



Voices in Exile

Supporting refugees, asylum seekers & those with no recourse to public funds

Job Description: Immigration caseworker

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| Job Title: | Immigration caseworker |
| Responsible to: | Immigration casework manager; Director |
| Status: | Full-time (part-time (0.8FTE/4 days pw) also considered) |
| Contract: | 12-month fixed-term contract, with possible extension subject to funding |
| Hours: | 37.5 hours per week (30 hours if part-time) |
| Location: | Office-based & remote as needed (hybrid working model) |
| Salary: | NJC pay scale range SP18 (£25,419 FTE) – SP24 £29,174 FTE) |
| Holiday entitlement: | 25 days per annum pro rata, with 1 additional day per annum for every completed year of service up to a maximum of 6 additional days |

Background:

Voices in Exile is a registered charity that works with refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants with no recourse to public funds in Brighton & Hove, East and West Sussex. We offer practical and legal support including generalist advice and specialist immigration casework for those who would otherwise be unable to access justice. As part of our holistic approach we also advocate for, accompany and enable people to access services, connect with communities, and develop their own potential through a programme of learning and creative activities. We are working towards becoming an organisation better informed by lived experience, but we are not there yet. Post holders will form a key part of a small, committed team working to develop Voices' services and activities at a critical point of growth for the organisation.

Job purpose:

We are looking for someone for a demanding but rewarding and evolving role at Voices in Exile as an immigration caseworker accredited at a minimum at OISC L1 and ideally OISC L2 or higher. The post holder will be flexible and skilled, with an essential interest in and experience of working with migrant and refugee clients, many of whom have additional complex needs. The post holder will work closely with our immigration caseworker manager to provide one-to-one specialist immigration advice and casework to migrant and refugee clients in Brighton & Hove and across East and West Sussex in the areas of immigration & asylum (up to OISC L2), and will also provide supervision for L1 and trainee staff and volunteer advisors as required. We actively welcome applications from those with lived and relevant experience – please see the job description and person specification below and attached.

We are currently the only free, L2-accredited, year-round provider of out-of-scope immigration advice on the South Coast, and increasing local immigration capacity is critical to address growing demand and changing demographics in the region. Our current core caseload is largely non-EEA nationals whose immigration cases are out of scope of legal aid. However we are also seeing and will continue to see new arrivals and needs in the region over the next year and onwards including Hong Kong BNO nationals, Afghans resettled under the ARAP and ACRS schemes, EEA nationals who still have not registered for status, and an increasing number of both newly arrived and established asylum seekers placed in emergency ('contingency') and dispersal Home Office accommodation. We can additionally expect increasing numbers of Ukrainian nationals and others displaced by the war in the Ukraine over the coming months.

The balance of time spent between different client groups and cases will therefore need to be responsive to the changes we see in the city and region. Many of our clients also have complex additional needs including health and homelessness and the post holder will be expected to liaise closely with our generalist caseworkers and external providers to ensure that people's holistic needs are met.

You will work as part of a small, supportive advice and casework team that also includes two generalist advice caseworkers and two dedicated resettlement caseworkers who are supporting newly resettled refugee families mainly from Syria and Afghanistan.

Regular supervision and support and in-house and on-the-job training will be provided, as well as external training on specific issues where needed. However you will need to be ready to step immediately into a busy advice environment with the necessary confidence, skills and knowledge to begin to deliver advice and casework and pick up an existing caseload.

Ideally you will already be OISC L2-accredited, but if only L1-accredited you must be willing to work towards accreditation within the probationary period.

Postholders will need to have the right to work in the UK.

Covid-19, hybrid working and what we're like to work for:

We have taken a cautious approach to Covid over the past two years and in response to staff feedback are currently developing a long-term hybrid working model to provide staff with the flexibility to work from home and from our office as and when suits as long as this fits with our operational needs. Individual working arrangements can be discussed with your line manager and/or our director.

We will provide the kit (IT and phone) needed to ensure that you can work from home safely and comfortably. We would expect you to have adequate working broadband and data allowance in place at no additional cost to Voices, but are willing to discuss this if it is a barrier for you. Working from home and flexible working arrangements are negotiable and subject to operational need, and are under regular review.

We would expect and hope that applicants will be fully vaccinated against Covid but will make accommodations if and where practical if this is not possible. We have clear Covid risk assessments, policies and procedures in place and these are reviewed regularly.

We have a work culture that is friendly, welcoming and inclusive, and we take staff wellbeing seriously. Clinical supervision is available and we make time for collective care and peer support within our working hours. We are a learning organisation and are open to hearing about how we can do better.

Staff reporting to this post:

Volunteers

Key responsibilities:

- Provide one-to-one specialist advice (including immigration advice to OISC L2) and support to migrant and refugee clients in Sussex by phone, email and face-to-face;
- Conduct initial holistic assessments and make appropriate internal and external referrals to address holistic needs;
- Provide thorough follow-up casework and support where appropriate and carry a caseload of ongoing immigration casework under the supervision of the casework manager;
- Actively develop professional relationships and referral links with law centres and solicitors' firms, and refer/signpost clients to other legal services & agencies as appropriate;
- Manage own caseload, keeping clear, accurate and timely records of all work done using case management system AdvicePro and other internal recording systems, and ensuring that work is monitored and evaluated and quality assured to meet internal and external requirements;
- Assist in evidencing the impact of work done, including recording, monitoring and reporting against project targets, regular case studies and other information & reports as requested;
- Provide supervision to trainee & volunteer advisers as required and in compliance with OISC guidance;
- Assist in devising and delivering in-house training for trainee and volunteer advisers as needed;
- Work with the casework manager to develop clear case management systems, policies and procedures;
- Attend & contribute to relevant fora & networks (virtual and actual), including liaison with local refugee and migrant community groups and networks;
- Attend regular team meetings & participate in other advice and staff team commitments and meetings as needed;
- Participate fully in individual supervision, training, appraisal and collective care and wellbeing;
- Work with colleagues in Voices in Exile to maintain and develop our holistic approach and commitment to human rights, community development, diversity and best practice in working with vulnerable migrants;
- Carry out other duties as required.

A = Application form
(Please address the relevant points in order)
I = Interview

Please bear in mind that you can demonstrate how you meet these requirements using examples from paid employment, volunteering, lived experience or a combination of all these.

| Person Specification | Essential/ Desirable | Assessment Method |
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| Qualifications/level of experience | | |
| 1. A relevant qualification or lived or professional experience in one or more of the following areas: advice giving, social work, law, gender or migration studies or related field. | E | A |
| 2. OISC Level 1 immigration & asylum accreditation | E | A |
| 3. OISC Level 2 immigration & asylum accreditation | D | A |
| Experience | | |
| 4. Minimum 2 years' experience of providing advice, casework or similar support to migrants or other vulnerable/at risk clients in a frontline service or casework environment | E | A+I |
| 5. Significant experience of OISC L1 immigration casework, including actively making and following up immigration applications on clients' behalf | E | A+I |
| 6. Experience of OISC L2 immigration casework | D | A+I |
| 7. Experience of advocating effectively and clearly on a client's behalf with statutory and other agencies | E | A+I |
| 8. Experience of working in the voluntary or community sector | D | A+I |
| Knowledge | | |
| 9. Good general knowledge of issues faced by refugees and migrants in the UK | E | A |
| 10. Good up-to-date knowledge of the immigration system and of barriers to access to justice for migrants in the UK | E | A+I |
| 11. Good up-to-date working knowledge of access to services for migrants in the UK, and in Brighton and Hove in particular | D | A+I |
| 12. Good awareness of gender & LGBTQI issues as they intersect with immigration & asylum | D | A+I |

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| 13. Good awareness of mental health and issues relating to trauma | D | A+I |
| 14. Good awareness and understanding of current safeguarding law, policies and procedures | D | A+I |
| Skills & qualities | | |
| 15. Ability to step into pressurised advice environment and take on one-off advice and casework with minimal supervision | E | A+I |
| 16. Ability to plan and organise own work and meet deadlines | E | A+I |
| 17. Ability to interview clients sensitively, clearly and accurately to diagnose and prioritise client needs | E | A+I |
| 18. High level of spoken and written English, and the ability to analyse complex written information and communicate it effectively | E | A+I |
| 19. Excellent online research and analytical skills in order to research case law and country of origin information | E | A+I |
| 20. Ability to work creatively with clients facing seemingly intractable issues, and to problem solve and manage conflict | E | A+I |
| 21. Ability to work as an effective team member and to relate well and communicate clearly and respectfully with a diverse group of people | E | A+I |
| 22. Personal resilience and the ability to maintain clear professional boundaries and manage expectations | E | A+I |
| 23. Ability to monitor and report against project targets & communicate effectively with funders & stakeholders | E | A |
| 24. Ability to train, support and supervise volunteer team members and work in partnership with interpreters | D | A+I |
| 25. Ability to work competently with Microsoft Office ICT packages including case management systems and Excel; and to be administratively self-servicing | E | A |
| 26. Ability to speak another relevant language | D | A |
| Other | | |
| 27. Commitment to working with migrant and refugee clients | E | A+I |

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| 28. Commitment to ViE aims, values and ethos, including working in an inter-cultural, multi-faith environment | E | A+I |
| 29. Commitment to maintaining client confidentiality and delivering a high-quality professional service | E | A+I |