

Information Pack Casework Paralegal

Will you join our award-winning and thriving team?

We are looking for a capable and ambitious paralegal to join our casework team. The role is one of two paralegal roles (there is also an Administrative Paralegal role). There is an expectation that both paralegals will undertake both casework support and administrative tasks, but there is a greater emphasis on casework support in this role. The role is presently supervised by the Deputy Legal Director, Sara Lomri, but there will be opportunities to work closely with other fee earners.

We invite applications from anyone who meets the job description, but the role is suited to candidates who have completed the Legal Practice Course, aspire to a career as a solicitor in the publicly funded sector and who can demonstrate experience of working with vulnerable individuals. The role is an opportunity to gain real casework experience within a team of lawyers who have solid experience of running judicial reviews and a proven ability to develop cases and ideas independently.

PLP is a growing and lawyer-led access to justice charity, which was founded in 1991. Our vision is a world in which individual rights are respected and public bodies act fairly and lawfully. We act directly for individuals, and are regularly instructed by law firms, lawyers’ groups, such as the Law Centres Network, NGOs and other public interest organisations. We work consistently at the leading edge of access to justice issues and there is always lots of scope for development. Recent high-profile cases have engaged with diverse issues such as the Home Office removals policy, financial eligibility for Legal Aid, and the accessibility of the EU Settlement Scheme.

PLP funding comes from a range of sources, including legal aid and charitable grants. Our mixed funding model gives the organisation financial security and stability and means that our lawyers are able to work creatively to achievable income targets.

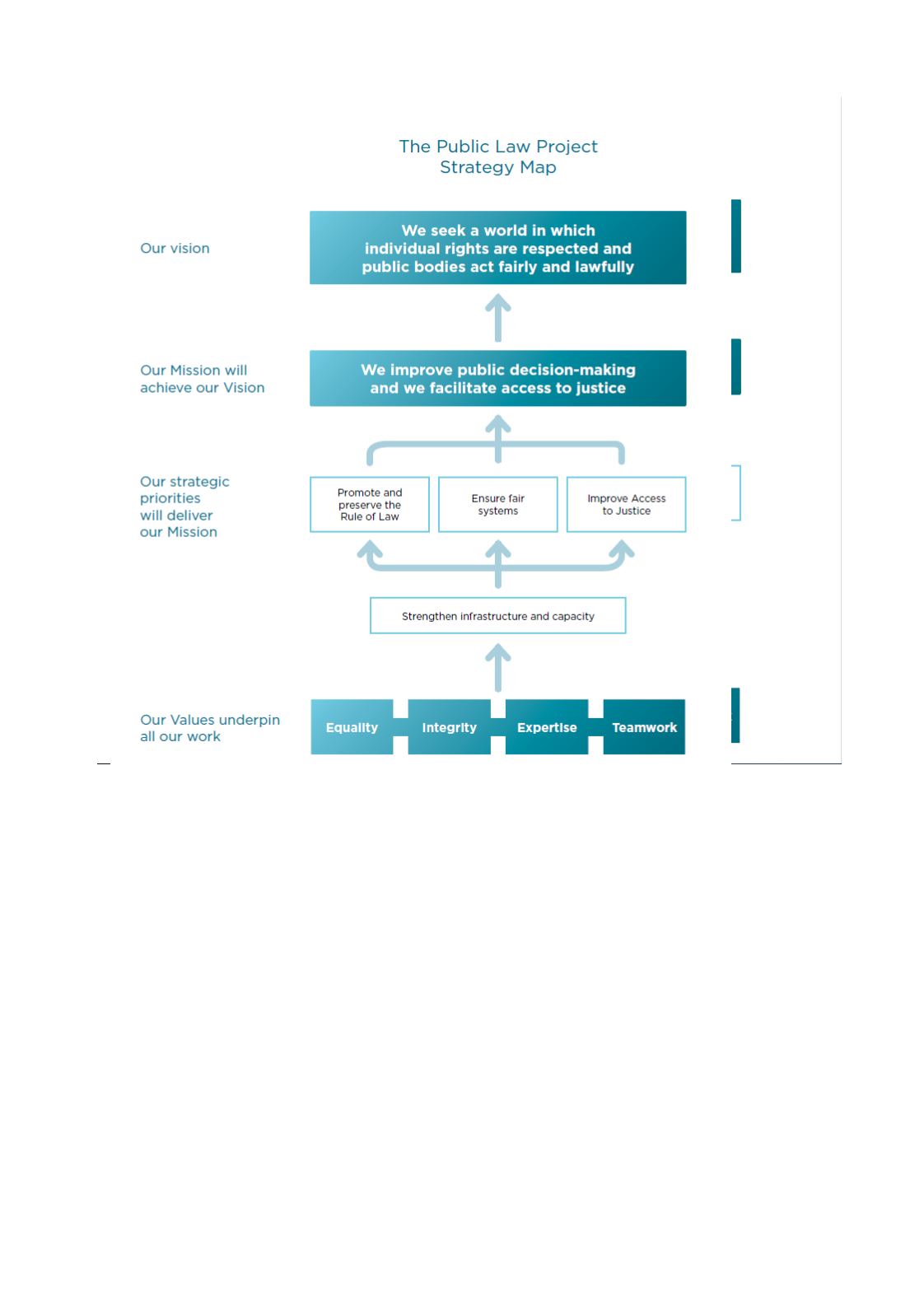
## What is PLP

Public Law Project (PLP) works to ensure people who are disadvantaged and marginalised can hold the state to account. For almost 30 years we have helped civil society, advisers and lawyers use the law to prevent abuses of power and improve access to justice in England and Wales. We employ specialist lawyers who represent individuals, campaign groups and charities, often in high profile, high stakes, public interest litigation. Our researchers work in partnership with the UK’s leading academic institutions, and we run a national programme of conferences and training.

PLP is growing. We are expanding our operations and developing our in-house expertise to meet some extraordinary challenges and opportunities; from austerity to Brexit, from benefit sanctions to an unprecedented programme of justice reform.

Can you help us achieve access to justice?

## Vision, Mission & Values



## Employment information

## Job title: Paralegal

## Contract term: Permanent

## Location: Central London (PLP’s offices are in Clerkenwell). We are currently predominantly working remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Hours: Full time (35 hours a week). Requests for part-time working (min 25 hours) and job share considered.

**Salary:** £23,247 per annum (pro rata if part time)**Pension:** 10% per annum after one year. Statutory minimum during first year.

**Leave:** A full time member of staff has 25 ordinary annual leave days each year in addition to bank holidays (usually 8).

**Probation period:** 6 months.

**Payment method:** Payment is made by electronic transfer on or shortly before the 15th of each calendar month covering payment for that same calendar month.

**Flexible working:**   
PLP is a family friendly employer. We are open to flexible working arrangements including those that will enable the post-holder to accommodate their care responsibilities.

PLP employees may be requested toattend occasional evening meetings. However, PLP recognises that post holders may have other commitments and seeks to be as flexible as possible in this regard. In addition, reasonable notice will be given of such commitments outside normal working hours where possible, and time off in lieu may be taken by arrangement.

*These details are provided for information only and do not form part of an employment contract or job offer.*

Diagram

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## Job Description: Casework Paralegal

The Paralegal provides administrative and legal support to PLP’s casework team, and supporting the Legal Director in the efficient running of the team. This is a fee earning role working under the supervision of PLP’s lawyers and is an entry-level post with potential for development for the right candidate.

The role is line managed by the Legal Director.

## Primary Duties and Responsibilities

The following is an illustrative but not exclusive list of the primary duties and responsibilities of the role:

### Casework administration

Providing general administrative support to PLP’s casework team including:

* Prepare outgoing post and faxes, book couriers and, when required, assist the Office Administrative Assistant with taking mail to the post office
* Answering the telephone, forwarding calls and taking messages
* Prepare and send basic case correspondence including subject access requests and appointment letters
* Arrange client appointments and, where necessary, book interpreters
* Assist caseworkers to set up and maintain client files, including printing and filing correspondence and other paperwork; setting up hard copy and electronic files; preparing and filing attendance notes; recording time
* Prepare, index, paginate, scan and copy bundles of documents for court, counsel and the Legal Aid Agency
* Travel out of the office as required to issue proceedings and file bundles at Courts and Tribunals, and serve proceedings and bundles on Defendants
* Booking training courses and travel for casework staff
* Scanning documents for the team generally including case documents and training materials
* Prepare payment requests to pay interpreters, counsel and independent experts
* Assisting caseworkers to claim expenses

Supporting the efficient running of the casework team by:

* Preparing papers for team meetings and minuting meetings
* Maintaining monitoring information about casework activities as required
* Assist with evaluation and monitoring work for activities carried out by the casework team in our projects including collating data on casework activities and outcomes, and assisting in the preparation of reports for funders
* Maintaining the PLP library and catalogue, including ordering and logging new books and journals

### Legal aid administration & billing support

* Assisting in the administration of legal aid applications including:
  + Preparing and drafting applications for legal representation on the Client and Costs Management System (CCMS)
  + Uploading documents and queries to CCMS and responding to queries
  + Undertaking means assessments with clients

Monitoring costs limits and making applications for extensions of costs and scope limitation

Drafting reviews and appeals of LAA decisions

* Providing billing support
  + Inputting and amending time recording on Lawfusion
  + Drafting EC1 forms for escape fee claims and preparing files for submission to the LAA
  + Preparing files for billing and liaising with external costs draftsmen
  + Drafting claim forms and preparing files for submission to the court and LAA for assessment

### Casework support

Working under supervision and direction of PLP’s lawyers, provide general support to the work of the casework team including:

* Manage new client enquiries and referrals, including speaking to new enquirers; logging details; carrying out preliminary assessment of legal aid eligibility; liaising with casework team to determine capacity and providing appropriate and timely response
* Attend clients in person and by telephone to take instructions, assess legal aid eligibility and complete legal aid application forms
* Draft correspondence, witness statements and instructions to 3rd parties with supervision
* Conduct research to support casework including legal research and work on consultations

### General duties

* Provide general administrative/secretarial support to the casework team as required
* Provide occasional support to the practice/office manager at busy periods or to cover where the Office Administrative Assistant is unavailable, subject to the needs of the above duties and responsibilities
* Undertake other tasks appropriate to role as requested by the senior management team.

Person Specification: Paralegal

## Knowledge, Skills and Competencies

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| **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| Ability to work accurately under time pressure and deliver work to a high standard | Undergraduate law degree or equivalent qualification |
| Good administrative skills including the ability to take accurate minutes | Experience of working in a legal practice including experience in billing |
| Proficient with the use of Microsoft Outlook and Office software | Knowledge of legal aid regulations and procedures, including making legal aid applications |
| Ability to use initiative to identify tasks without being asked and to work with limited supervision | Experience of time recording systems and/or legal project work |
| Good time management skills and ability to prioritise tasks and meet deadlines | Awareness of data protection requirements, including GDPR |
| Ability to communicate effectively orally and in writing |  |
| Ability to carry out legal research to a high standard |  |
| Ability to comply with PLP’s data protection policy |  |

**Personal qualities**

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| **Essential** | **Desirable** |
| Team player | Willingness and ability to occasionally attend evening meetings where required. |
| Commitment to PLP’s core values of equality, integrity, expertise and teamwork |  |
| Ability to be sensitive to our clients’ needs where appropriate and handle confidential information appropriately |  |
| Willingness and ability to travel locally during office hours including for urgent court runs |  |
| Attitude conducive to working in a small, charitable organisation including the willingness to take on a wide range of tasks |  |
| Commitment to equal opportunities |  |
| Right to work in the UK |  |
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## Application process

PLP is an equal opportunities employer. We welcome applications from individuals regardless of age, disability, gender, marital status, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Candidates may ask for clarification of elements of the person specification and/or the application process, and may discuss any issues that might impact on how they would be able to undertake the work. PLP will not discuss issues that may give any candidate information that would give them an advantage in their application.

To apply please complete the application form which accompanies this information pack and send it to hr@publiclawproject.org.uk

**The deadline for applications is 11.59pm, Monday 25 January 2021.**

A recruitment panel will be nominated for each vacancy. The recruitment panel will use the completed application form to assess each candidate's ability to meet the essential requirements of the job as set out in the person specification using a scoring system. The highest scoring applicants will be interviewed.

**Interviews will be held in February 2021.**

Further information about the interview process will be provided to successful applicants. Interviews will usually consist of at least one practical test of your abilities relating to the role and a standard interview with a panel of at least two people. Please let us know in advance of your interview if you have a disability which may interfere with your ability to take part in a test and PLP will make reasonable adjustments to ensure the process is fair to all applicants.

Interview questions will be decided in advance based on their relevance to the job description and person specification and scored separately by interviewers. A score sheet will be set in advance, interviewers may only use information from the application form, the interview and any other assessment methods to inform their score.

If you have a disability which you think may interfere with your ability to do the job as described, please let us know and PLP will make reasonable adjustments both at interview and on appointment.

PLP keeps assessment records/notes for all applicants, whether shortlisted or not, for 12 months. They are stored securely and then destroyed securely after the above period.

All short-listed candidates shall be notified of their selection decision and can obtain feedback from the assessment if they request it. All such requests are dealt with by the Practice Manager who may pass them on to the relevant person if applicable.

## Equality statement of intent

As an employer, PLP will treat all employees and job applicants equally and fairly and will not unlawfully discriminate against them. This also applies to volunteers, interns and anyone undertaking work experience with PLP. Our commitment to equal treatment extends to arrangements for recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment, access to training opportunities, access to promotion and transfers, grievance and disciplinary procedures, demotions, selection for redundancies, dress code, references, work allocation and any other employment related activities. Specifically, PLP will endeavour to ensure that:

I. Whenever practical, we will recruit and maintain a workforce which broadly reflects the diversity of the community in which we operate and serve. We will ensure that the style and content of our job adverts and recruitment materials convey this commitment, and always includes the statement that "The Public Law Project is an equal opportunity employer".

II. Subject to cost, we will ensure that job opportunities are advertised widely and to diverse audiences. Where appropriate, PLP will take positive action measures to attract applications from all sections of society and especially from those groups which are under-represented in our workforce.

III. We treat all job applicants equally and fairly and do not unlawfully discriminate against them. We do this by ensuring that we operate an open and fair recruitment process, and making decisions using selection criteria which do not discriminate.

IV. We will take every possible step to ensure that employees and volunteers are treated fairly, with the aim of creating a culture that respects and values each others’ differences, that is free of discrimination and promotes dignity, equality and diversity, and that encourages individuals to develop and maximise their true potential.

V. We recognise our continuing responsibility to develop the potential of all employees, removing any barriers, bias or discrimination that prevents progression or full contribution to the organisation’s performance. We will ensure that selection for promotion, training or other benefit is free from discrimination of any kind and is based on the employee’s experience and abilities and the needs of the job.

VI. We will make clear to all employees, volunteers and trustees that anyone who works for PLP in any capacity is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect, and that unlawful discrimination, intimidation, harassment and victimisation are disciplinary offences which will not be tolerated by the organisation and may lead to disciplinary action. We will provide clear and accessible procedures allowing allegations of such conduct to be promptly and sensitively investigated.

VII. We will provide flexibility to employees in relation to work requirements that may significantly impact on their personal needs and responsibilities and we will seek, as far as possible, to foster a culture that ensures an appropriate work – life balance. We also aim to be aware of days of cultural or religious significance that employees may wish to observe in an appropriate manner.

## Privacy notice

When you apply for a job with PLP we will need to collect information about you including your employment history and contact details so that we can assess your suitability for the role and inform you about the progress of your application.

Your records will be kept securely whilst we consider your application. If your application is unsuccessful, we will keep your data until 6 months after the decision was made. If successful your recruitment information will be kept for 6 years after your last day working with us.

If you opt to provide equal opportunity data to PLP this will be anonymised and retained only as long as is necessary to record the recruitment decision against the anonymised data and no longer than six months.

We do not share recruitment information with third parties.