



Job description

Job title	Lawyer
Department	External Relations Department
Responsible to	Head of Legal Unit
Remit of post covers	England and Wales
Salary	Starting salary of £38,648 pa inclusive of basic salary and London allowance. Grade E of Mind's salary scales.
Hours	35 hours a week
Based at	Stratford, East London
Length of contract	Permanent

Purpose of job

We're Mind, the mental health charity. We won't give up until everyone experiencing a mental health problem gets support and respect. We provide advice and support to empower anybody experiencing a mental health problem and we campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding. There will be an emphasis in this role on the mental health of young people.

The purpose of this job is to fight discrimination and injustice against those experiencing mental health problems through casework, legal advice and through supporting Mind's policy work.

Scope of the job

Mind's Legal Team provides legal support for Mind in relation to identifying and supporting Mind's role in test cases (with an impact beyond that for the individual concerned).

The team works closely with Mind Infoline staff and the Mind Legal Line staff in Cardiff and the post holder will take part in training and supervising them. The Legal Team also produce written materials for the public and professionals, including a series of rights guides, an e-newsletter for lawyers, advocates and others, and a series of articles for an external publication. The post holder will contribute to this work.

The lawyers work closely with other teams within Mind, in particular offering legal advice to colleagues in the Information, Workplace Wellbeing and Policy & Campaigns Teams to explain legal rights or promote changes to the law.

Mind aims to ensure that the needs and interests of people with mental health problems, women and black and minority ethnic communities, disabled people and lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender and people of all ages are reflected in all its activities. You will be expected to contribute to this aim.

Key responsibilities

Legal advice and representation

1. Provide legal support for Mind in relation to identifying and supporting Mind's role in test cases (with an impact beyond that for the individual concerned). This may include drafting and lodging proceedings, ensuring deadlines are met, instructing counsel and experts (where required), attending court hearings and ensuring Mind's costs stay within agreed limits.
2. Assist Mind Infoline staff and Mind Legal Line staff in dealing with enquires from people with experience of mental health problems, carers and families, and ensure legal information and general advice provided by telephone, letter and email complies with Mind's service delivery targets. This may involve some direct advice giving.
3. Work closely with Mind Legal Line staff to establish whether cases are suitable as test cases and ensure a smooth handover and management of such cases.
4. Maintain up-to-date manual and computerised databases of records of requests for assistance, case files and all related casework activity in compliance with Solicitors Regulation Authority requirements.
5. Contribute to team discussions in relation to specific cases and casework policy in general.

Legal writing, education and development

1. Produce written materials for lawyers, advisers and the public on aspects of mental health, mental capacity, disability discrimination, community care, human rights and related law and practice.
2. Assist with the training of Mind Infoline workers and Mind Legal Line advisors and other Mind staff.
3. Undertake legal research where necessary for the purposes of providing advice or in relation to casework.
4. Keep up to date with relevant legal and policy developments and ensure that other team members are updated accordingly.
5. Attend meetings, conferences and seminars on behalf of the Legal Team on topics relevant to its work and speak at such events where appropriate.
6. As necessary, provide information about Mind's legal work and relevant legal developments to other teams within Mind, particularly to the Policy & Campaigns Team, Information Team, Workplace Wellbeing Team and Media Team, and to the network of Mind charities across England and Wales where relevant.

Policy work

1. Build and maintain a range of relationships within Mind and with external organisations and individuals as appropriate to support Mind's overall strategy and the work of the Legal Team.

2. Work with other staff within Mind, and particularly within the External Relations Department, on proposed or desirable changes to the law, including drafting and/or contributing to responses to government consultations and parliamentary select committee calls for evidence.

Expectations

1. Attend and contribute to appropriate internal meetings, including team and department meetings, training, supervision and the appraisal process.
2. Undertake other duties that may from time to time be necessary, compatible with the nature and grade of this post.
3. Maintain and develop expertise and a thorough working knowledge of all relevant law and procedure, including keeping abreast of relevant legal and policy developments.
4. Attend training courses and undertake all necessary steps to comply with professional and supervisory requirements, such as completing required CPD hours and maintaining a current practising certificate.
5. Maintain confidentiality at all times and abide by the principles of the Data Protection Act.
6. Some out of hours work and travel, including some travel to the Mind Infoline and Mind Legal Line in Cardiff, including some overnight stays, will be required.

Mind (National Association for Mental Health)

Person specification: Lawyer

Essential criteria

1. Professionally qualified solicitor or barrister holding or eligible to hold a practising certificate (you will be asked to produce your qualification/practising certificate if selected for interview).
2. Good working knowledge and understanding of at least two of the following areas of law: mental health, mental capacity, discrimination, human rights, community care and public law.
3. Excellent written communication skills and the ability to write clear and accurate legal information for a range of audiences in a range of formats.
4. Knowledge and understanding of current mental health policy issues.
5. Willingness to deliver training and a demonstrable ability to do so.
6. Excellent oral communication skills, including the ability to explain complex issues to non-legal audiences.
7. Ability to deal respectfully and supportively with people with mental health problems who may be distressed or agitated.
8. Understanding of and commitment to Mind's mission and values.
9. Experience of working as part of a team with both lawyers and/or non-lawyers.
10. Self-supporting excellent IT skills including email, MS Office and digital information systems.
11. Willingness to undertake occasional travel and unsocial hours.

Desirable criteria

1. Experience of Human Rights and Public Law
2. Experience of mental health law as it applies to children and young people.
3. Experience of giving legal advice by telephone and letter.
4. Experience of writing jargon free, accessible legal information.
5. Direct or indirect experience of mental health problems.
6. Experience of drafting responses to government consultations.