



Senior Welfare Benefits Advisor (Haringey)

One-year fixed term contract – Salary 28,000 – 30,000 depending on experience

Hours: 35 hours per week

In 2016, Asylum Aid merged with Migrants Resource Centre. We have now rebranded as Consonant to better reflect the broad scope of our work and emphasise our mission to help build a society where everyone feels they belong, regardless of their background. Over the past two years, we have significantly broadened the scope of legal support we provide our clients. We now offer legal advice on all immigration and asylum matters as well as generalist advice on a full range of welfare, housing, and debt issues. We deliver our services with a team of more than 10 solicitors, caseworkers, and advisers as well as a growing network of pro bono lawyers and volunteers. The team operates from two offices and several outreach centres across London.

As Senior Welfare Benefits Advisor (Haringey), you will develop and deliver a new comprehensive advice service to local people on all matters relating to Welfare Benefits, to support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the borough of Haringey. This will include advising clients on entitlements to Welfare Benefits in order to increase their income, assist and support in the application of relevant claims and to effectively challenge adverse decisions. Advice sessions will take place by face to face appointments at our offices, at outreach sessions and on the telephone. You will work closely with Consonant's existing advice service in Westminster.

For further details, please see attached recruitment pack:

Applications should be sent to wayne.myslik@consonant.org.uk

Closing date: Applications are due by 5pm on 13 December 2019

Consonant encourages applications from people with migrant or refugee backgrounds

Consonant is an equal opportunities employer.

Reg. charity no. 291789

About Consonant

At Consonant, our roots are in the migrant communities that we serve. Many of our services are delivered by a wide range of skilled and dedicated volunteers who come from all over the world. And most of our staff are themselves migrants or the children of migrants. Many started as service users or volunteers before joining the staff, and therefore understand the challenges our clients face.

Our vision

Our vision is of a society that is inclusive and free of prejudice; that celebrates diversity; and that supports the rights of all people to enjoy freedom from persecution, danger and oppression.

Our mission

Our mission is to enable people of diverse origins to make the UK their home; and to enrich our society by building community through mutual respect and partnerships.

What we do

Consonant will support migrants, refugees and asylum seekers to settle, integrate, and build new lives in the UK. We will help migrants and their families to truly prosper by enabling them to:

- Overcome the barriers that hold them back
- Develop the skills they need to build positive new lives, and
- Transform their communities and society to work for all who live here

The Role

As Senior Welfare Benefits Advisor (Haringey), you will develop and deliver a new comprehensive advice service to local people on all matters relating to Welfare Benefits, to support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the borough of Haringey. This will include advising clients on entitlements to Welfare Benefits in order to increase their income, assist and support in the application of relevant claims and to effectively challenge adverse decisions. Advice sessions will take place by face to face appointments at our offices, at outreach sessions and on the telephone. You will work closely with Consonant's existing advice service in Westminster.

The Candidate

The post requires someone who has demonstrable experience and knowledge on a range of issues faced by people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, including housing, debt, social care, and welfare benefits. The ideal candidate will be familiar with and have contacts in the borough of Haringey.

Summary of Terms and Conditions of Employment

Full-time staff are entitled to 28 working days' holiday per leave year (excluding bank holidays). Then one additional day is granted for each year of service to a maximum of 33 days. Following a successful probationary period, a full-time employee will be entitled to up to 10 sick days on full pay in the first year of employment and an additional 2 days for each subsequent completed year of employment up to a maximum of 20 working days. After five years' continuous employment, an employee may apply for up to one year's sabbatical leave without pay, if suitable conditions can be agreed with the Chief Executive. The charity will contribute up to 6% of each employee's gross salary to the Group Pension scheme or the individual's own stakeholder scheme, following a successful probationary period. The level of contribution from the charity is dependent on the level of contribution the employee makes to the pension scheme. The charity will double the percentage of company contribution compared to employee contribution up to a maximum of 6%.

**Consonant
Job Description**

Senior Welfare Benefits Advisor (Haringey)

Location: Consonant offices in Haringey, London

Main purpose of the job To develop and deliver a welfare benefits legal advice service to support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in the borough of Haringey.

Key Responsibilities

The post-holder will:

- Develop and deliver an advice, guidance and support service that has homelessness prevention at its centre
- Promote the dignity, independence and self-determination of service users
- Work with service users to achieve outcomes that help them prevent and respond to a range of issues that might lead to homelessness or housing difficulty
- Be committed to developing and maintaining positive relationships with stakeholders and the local community
- Ensure the service meets the needs of residents regardless of race, gender identity, sex, religion, sexuality or disability
- Deliver the service in community languages and English

Advice giving

- Conduct needs and risk assessments.
- Oversee casework delivery.
- Identify causes of difficulties service users are experiencing and together identify sustainable and achievable solutions.
- Assist clients to obtain their welfare, housing and related rights.
- Support clients to manage their finances.
- Support clients to gain the require skills to manage their housing and to access training or employment where relevant.
- Refer clients on to relevant specialist support agencies for their needs where required.
- Liaise with external agencies on behalf of clients.
- Interview clients using sensitive listening and questioning skills in order to allow clients to explain their problem(s) and empower them to set their own priorities.
- Interview clients with the support of language volunteers/interpreters if appropriate
- Use up to date information sources to find, interpret and communicate the relevant information.
- Research and explore options and implications so that clients can make informed decisions.
- Act for the client where necessary by calculating, negotiating, drafting or writing letters and telephoning.
- Negotiate with third parties such as statutory and non-statutory bodies as appropriate.
- Accept referrals from and act as an information resource to other agencies
- Ensure that all work conforms to Consonant 's Office Manual and LEXCEL standard.
- Maintain detailed electronic case records (Advice Pro) for the purpose of continuity of casework, information retrieval, statistical monitoring and report preparation.
- Deliver the service in accordance with the contract targets.
- Deliver the service in outreach locations as specified in the contract
- Identify appeals, procedures and time limits in social welfare law and co-ordinate with partners for referral.
- Keep up to date with protocol procedures and changes within social welfare law (such as universal credit, housing changes)

Social policy

- Assist with social policy work by identifying social policy issues and referring them to appropriate channels
- Providing information about clients' circumstances through the appropriate channels for wider take-up.

Professional development

- Keep up to date with legislation, policies and procedures and undertake appropriate training within a set budget.
- Read relevant publications.
- Attend relevant internal and external meetings as agreed with the line manager.
- Prepare for and attend supervision sessions/team meetings/staff meetings as appropriate.

Volunteer Co-ordination and Development

- Recruit volunteers to support the service, especially as interpreters and translators.
- Arrange training for volunteers as appropriate.

Administration

- Use IT for statistical recording, record keeping and document production.
- Ensure that all work conforms to Consonant's systems and procedures.
- Provide electronic statistical information and case studies as required for the contract.

Other duties and responsibilities

- Cascade information and developments in social welfare law and immigration to the volunteers who will assist with the gateway service.
- Support and assist the volunteers and other staff.
- Carry out any other tasks that may be within the scope of the post to ensure the effective delivery and development of the service.
- Demonstrate commitment to the aims and policies of Consonant.
- Abide by health and safety guidelines and share responsibility for own safety and that of colleagues.

Consonant

November 2019

Person Specification

Essential criteria

The post-holder will meet the following ***essential criteria*** for the post:

Experience & Knowledge

Essential

1. Experience of working with clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.
2. Experience of delivering advice with specialist expertise in at least two areas of social welfare law (Welfare Benefits, Debt, Housing/Homelessness, Employment).
3. Experience of recruiting, supporting, and supervising staff or volunteers
4. Experience of working with interpreters
5. Knowledge on a range of issues around homelessness including housing, debt, health and social care and we.
6. Experience of working with disabled people or vulnerable client groups
7. Experience of building effective relationships through which issues can be identified and resolved
8. A thorough understanding of social security and welfare benefits legislation
9. Experience of supporting people to fill in forms and meet deadlines
10. Experience of preparing people for appeals and tribunal
11. Understanding of the issues and barriers that people of migrant background face in the UK
12. Experience of writing and presenting reports and dealing effectively with correspondence.
13. Experience of successfully operating and negotiating with external & internal services and agencies to ensure optimum delivery of services
14. Understanding of confidentiality, data protection issues and safeguarding issues
15. Excellent working knowledge of MS word, outlook and other applications

Desirable

16. Knowledge of a second language
17. Experience working in the London borough of Haringey

Skills & Abilities

1. Ability to develop and implement service delivery models to maximise effectiveness
2. Organised and can work to deadlines
3. Resilient and tenacious
4. Empathic approach
5. Time management and task prioritisation
6. Able to work independently as well as part of a team
7. Excellent written and verbal communication skills
8. Report writing skills
9. Networks and keeps others informed
10. Action orientated and can-do approach

Other requirements

Enhanced CRB that permits working with vulnerable adults and children.

JOB APPLICATION FORM

Please complete this application form (and the Equal Opportunities monitoring form enclosed / attached separately) and return them to:

Wayne.myslik@consonant.org.uk

Please mark your email 'Job Application – Senior Welfare Benefits Advisor (Haringey)'

Closing date: Applications are due by 5pm on 13 December 2019

Consonant wishes to encourage electronic applications,
but applicants preferring to submit a hard copy may send it to
Consonant, Berol House, 25 Ashley Road, N1 9LJ

Senior Caseworker / Solicitor

1) Personal Information

Full name:

(Please underline your surname or family name)

Address:

Telephone no:

(Home)

(Work)

Email address:

2) Education (please note, if you submit a CV there is no need to fill out sections 2-4)

Dates	Name and location of school/college attended	Exams passed/qualifications obtained

3) Professional Qualifications and Training (please note, if you submit a CV there is no need to fill out sections 2-4)

Dates	Type of training course and name/location of provider	Qualifications obtained

4) Employment history (please note, if you submit a CV there is no need to fill out sections 2-4)

Dates	Name and address of employer	Job title, main duties, present/final salary and reasons for leaving/wanting to leave

5) Please explain how your work experience (both paid and unpaid), skills and abilities help you to meet the selection criteria set out in the person specification for this post.

A decision on whether to interview you will be based on your ability to provide evidence here of your suitability for the post in relation to the person specification criteria. A final decision on who to select for the post will be based on this form as well as on your interview and on your references.

Therefore, you should use this section of the application form to demonstrate how you meet the different selection criteria. This includes explaining the nature and scope of any relevant employment or voluntary work. It is important not to assume that your experience or qualifications speak for themselves. You may add additional sheets if you wish to continue your answer and use a CV to replace parts 2 to 4 of this form, but not part 5. Please do not include any other supporting documents, as these will not be considered.

6) Further information

How did you find out about this post?

How long is the notice period for your present post?

Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

If yes, please indicate any aid(s)/adjustments required at interview or if
appointed_____

Have you any current disciplinary warnings outstanding from your current employment?

If yes, please provide brief details

6. References

Please provide the names and details of two people able to provide a reference for you. **One should be your current or most recent employer.**

Reference 1

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Occupation _____

Connection with you _____

Reference 2

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Email _____

Occupation _____

Connection with you _____

7. Declaration

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 I give my consent for the information contained in this form, including any defined as 'sensitive personal data', to be processed in accordance with Migrants Resource Centre's recruitment and employment policies. I understand that if I am appointed, this application form will form part of my personal file and that if I am not appointed it will be stored securely and confidentially for up to a year and then destroyed.

I confirm the information I have supplied above is, to the best of my knowledge, true and accurate.

Signature: _____

Date: _____