



Springfield Advice & Law Centre

Newton Building 7, Springfield University Hospital,
61 Glenburnie Road, London SW17 7DJ

13 February 2024

Dear Applicant

Director & Head of Legal Practice

Thank you for your interest in this role. Our application pack includes

- summary and context of the post,
- job description and person specification
- application form and equalities monitoring form

If you would like to have a brief informal chat to discuss the role, please contact recruitment@swllc.org

There is now no final closing date for applications. Please send your completed application to recruitment@swllc.org

Yours faithfully

Springfield Advice & Law Centre

**SPRINGFIELD ADVICE & LAW CENTRE**

Legal Action for Local Communities

ORGANISATION SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVES OF THE POSTS

Springfield Advice & Law Centre is a community based legal practice and a registered charity. We were formed in 1982 when we were set up to serve the mental health community. We are based mainly on the site of Springfield University Hospital Mental Health NHS Trust. Springfield Law Centre is unique as a working model of a health justice partnership.

Our services are primarily provided to those suffering from mental ill-health, their families or carers. We believe in the value of high-quality legal advice services that are integrated into health and other services. We promote the improvement and maintenance of access to public services for mental health service users (MHSUs), by assisting our clients to achieve their legal rights to: a decent home; relief from debt and poverty; fair access to welfare benefits and financial support; and to support-service provision, which in turn aims to prevent any prolonged detention or unnecessary treatment with regard to their mental health/well-being. The Law Centre, in general, believes in the importance of promoting equality of opportunity and access to services – particularly for those with mental health difficulties – through the provision of independent and specialist legal advice and representation.

We provide specialist advice on housing, community care, debt and welfare benefit matters, having legal aid contracts in community care and housing. We are also funded through a number of grants.

As well as operating from Springfield Hospital in Tooting, we operate from outreach centres in Merton (Wilson Hospital, Mitcham) and from a satellite office in Sutton (at Jubilee Health Centre East, Wallington)

We have a strong emphasis on quality: we are accredited to the Law Society's Lexcel standard for excellence in legal practice management.

We have a small, friendly staff team who work cooperatively together, on a rota to staff both offices and outreach centres, as well as ensuring our phone-lines are responsive to our client-group of, predominantly, vulnerable adults.

Working at Springfield Advice & Law Centre

Joining the Law Centre is a chance to be a part of the Law Centres' movement and to make a real difference with every case.

We are committed to flexible working, supporting a range of flexible working arrangements. We welcome applications for those who wish to work part-time or to job-share.

We have a generous leave allowance at 30 days per calendar year.

The context of the post

**Director & Head of Legal Practice**

We are looking for a for a new Director & Head of Legal Practice to take forward this unique, niche Law Centre. There is an opportunity for expanding the work of the Law Centre and showcasing the worth of health justice partnerships. The current Director has been involved in the Law Centre for the last 18 years and has been the Director for a decade. The Law Centre is restructuring, creating a new part-time role of Office Manager to assist the new Director with the administration of the Law Centre.

Our current team includes a recently qualified housing solicitor, housing paralegal and debt and welfare rights caseworkers.

We are looking for an energetic and compassionate lawyer with a broad experience of either housing or community care casework and representation, who is capable of being a legal aid category supervisor in either area, who has the confidence to lead the team and to develop it so that we can continue to make a real difference within the community.

Please send your completed application to recruitment@swllc.org



JOB DESCRIPTION DIRECTOR & HEAD OF LEGAL PRACTICE

JOB TITLE:	Director & Head of Legal Practice
SALARY:	up to £43,000
ACCOUNTABLE TO:	Management Committee
MANAGED BY:	Chair of Management Committee or their nominee
LINE MANAGERS:	All staff at the Law Centre with the ability to delegate where appropriate
MAIN PURPOSE:	<p>The Director is responsible for direction and strategic leadership to ensure the Law Centre has sufficient resources to provide high quality and accessible legal services.</p> <p>To ensure standards are maintained in accordance with Lexcel Quality Mark</p> <p>To be directly responsible for all casework undertaken through the Law Centre, including providing line management to caseworkers and other members of staff</p> <p>To provide advice and casework in your area of expertise for the Law Centre, and represent clients in courts and tribunals</p> <p>To be the named Compliance Officer for Legal Practice and Contract Liaison Manager with the Legal Aid Agency. The Director needs to be a lawyer.</p>

Organisational Structure:

The Director is accountable to the Management Committee. The Director has authority to make day-to-day decisions necessary for the smooth running of the Law Centre, within a framework agreed with the Management Committee. He/She will be supervised by the Chair of the Management Committee.

Level of Contact:

The Director will be an ambassador for the organisation and will be required to represent the Law Centre at both a national and local level to funders, government officers, and elected politicians. The Director will have contact with the media on behalf of the Law Centre.

Level of Responsibility for Assets:

The Director has overall responsibility for the financial management of the Law Centre and for liaison with funders for new and existing funding streams. Day-to-day responsibility to be delegate to Office Manager or other staff.



Specific Responsibilities:

In carrying out the duties of the post the Director has overall responsibility for ensuring that the following specific tasks are carried out.

Management Duties:

- 1 To have overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the casework strategy within the Law Centre.
- 2 To provide supervision in accordance with the rules of professional conduct (including the Solicitors' Practice Rules and the Solicitors' Accounts Rules) ensuring adequate professional indemnity insurance and up to date practising certificates for solicitors.
- 3 To monitor and assess the levels of client satisfaction and complaints to make sure that the organisation takes appropriate steps to maintain its reputation and to minimise its risks.

Strategic Planning & Development:

- 4 To keep up to date with local and national developments in legal and advice services and to ensure that the Law Centre is aware of them and is able to respond appropriately.
- 5 To be responsible for developing, drafting, and reviewing an annual strategic business plan.
- 6 To co-ordinate the development of the Law Centre's services to meet the needs of the local community as identified by the service review and business planning process.
- 7 To ensure that the Law Centre plays an active role in the Law Centres' Network movement.

Personnel:

- 8 To have overall responsibility for personnel matters and staff recruitment within the Law Centre and to work in conjunction with the management committee with these matters.
- 9 To ensure an effective organisational structure that is responsive to changing needs.
- 10 To act as line manager to all staff and caseworkers, including supervision of casework and performance review.
- 11 To conduct annual staff appraisals and report on personnel issues to the trustees.
- 12 To set and monitor billing targets, casework hours and contract/grant performance targets for all caseworkers.

Legal Aid Agency Contracts:

- 13 To liaise with the Legal Aid Agency in relation to the Law Centre's contracts and to act as the Contract Liaison Manager, to include dealing with all audits.



- 14 To oversee the process of billing and returns to the LAA for the Law Centre and liaise with other caseworkers to do the same from other branch/satellite offices.
- 15 To provide regular feedback to staff and Management Committee regarding the above.
- 16 To maintain and manage the client account

Maintaining Quality:

- 17 To maintain Lexcel quality mark across the organisation including preparing for annual audit and annually to review all policies and procedures.
- 18 To be in charge of our Conflict of Interest policy and procedures at the Law Centre.
- 19 To be the Risk Manager and to be responsible for risk management within the Law Centre.
- 20 To review the risk policy of the Law Centre annually and to report back to the Trustees.
- 21 To carry out random file reviews of all caseworkers at the Law Centre. To delegate a system of files reviews through casework staff and maintain a record of the reviews.
- 22 To review feedback received via client care questionnaires and to ensure that any feedback that should be handled as a complaint is dealt with in accordance with our policy
- 23 To act as complaints officer in respect of in respect of complaints received about the Law Centre. To review annually the operation of the complaints procedure and to report back to the Trustees.
- 24 To deal with any negligence claim and reporting any potential claim to the Law Centre's insurers.
- 25 To maintain client confidentiality within the Law Centre and to authorise any breaches to this, only as permitted under the SRA Code of Conduct.

Casework & Community Work:

- 26 To provide legal advice, assistance and conduct cases and litigation in your main area of expertise.
- 27 To undertake casework administration including Legal Aid Agency administration, word-processing and filing.
- 28 To undertake billing in accordance with LAA requirements and your individual billing target.
- 29 To engage in project work, campaigning, training, publicity and information work and support to other agencies as required.

Supervision & Support:

- 30 To be responsible for the allocation of new work and the reallocation of existing work.



- 31 To provide supervision and develop good practice throughout the casework staff.
- 32 To act as a mentor in terms of guidance on legal issues and casework to other staff and to workers in other agencies.
- 33 To assist the Office Manager in training new members of staff within the Law Centre, to monitor their work and ensure that they receive sufficient support.
- 34 To provide and support internal and external training provision as far as possible.

Fundraising & Finance:

- 35 To be responsible for the financial management of the Law Centre – this includes preparing and monitoring budgets within in a challenging financial environment with multiple funding streams.
- 36 To be responsible for the development and implementation of a long-term fund-raising strategy for the organisation.
- 37 To advise the Management Committee on financial considerations and the Committee's liabilities and responsibilities.

Management Committee Responsibilities:

- 38 To advise the Management Committee on appropriate committee structures and take responsibility for the implementation of the same.
- 39 To ensure the implementation of Management Committee decisions.
- 40 To ensure that the Management Committee is appraised by the provision of regular written reports.
- 41 To ensure that the Management Committee has sufficient information to enable it to set objectives and manage the Law Centre efficiently and competently for the benefit of the local community.
- 42 To ensure the Management Committee is provided with staff reports, statistics, statistical analysis of required data and any other information that is needed at regular intervals to ensure that the Law Centre meets its legal obligations.
- 43 To keep up-to-date with legal requirements which apply to the Law Centre and to ensure that the Management Committee and staff are made aware of them.

General:

- 44 To undertake work in accordance with the Solicitors' Practice Rules with regard to the rules and principles of professional conduct and the agreed practice of the Law Centre.
- 45 To convene regular staff meetings and report on them to the Management Committee. To attend meetings of the Management Committee.



- 46 To observe the Law Centre's Confidentiality Policy at all times.
- 47 To undertake all duties within the letter and the spirit of the Law Centre's Equal Opportunities Policy at all times.
- 48 To be self-servicing administratively.
- 49 To undertake any other duties as may be reasonably required by the Law Centre.



PERSON SPECIFICATION DIRECTOR AND HEAD OF LEGAL PRACTICE

It is important that you address all categories of the person specification fully, and use examples where ever possible. The person specification will form the criteria against which applicants will be short listed.

Essential

Qualifications and experience

1. 5 years' PQE qualified lawyer, with demonstrable experience of management at a senior level.
2. Ability to meet the supervisor for the Legal Aid Agency contract in either housing or community care.
3. A track record of implementing and managing change.
4. A track record of leading and motivating others demonstrating strong people's skills.
5. A track record of innovation and problem solving.
6. Appropriate skills and experience that demonstrate an ability and commitment to manage staff effectively. This should include support, supervision, and appraisal and performance management.
7. Appropriate skills and experience to effectively handle and manage complaints.
8. Experience of managing a Legal Aid Agency Contract and Legal Help matters, with billing targets.
9. Ability to bill all types of legally-aided work and to report to the Legal Aid Agency.
10. Ability to manage a varied caseload of sufficient, appropriate matters to meet the billing target in place.
11. Ability to draft appropriate documentation in your specialist area of law.
12. Experience of giving successful training or talks, for example giving presentations, or representing clients before Courts or Tribunals.

Skills

13. Ability to take an active role in, leading the direction of the Law Centre, developing new strategies and raising profile.
14. Ability to manage the Lexcel Quality Mark and ensure that systems and standards are maintained across the organisation so that audits are passed.



15. Ability to understand the financial viability of the Law Centre.
16. Ability to report effectively to funders and to monitor progress against grant funded projects.
17. Commitment to equality and diversity as set out in the principles and policies of the Law Centre.
18. Ability to be self-servicing: you will be expected to manage most of your own typing, filing and billing of Legal Help/Aid cases to comply with LAA requirements.
19. Ability to prioritise your workload with minimum supervision.
20. Excellent communication skills: you must be able to relate well to colleagues, clients and third parties, in person, in writing and on the telephone, despite the pressures of the role.
21. You must be very well organised in order to work well under pressure with excellent ICT skills without compromising standards.
22. Ability to work flexibly and outside regular office hours including attending and reporting to the trustees on the progress of the Law Centre.
23. Consideration will be given to requests for flexible or family friendly hours of work to include job share, part time working or specific proposals. The Management Committee consider the range and number of duties to be a full-time role and that any reduction from a full-time role will result in a division of duties to accommodate all aspects of the Law Centre's needs and aspirations.