expected to share and demonstrate our values:

Trustworthy	Recognised for excellence, we will be the best we can be in everything we do. We will be truthful, independent and outcomes focussed.
Fair	We believe in treating people with kindness and compassion in a way that is right, reasonable and just.
Fearless	We will do what is right, not what is easy. We will bravely challenge injustice.
Inclusive	Our beneficiaries' voices will influence our thinking and decision making at all levels of our organisation. Collaborative in our thinking, we will work with others to achieve our goals.
Positive	We will be constructive and progressive in our challenge. We will optimistically and dynamically drive for change.

In addition to our values, you will also need to be able to demonstrate or tell us about the following areas at your interview:

Requirements	Essential / Desirable
Experience you will have	
Experience of communicating clearly and effectively with a diverse range of people both orally and in writing	E
Experience of working as part of a team	E
Skills you will have	
Ability to produce accurate work and effectively present information	E

Ability and willingness to develop effective client relation skills, particularly an ability to explain legal issues and potential solutions to non-specialist audiences	E
Ability and willingness to make full use of Microsoft Office programmes, electronic case management systems, and time recording apps (with training)	E
Ability and willingness to learn research and evaluation techniques	E
Ability to effectively manage your own workload to meet deadlines and use initiative	E
Personal Attributes you will have	
Purpose driven with an commitment to our mission and values	E
Commitment to working within the principles of equity, diversity and inclusion	E
Discrete and professional and can be trusted with sensitive information	E
Interest in supporting people to understand their rights and entitlements	E
Honesty about own performance, and commitment to continuous learning, identifying gaps in skills and knowledge, and responding to feedback	E
Ability to work flexibly and remotely	E
Knowledge you will have gained	
Knowledge of the advice sector	D
Knowledge of the Care Act 2014	D
Knowledge of general social care issues and other issues of importance to those needing social care advice	D
Qualifications	
Degree-level qualification in law or related subject	D

How to apply

We hope that having read this far, you will want to apply!

Please ensure that your CV and supporting statement **do not include** your name – use initials only. This will ensure that we avoid unconscious bias in our shortlisting process. To apply, please provide the following documents:

- An **up-to-date CV**
- A completed [diversity monitoring form](#)
- A **supporting statement** of no more than two pages, addressing:
 - The essential requirements of the person specification

Please send to jobs@accesscharity.org.uk

If you want support applying, contact us using the email address above.

Please ensure you have the right to work in the UK before expressing your interest in this role. We are sorry that we cannot consider applications from candidates who do not have the right to work in the UK.

We only reach out to candidates who have been shortlisted. If you do not receive communication from us within two weeks following the application deadline, please consider that we will not be moving forward with your application.

Timeline for recruitment process

Closing date: 23:59 on Tuesday 17th September

Interview and assessments on Tuesday 25th September or Wednesday 26th September

Please ensure you keep these dates free.

At Access Social care, we aren't interested in tokenism. We know that if we are to make the biggest difference for the people that need us the most, we need to get Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and anti-racism right. Part of this is recruiting greater diversity in all our teams.

With this in mind, we particularly welcome applications from candidates with experience of the communities we serve, including people with direct experience of the social care system, and from marginalised groups, particularly Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups, older and disabled people, and trans and non-binary people.