



Public
Law
Project

Information pack

Casework Paralegal (Legal Aid)





Will you join our award-winning and thriving team?

We are looking for a capable and ambitious paralegal to join our casework team. The Casework Paralegal (Legal Aid) is a new role providing administrative and legal support to PLP's casework team and contributing to legal aid policy work. On a day-to-day basis, the role will support the work of the Lead Lawyer with responsibility for our Legal Aid Strategic Priority ('An effective and accessible legal aid scheme') and the solicitors line managed by that Lead Lawyer.

The role will primarily support the development of strategic casework and policy work around access to civil legal aid. There may also be opportunities to develop experience of public law casework in other areas.

PLP is considering launching a pilot project aimed at helping members of the public to access legal aid. The Casework Paralegal (Legal Aid) would be an instrumental part of that project, responding to enquiries from members of the public, assessing and advising on eligibility for legal aid (with support) and helping to identify issues that could be the subject of public law challenges.

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. Experience of conducting means assessments for legal aid cases and/or policy work on civil legal aid will be particularly valued in applications for this role.

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.



As part of our commitment to recruit fairly we use anonymised-selection processes until interview, offer additional interview opportunities to the highest-scoring candidates from under-represented communities, and use 'tie-breaker' provisions at all stages of our selection process.

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About Public Law Project

We are researchers, lawyers, trainers, and public law policy experts. The aim of all of our work is to make sure that state decision-making is fair and lawful and that anyone can hold the state to account.

For over 30 years we have represented and supported people marginalised through poverty, discrimination or disadvantage when they have been affected by unlawful state decision-making.

- Our specialist lawyers 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. We respond to consultations, policy proposals and legislation that have implications for public law remedies, access to justice and the rule of law. We provide evidence to inquiries, reviews, and parliamentary committees, and we publish independent research and guides to increase understanding of public law.
- Our events team runs a national programme of conferences and training for practitioners and those working with marginalised and disadvantaged groups, providing thought-leadership, expertise and insight to organisations and individuals who share our goals.



Vision, Mission & Values

Our vision

Our vision is a world where state decision-making is fair and lawful and each person has the power to hold public bodies to account.

Our mission

We hold power to account

We improve state decision-making

We empower people to get justice

Our values

Equality

Integrity

Expertise

Teamwork



Employment information

Job title: Casework Paralegal (Legal Aid)

Contract term: Permanent

Location: Central London (EC1V). The role is office based but our flexible working policy allows significant opportunity for home working.

Hours: 35 hours (full-time). PLP supports flexible working practices and will consider part-time hours and/or job sharing for the right candidate.

Salary: £26,778.13

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: 2 months. Benefits may be offered at a reduced level during the probation period.

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.

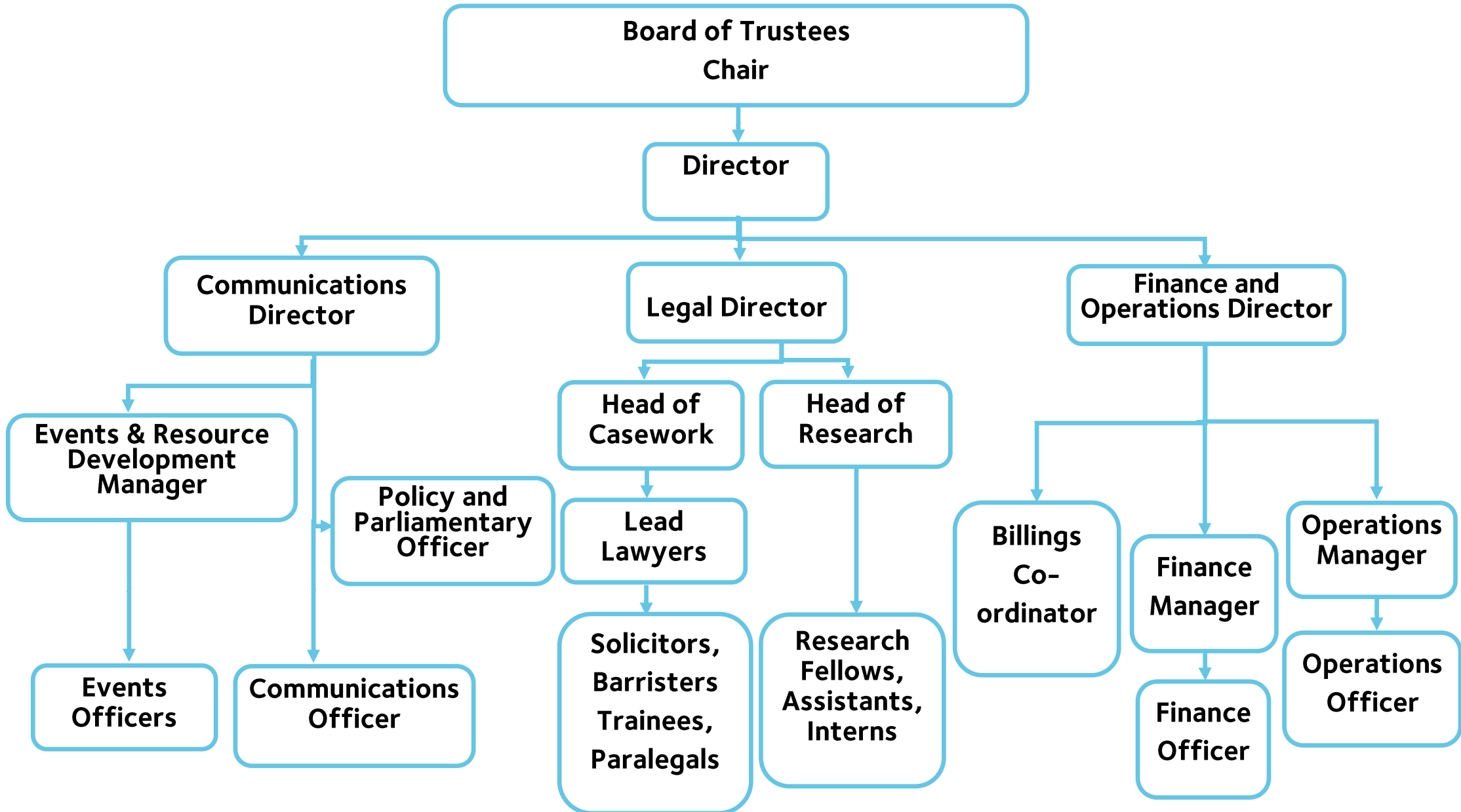


PLP employees may be requested to attend occasional evening meetings. However, PLP recognises that post holders may have other commitments and seeks to be as flexible as possible in this regard. In addition, reasonable notice will be given of such commitments outside normal working hours where possible,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



Organogram





Job Description: Casework Paralegal (Legal Aid)

The Casework Paralegal (Legal Aid) is a new role providing administrative and legal support to PLP's casework team and contributing to legal aid policy work. On a day-to-day basis, the role will support the work of the Lead Lawyer with responsibility for our Legal Aid Strategic Priority ('An effective and accessible legal aid scheme') and the solicitors line managed by that Lead Lawyer.

The role will primarily support the development of strategic casework and policy work around access to civil legal aid. There may also be opportunities to develop experience of public law casework in other areas. The solicitors in these roles have experience of public law challenges related to welfare benefits, immigration, and community care. The recent successes of the team in our legal aid strategic priority area include:

- Successful judicial review challenges on behalf of survivors of domestic violence refused legal aid due to financial eligibility tests, resulting in substantive changes in policy and regulations that have radically improved access to civil legal aid for low-income homeowners.
- Collaborating with PLP's research team to investigate the Legal Aid Agency's treatment of requests to disregard 'trapped capital' in the means assessment that cannot be sold and engage in policy work to secure improvements.
- Ongoing casework on other aspects of the means test adversely impacting domestic violence survivors and children with special educational needs.
- Engaging with the Ministry of Justice's Means Test review to secure proposals to increase eligibility limits, include additional categories of spending and exclude certain capital (including compensation and backdated benefits).
- A comprehensive response to the Ministry of Justice's Means Test Review Consultation to advocate for further improvements through attending stakeholder meetings, hosting a roundtable and drafting a response to the consultation.



PLP's current goals in this area are to increase numbers of people eligible for and/or practically able to access civil legal aid; and greater engagement in the need to ensure civil legal aid sustainability among key audiences.

PLP is considering launching a pilot project aimed at helping members of the public to access legal aid. This project would seek to ensure that members of the public are actually able to benefit from improvements to means regulations and policy secured previously and inform future work. The Casework Paralegal (Legal Aid) would be an instrumental part of that project, responding to enquiries from members of the public, assessing and advising on eligibility for legal aid (with support) and helping to identify issues that could be the subject of public law challenges.

All paralegals provide administrative and legal support to the broader casework team as required, though there is a dedicated Admin Paralegal and there is an expectation that this role will mainly support the work of the casework team set out above.

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

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
- Contribute to drafting consultations, policy briefings and communications



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 Admin Paralegal 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: Casework Paralegal (Legal Aid)

Abilities, skills, and knowledge	Essential	Desirable
Knowledge of legal aid regulations and procedures, understanding of key issues affecting the sustainability and accessibility of civil legal aid.	✓	
Ability to work accurately under time pressure and deliver work to a high standard	✓	
Good administrative skills including the ability to take accurate minutes	✓	
Proficient with the use of Microsoft Outlook and Office software	✓	
Ability to use initiative to identify tasks without being asked and to work with limited supervision	✓	
Good time management skills and ability to prioritise tasks and meet deadlines	✓	
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 and awareness of data protection requirements, including GDPR	✓	
Undergraduate law degree or equivalent qualification or Detailed experience and knowledge gained through work, volunteering,		✓



<p>campaigning or similar of one or more of the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Public law- Civil justice (including Housing, Family, Community Care, Benefits and Immigration law)- Legal Aid in England and Wales- Advocating for the interests of vulnerable people		
Experience of working in a legal practice including experience in billing, completing legal aid forms and using the LAA CCMS.		✓
Experience of time recording systems and/or legal project work		✓

Personal qualities, commitment, and values	Essential	Desirable
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Commitment to PLP's core values of equality, equity, inclusion, integrity, expertise and teamwork	✓	
Attitude conducive to working in a small, charitable organisation including the willingness to take on a wide range of tasks	✓	
Team player	✓	
Ability to be sensitive to our clients' needs where appropriate and handle confidential information appropriately	✓	
Commitment to equal opportunities	✓	
Willingness and ability to travel to other parts of the country, occasionally staying overnight and attending evening meetings where required.	✓	
Right to work in the UK	✓	
Willingness and ability to occasionally attend evening meetings where required.		✓



Application process

PLP is an equal opportunities employer and Disability Confident Employer. We welcome applications from individuals regardless of age, disability, gender, gender identity, 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 on Friday 15th July 2022.

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 on the week of 8th August 2022.

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 and require reasonable adjustments for the interview and/or assessment process to ensure the process is fair and equitable 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.

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 HR 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 other's 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.