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*CHAS has a vision of society where all members*

*of the community have a place they can call home*

**Job description**

Job title: Housing Advice Caseworker

Location: CHAS (Bristol) Housing Advice Service, Easton Business Centre, Felix

Road, Easton, Bristol, BS5 0HE (blend of home and office working)

Accountable to: Advice Service Lead

Hours and leave: 28-35 hours per week
 25 days + Bank Holidays (pro-rata)

Benefits: Employer pension, Cycle to Work scheme, Employee Assistance

Programme, Flexible Working Policy

Salary: £24,491 - £27,741 (dependant on experience) (pro-rata)

Contract: 12 month fixed term

**About CHAS:** CHAS is a local housing and homelessness charity, based within the community. We provide advice, advocacy and support to anyone in housing need, with a focus on the most marginalised.

**Role Summary**: You will provide specialised housing advice and advocacy on a range of issues including landlord and tenant disputes, housing related benefits and rehousing. As well as providing legal advice, you will offer the support and encouragement needed to motivate and empower clients to resolve their own housing issues.

 Three days a week of this post will be funded through our Bristol Homelessness Prevention Project in partnership with Caring in Bristol. This project aims to use new and dynamic ways to tackle homelessness in the city. BHPP plans to reach people where they already are in the community, overcoming the access barriers many face in accessing advice. The successful candidate for this role will provide housing advice casework as part of this project, as well as attending project meetings and outreach advice sessions.

**Context:** After a sustained Covid-19 response, we’re now at a stage in our development where we are expanding our project work, investing in our advice service and our local community, to increase the capacity of advice and outreach.

**Personal Outlook:** The post-holder is required to be self-motivated with strong communication and organisation skills, able to work as part of a team and manage their own workload.

**We’re keen to have a staff team which is representative of the community we serve and also welcome applications from people with life experience of housing and homelessness issues to help us to shape and develop our service.**

**Responsibilities**

**Advice & Support**

* Providing a Housing Advice Service (telephone, email, appointments) on housing & homelessness matters, to individuals and agencies, some of which may be within a community setting.
* Triage telephone and email enquiries, assessing the nature of the query, urgency and most appropriate pathway.
* Handle enquiries and carry a caseload of clients, providing information, advice, practical help, advocacy and appropriate onward referrals.
* Carrying a caseload of clients, providing information, advice, practical help, advocacy and appropriate onward referrals.
* Work closely with partner agencies; referring clients for specialist advice and joint-working to progress cases.
* Offering a client-centred, holistic approach to promote the best outcome for the client.
* Maintaining records of enquiries and casework, using case monitoring software and database.
* Undertaking training to maintain up-to-date knowledge of legal changes and practice, improve personal skills and knowledge required for the role.

**Outreach & Events**

* Supporting community outreach to engage a wider audience within the community. In the current context, some events may be remote/ web-based.
* Delivering activities to encourage organisations, their staff and beneficiaries to seek housing advice early, to avoid housing crisis.
* Supporting the development of CHAS Bristol’s network of partner organisations & community-based groups.
* Contributing to the development of a training programme and suite of materials for staff and volunteers of community-based organisations.

**General responsibilities**

* Working alongside volunteers and trustees of the charity.
* Engaging with and contribute to the development of the advice service as the charity grows.
* Working within CHAS (Bristol) policies and procedures, including equal opportunities, health and safety and confidentiality.
* To undertake other such duties as may be required.

**Qualifications, Experience & Skills**

**Essential**

* Experience and relevant training within the housing advice sector
* Knowledge and understanding of homelessness and housing issue
* Up to date knowledge of housing legislation and recent case law
* Experience using electronic case management systems
* Experience working with people from a range of backgrounds, with differing needs.
* Understanding of Bristol’s advice & voluntary sector
* Experience working under pressure & achieving individual targets
* Proficient computer literacy (e.g. Microsoft office / SharePoint)
* A confident and dynamic communicator
* Excellent attention to detail
* Able to work both as part of a team and on own initiative, prioritising and managing own workload and time to meet targets and deadlines
* Enthusiastic, flexible and confident approach to work
* Commitment to the aims of CHAS (Bristol)

**Desired**

* Experience of providing advice at a specialist level (e.g. advocacy at court or tribunal)
* Experience of training and/or supporting volunteers
* Experience of community outreach & delivering events to the public
* Experience delivering presentations and/or training workshops to groups
* Experience of working in a small, and growing organisation
* Experience of service user involvement

**Person Specification**

While we aim to recruit someone with detailed knowledge of housing rights and law, if you meet the other essential criteria training would be available for the right candidate.

**C**- Certificate  **A** – Application I- Interview **T-** Test

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Essential | Desirable | Measured |
| Education | * Education to degree level, or equivalent relevant qualification, or substantial training and experience in a relevant role
 |  |  X | A/C |
| * Evidence of continuing professional development and training
 | X |  | A/C |
| Experience | * Recent experience providing advice, support and casework on housing or related issues
 |  | X | A/I |
|  | * Experience of working with vulnerable people
 | X |  | A/I |
|  | * Proven experience of working under pressure and achieving individual targets
 | X |  | A/I |
|  | * Experience of delivering presentations and/or training workshops to groups
 |  | X | A/I |
|  | * Experience of providing advice at a specialist level (e.g. advocacy at court or tribunal)
 |  | X | A/I |
|  | * Experience of training and/or supporting volunteers
 |  | X | A |
|  | * Recent experience of providing advice, support and casework in debt, financial capability and/or welfare benefits
 |  | X | A/I |
| Knowledge/ Understanding | Knowledge and understanding of homelessness and housing issues | X |  | A/I/ T |
|  | Up to date knowledge of housing legislation and recent case law |  | X | A/I/ T |
|  | Understanding of the advice and voluntary sector | X |  | A/I |
|  | Knowledge of complex legal issues related to housing and homelessness, welfare benefits or financial capability and debt issues |  | X | A |
| Skills & Abilities | * Ability to assess, identify and prioritise client problems, identify and present potential solutions and develop appropriate casework plans and strategies.
 | X |  | A/I/ T |
|  | * Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to liaise effectively and positively with a wide range of individuals and organisations
 | X |  | A/I/T |
|  | * Proficient in computer skills e.g. Microsoft Word, Excel and Outlook
 | X |  | A/I |
|  | * Experience of using electronic case management systems
 | X |  | A/I |
|  | * Ability to maintain accurate case and statistical records, maintaining security and confidentiality at all times
 | X |  | A/I |
|  | * Attention to detail
 | X |  | A/I |
| Personal Qualities | * Able to work both as part of a team and on own initiative, prioritising and managing own workload and time to meet targets and deadlines
 | X |  | A/I |
|  | * Enthusiastic, flexible and confident approach to work
 | X |  | A/I |
|  | * Commitment to the aims of CHAS (Bristol)
 | X |  | A/I |