



Job Description

Job Title:	Trainee Solicitor
Location:	Blackburn Hub Lancashire
Accountable to:	Lead Solicitor
Hours:	37.5 per week

About Shelter

A home is a fundamental human need, as essential as education or healthcare. Yet millions of people's lives across the country are blighted by homelessness, soaring rents, deplorable conditions, discrimination, and the threat of eviction.

Shelter exists to defend the right to a safe home. Each year through our expert advice and support services, we help millions of people struggling with bad housing or homelessness – and we campaign to prevent it in the first place.

Through our helpline, online services, and network of local hubs, we provide expert information, advice and support to people in housing crisis. Alongside this, we are committed to tackling the root causes of the current housing emergency. We do this through our wider campaigning and policy work which is always informed by the experiences we're seeing on the frontline. We're here so no-one has to fight bad housing or homelessness on their own.

About the team

Our legal team has over 100 fee earners and support staff, including 45 solicitors. We deliver the highest quality housing advice and litigation services from our network of 14 offices around the country.

We work closely with other teams in Shelter's services, taking referrals of complex and certificated cases to ensure that Shelter can provide an end-to-end service to its clients. The work of Shelter's solicitors is predominantly funded by legal aid but offers CFA/DBA where appropriate. The service conducts certificated litigation work, controlled work and Housing Possession Court Duty Schemes. Shelter Legal Services provides services for individual clients, support digital advice and training to other solicitors and advice agencies as well as supporting the organisational priorities of policy and campaigning on social welfare law and access to justice issues.



Shelter Legal Services has a national reputation for excellence in housing law and we have a long history of seeking to assist the development of English law in the field of homelessness and issues of inadequate housing through litigation. We use the law to solve people's problems and test the limits of the law. We want to be able to offer all Shelter clients a complete advice and advocacy service and to fill gaps in existing legal services. In the current challenging funding environment offering legal solutions to enable people to access, keep and improve their homes whilst maintaining cost effectiveness requires innovation, imagination and high calibre financial and problem-solving skills.

The legal team in the Blackburn office have a legal aid contract to deliver two court duty housing possession schemes to represent people facing eviction from their homes. In addition, they represent clients under legal aid in many areas including challenging negative homelessness decisions, representing clients in court in defending possession proceedings and bringing claims for unlawful eviction.

About the role

We have a rare opportunity, funded by the Legal Education Foundation, for a high calibre adaptable Trainee Solicitor to join the team. You will have completed your LPC or completed your SQE1 and will work under the housing and public law legal aid contracts as well as having the opportunity to support Shelter's test cases and interventions.

During training you'll develop and apply the skills you'll need as a qualified solicitor:

- advocacy and oral presentation
- case and transaction management
- client care and practice support
- communication skills
- dispute resolution
- drafting
- interviewing and advising
- legal research
- negotiation

The Trainee Solicitor role will support the solicitors within our hub to play a key role in tackling housing injustice and unfair housing practices by using the law to assist people in our communities with housing need. You'll develop the skills through a mixture of completing work and tasks by yourself, assisting others and observing experienced practitioners

The postholder will support the solicitors and the team using their legal skills to support challenging and fighting cases that defend housing rights, challenge discriminatory practices relating to housing and create system change by defining or changing the law. The postholder will work with colleagues in hubs to ensure people in our communities



are aware of their rights, how to enforce them and represent people who need specialist legal advice.

The postholder will support solicitors and advisers with casework on behalf of Shelter's clients on a range of specialist housing issues and be able to identify social welfare and debt issues in order to signpost/refer to internal/external agencies. The work will be conducted under Legal Aid Agency funding and to Specialist Quality Mark standards. The postholder may also be expected to undertake work under Shelter Voluntary Income or other funding sources from time to time.

Where appropriate the Trainee Solicitor will support the conduct of legal representation in court including shadowing counsel or solicitors in court.

More generally the postholder may be required to work in a range of different physical locations throughout their community and to engage on behalf Shelter with external stakeholders (e.g., Local Authority, Community partners).

Role Specific Responsibilities

Delivery of legal services

- To carry out legal casework in the housing category and related areas of law, providing a good standard of professional service and client care.
- To support solicitors and assist the solicitor to maintain an active caseload, including litigation, which enables homeless people and those with housing and related problems to enforce their rights. This includes litigation in test and lead cases and taking cases to judicial review.
- To carry out such casework tasks as may be assigned or delegated by the solicitor and carried out under the supervision of the solicitor, including applying for funding, taking instructions, witness statements, drafting letters, making applications, and supporting court representation or by shadowing conducting counsel/solicitor.
- To ensure time recording and targets are met, including in the splitting of time between Legal Aid, non-Legal Aid and more general Community Priority focused activities such as engagement with community stakeholders.
- Other tasks as agreed with the supervising solicitor and Lead Solicitor

Working with our hubs to deliver our shared community priorities

- Work closely with Hub Strategic Leads (local managers) and their teams, external organisations and key stakeholders. Provide Legal support and representation on specific community priority issues under direction of the Lead Solicitor in the hub location. Support with gathering and interpreting information about change to ensure the legal teams are engaged with, and participate in, change processes.
- Support in establishment and maintaining relationships with external organisations and key stakeholders.



- Work to ensure smooth delivery of legal services as a lever in hubs to deliver the HUBs shared plan.
- Promote values around Shelter's commitment to being a learning organisation and 'One Shelter' principles.
- Actively engage in team meetings, inputting and provide feedback. Support with implementation of new structures, methods or processes, to deliver legal work aligned with delivery of hubs shared community priorities.
- Support with work to 'think outside the box' to obtain funding to deliver legal services.

Ensuring good practice and compliance

- Ensure a high-quality legal service is delivered meeting professional and quality standards (including Solicitors Regulation Authority (where applicable), Legal Aid Agency ("LAA"), Specialist Quality Mark, Data protection, safeguarding, customer experience and Shelter standards).
- Work to support development and delivery of the Local Legal Plan to focus on proactive intentional casework, balancing legal advice casework and hub community priorities work.
- Ensure all work meets both external and internal quality, performance and professional targets and standards.
- Ensure all work meets the funding requirements of the LAA and any other funder
- Ensure client/casework related details are entered onto a case management system accurately and punctually.
- Comply with the requirements of the Solicitors' Regulation Authority in ensuring that training records are kept.
- Comply with the requirements of the Solicitors' Regulation Authority in attending the Professional Skills Course by prior arrangement with the supervising solicitor.
- Refer to other Shelter services or other agencies as required.
- Work in accordance with the service's operating model
- Other tasks as delegated (by relevant manager/supervisor)

Anti-racism and fighting social injustice

Work with your team and across Shelter to identify and understand how racism impacts on housing and how an anti-racist approach will help to address the barriers to safe housing.

About You

1. You will have passed the Legal Practice Course (LPC) or have an UG degree and completed and passed SQE part 1.
2. You will demonstrate specialist knowledge and technical requirements of the job.
3. You will have intellectual aptitude and an ability to reason critically.



Required Behaviours.

The Shelter Behaviours demonstrate the attitudes and approaches we take to our work; from how we do things, how we treat each other and expect to be treated both internally and externally. They help us to have the culture we need to deliver our ambitious strategy. At Shelter we have 5 overall behaviours, that are each made up of 3 descriptors, these are outlined below.

We work together to achieve our shared purpose.

- by actively collaborating and putting trust in the people we work with
- by recognising the contribution of others
- by carefully considering the “how” when taking on new projects and initiatives

We prioritise diversity and have an inclusive and open mindset.

- by not tolerating and actively tackling racism and any other forms of hate and discrimination
- by creating safe spaces for people to be their authentic self, challenge each other and learn.
- by being compassionate towards the people we work with and prioritising each other’s wellbeing

We enable decision making.

- by giving people the tools, they need to make well informed decisions
- by being accountable for the decisions we make
- by delegating authority to those closest to the work

We create change and align behind our strategy.

- by participating in change initiatives that deliver our strategy
- by supporting tough strategic choices
- by saying no to work that does not serve our purpose

We are open to risk and learning from our experiences.

- by learning from our failures and successes
- by being reflective and giving and receiving feedback
- by being proactive and taking initiative

Other information

- All staff should adhere to Shelter’s Equality Policy and will be expected to play a key role in its successful implementation.
- This post is not exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act.

Please note



This job description cannot cover every issue or task that may arise within the post at various times and the post-holder will be expected to carry out other duties from time to time which are broadly consistent with those in this document. This job description does not form part of the contract of employment