



Supporting refugees, asylum seekers & those with no recourse to public funds

Voices in Exile

Job Description: Generalist caseworker x 2

Job Title:	Generalist caseworker
Responsible to:	Casework Manager; Director
Status:	Part-time (0.8FTE/4 days pw)
Contract:	To end December 2022, with possible extension subject to funding
Hours:	30 hours per week
Salary:	NJC incremental pay scale range entry pt. 18 (£24,982 FTE) – pt. 24 (£28,672 FTE)
Holiday entitlement:	25 days per annum pro rata, with 1 additional day per annum for every completed year of service up to a maximum of 6 additional days

Background:

Voices in Exile is a registered charity that works with refugees, asylum seekers and vulnerable migrants with no recourse to public funds in Brighton & Hove, East and West Sussex. We offer both practical and legal support including generalist advice and specialist immigration casework for those who would otherwise be unable to access justice. As part of our holistic approach we also advocate for, accompany and enable people to access services, build community, and develop their own potential through a programme of learning and creative activities. We are working towards becoming an organisation led by lived experience, but we are not there yet. Post holders will form a key part of a small, committed team working to develop Voices' services and activities at a critical point of growth for the organisation.

Job purpose:

We are looking for people for two demanding but rewarding and evolving roles at Voices in Exile as generalist caseworkers who can also manage a complex refugee resettlement caseload. The postholders will be flexible and highly skilled, with an essential interest in and experience of working with vulnerable clients with complex needs, and particularly with migrant and refugee clients. The posts might suit an experienced social worker who is interested in broadening and deepening their practice within the migrant sector; or an experienced generalist or immigration adviser who is interested in working with a mixed caseload that includes needs around destitution, homelessness, immigration, integration and resettlement. We don't expect you to be a specialist in all these areas, but we do expect you to be a specialist in at least one! We actively welcome applications from those with lived and relevant experience – please see the job description and person specification below and attached.

The post holders will provide one-to-one generalist advice, casework and practical support to migrant and refugee clients on issues including immigration status, housing & homelessness, welfare benefits, asylum support, community care and destitution; and will provide help to access local services including support groups, wellbeing activities, digital inclusion, ESOL, training and employability. Ideally you will also be accredited to provide immigration advice at OISC Level 1, or be willing to work towards accreditation while in post.

Our current core caseload is largely non-EEA nationals whose cases are out of scope of legal aid. However we may also see new arrivals and needs in the region over this period, including Hong Kong BNO nationals, Afghan interpreters and their families, EEA nationals who have not yet registered for status, and an increasing number of both newly arrived and established (dispersed) asylum seekers. The balance of time spent between different client groups and cases will therefore need to be responsive to the changes we see in the city and region. Many of our clients also have complex health needs and the post holders will be expected to provide casework management and co-ordination of services, liaising closely with other providers and with interpreters.

The role will also provide integration support to families resettled in Brighton & Hove under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) and who are in their second or third years in the UK. The scheme aims to make families feel welcome; to meet their need for practical services, information and support; and to help them understand their rights and achieve their own goals in relation to integration in the UK. This part of the role includes assisting people to access bureaucratic and busy services (GPs, utilities, benefits etc) and attend appointments; booking interpreters; applying for benefits not covered by specialist services (DHP, NHS transport costs scheme, HC1 forms, free bus passes etc); enabling access to volunteering; helping clients manage their tenancies; liaising with voluntary and statutory services, and responding to crises (e.g. homelessness or relationship breakdown).

Currently we are actively supporting 10 Syrian families (shortly to reduce to 7), all of whom have additional vulnerabilities including health and mental health difficulties, and who are in their second or third year of the government's 5-year resettlement plan.

We do not expect that the post holders will be working with newly arrived families – however this may change depending on national and local government resettlement targets over the next year. If Year 1 support for families arriving under the UK Resettlement Scheme is required, caseloads will be adjusted accordingly. The support package offered in Year 1 includes welcoming new arrivals; ensuring that accommodation is adequately furnished and supplied in advance; advising on and assisting with set-up of household utilities, GP registration, school enrolment, access to ESOL classes etc; providing inductions to and guidance on budgeting; setting up new benefit claims and resolving any benefit issues; accessing employment and local services; co-ordinating multi-agency meetings; establishing support and integration plans with clear milestones, regular reviews and end dates; and providing casework support as needed within the remit of our local authority contract.

You will need to be able to step immediately into a busy advice environment with the necessary confidence, skills and knowledge to deliver advice, casework and support with limited supervision. You might be required to work out of hours where there are emergencies or if and when there are new arrivals in need of immediate support.

Covid-19, hybrid working and what we're like to work for:

We are still largely working remotely and planning a return to a hybrid working model based from our Kemptown offices from September. You would be expected to attend some home and outreach visits (both in and beyond the city in East and West Sussex) in line with our current risk assessments.

We provide the current HMRC allowance (£6 pw) for staff who are working from home some of the time, and can provide the kit (IT and phone) where needed to ensure that you can do this safely and comfortably. We would expect you to have adequate working broadband and data allowance in place at no additional cost to Voices if you wish to spend some of your time working from home, but are willing to discuss this if it is a barrier for you. Working from home and flexible working arrangements are negotiable and subject to operational need, and are under regular review as Covid infection rates change.

We would expect and hope that applicants will be double-vaccinated against Covid, but will make accommodations if and where practical if this is not possible. We have clear Covid risk assessments, policies and procedures in place.

We have a work culture that is friendly, welcoming and inclusive, and we take staff wellbeing seriously. Clinical supervision is available and we make time for collective care and peer support within our working hours. We are a learning organisation and are open to hearing about how we can do better.

We will be doing some work this autumn on our strategic plan for the next 4-5 years, and this will include looking at how we can work towards becoming an organisation led by lived experience, as well as work on how we plan to address racial injustice and address our own organisational biases. We hope that you will be willing to join us in this.

Staff reporting to this post:

Volunteers

Key responsibilities:

- Provide one-to-one initial advice (ideally including immigration advice up to OISC L1) and support to migrant and refugee clients in Sussex by phone, email, face-to-face and through a range of media like WhatsApp and Zoom;
- Provide thorough follow-up casework (ideally including immigration casework up to OISC L1) and support where appropriate;
- Provide reception and integration support to recently arrived families resettled in Brighton & Hove under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement programme, in line with current BHCC service specification and with regular reviews, follow-up casework and monitoring of progress toward independence;
- Co-ordinate services and provide clear and accurate signposting, referrals and active referrals where possible;
- Provide outreach and accompany clients as necessary to e.g. refuges & hostels, medical and therapeutic appointments, college enrolments etc.; or supervise volunteers to do so where appropriate;
- Develop and provide outreach advice services in partnership with other agencies, and attend or set up multi-agency meetings where needed;
- Actively develop professional relationships and referral links with other advice agencies, law centres, solicitors and specialist services, and refer/signpost clients as appropriate;
- Manage own caseload, keeping clear, accurate and timely records of all work done using case management system AdvicePro and other internal recording systems;
- Assist in evidencing the impact of work done, including recording, monitoring and reporting against project targets, regular case studies and other information & reports as requested;
- Attend & contribute to relevant fora & networks (virtual and actual), including liaison with local refugee and migrant community groups and networks, as necessary;
- Attend regular team meetings & participate in other advice and staff team commitments and meetings as necessary;
- Participate fully in individual supervision, training, appraisal and collective care and wellbeing;
- Work with colleagues in Voices in Exile to maintain and develop our holistic approach and commitment to human rights, community development, diversity and best practice in working with vulnerable migrants;
- Manage and supervise volunteers, including volunteer mentors, as needed;
- Carry out other duties as required.

A = Application form
(Please address the relevant points in order)
I = Interview

**Where points on the specification are listed as essential but have an asterisk *, we expect you to meet at least one of these requirements, but not necessarily all!*

Person Specification	Essential/ Desirable	Assessment Method
Qualifications/level of experience		
1. A relevant qualification <i>or</i> significant lived or professional experience in one or more of the following areas: advice giving, social work, law, gender or migration studies or related field.	E	A
2. OISC Level 1 immigration & asylum accreditation	D	A
Experience		
3. Minimum 2 years' experience of providing advice & casework in a relevant area (e.g. adult or children's social services, welfare benefits, housing & homelessness, community care, asylum support) <i>and</i> of facilitating access to local services including e.g. groups, wellbeing services, ESOL, training and employability	E	A
4. Experience of supporting individuals and families with complex needs	E	A+I
5. Experience of working in the voluntary or community sector	E	A+I
6. Experience of supporting people to navigate the benefits system, including actively making and following up benefit applications on clients' behalf	E*	A+I
7. Experience of OISC L1 immigration casework, including actively making and following up immigration applications on clients' behalf	E*	A+I
8. Experience of statutory multi-agency working and conferencing, including with e.g. police, Social Services, health professionals and relevant NGOs	E	A+I
9. Experience of working in a pressurised advice environment and taking on drop-in/one-off advice and follow-up casework with appropriate supervision	E	A+I

10. Experience of interviewing clients sensitively, clearly and accurately to diagnose and prioritise client needs	E	A+I
11. Experience of working creatively towards independence and making goal-led changes with clients facing seemingly intractable issues; and of problem-solving and managing conflict	E	A+I
12. Experience of working within safeguarding law and guidance and of identifying and responding appropriately to safeguarding concerns	E	A+I
13. Experience of recognising and responding appropriately to signs of trauma and mental health distress	E	A+I
14. Experience of advocating effectively and clearly on a client's behalf with statutory and other agencies	E	A+I
15. Experience of maintaining client confidentiality and delivering a high-quality professional service	E	A+I
Knowledge		
16. Good general knowledge of issues faced by refugees and migrants in the UK	E	A
17. Good up-to-date working knowledge of the immigration system and of access to justice for migrants in the UK	E	A+I
18. Good up-to-date working knowledge of access to services for migrants in the UK, and in Brighton and Hove in particular	D	A+I
19. Good up-to-date working knowledge of housing and welfare benefits legislation, policy & services	E*	A+I
20. Good understanding of current NRPF and destitution issues, including NRPF homelessness	E*	A+I
21. Good awareness of issues relating to domestic and sexual abuse	E	A+I
22. Good awareness of gender & LGBTQI issues and the intersection of these with other cultures and communities of identity	E	A+I
23. Good awareness of mental health and issues relating to trauma	E	A+I

Skills		
24. Personal resilience and the ability to maintain clear professional boundaries and manage expectations	E	A+I
25. Ability to plan and organise own work and meet deadlines	E	A+I
26. Ability to work as an effective team member	E	A+I
27. Ability to relate well and communicate clearly and respectfully with a diverse group of people, including the ability to work sensitively around gender, sexuality and cultural roles and to work in partnership with interpreters	E	A+I
28. High level of spoken and functional written English, and the ability to analyse complex written information and communicate it effectively	E	A+I
29. Ability to monitor and report against project targets & communicate effectively with funders & stakeholders	E	A+I
30. Ability to train, support and supervise volunteer team members and work in partnership with interpreters	E	A+I
31. Ability to work competently with Microsoft Office ICT packages including case management systems and Excel; and to be administratively self-servicing	E	A+I
32. Ability to speak Arabic or another community language	D	A
Other		
33. Commitment to working with migrant and refugee clients	E	A+I
34. Commitment to ViE aims, values and ethos, including working in an inter-cultural, multi-faith environment	E	A+I
35. Commitment to maintaining client confidentiality and delivering a high-quality professional service	E	A+I
36. Willingness to work out of hours to respond to client emergencies and new arrivals as needed (TOIL policy in place to compensate for this).	E	A+I