



LEGAL SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS

Haringey Migrant Support Centre (HMSC) is a charity set up in 2012, staffed by volunteers and a small number of paid workers, offering advice and support to migrants in London. The beneficiaries often have an insecure immigration status and are affected by the 'hostile environment' agenda. HMSC assists visitors (clients) in many different ways, on issues ranging from immigration to housing, welfare or health. We have weekly triage sessions (first assessment), followed by advice and casework when needed. Twice a month, we also run a social community space with a hot lunch and activities to support visitors' wellbeing, help foster connections and build community knowledge.

The role of **Legal Support Volunteer** would suit people wishing to gain additional experience in the area of immigration law and is particularly suited to Law students or anyone with a strong interest in law and access to justice, combined with good analytical and writing skills and an ability to grasp complex legal issues. You will need to show determination to support our visitors, have excellent interpersonal skills, flexibility and initiative. Full supervision provided.

When? Every Tuesday from 10am to 5pm – In our offices in Haringey (N15)
+ 1 hour at the end of the week (you decide when) remotely (this allows you to check/chase emails and make sure cases are progressing quickly)

Tasks

Legal Support Volunteers will work on two main projects, but will also need to be flexible and undertake other tasks needed by the immigration team.

1. Making Exceptional Case Funding (ECF) applications

ECF applications allow our visitors to get legal aid and a free immigration solicitor. Most of our ECF applications are granted, but the process can be tedious, and you will need to be persistent and pay attention to details. This will include supporting visitors to obtain financial evidence to show that they are eligible for legal aid.

2. Collecting evidence for 20 years applications

Some of our visitors have been advised to make an application based on their long residence, because they have been in the UK for over 20 years. These applications require a lot of evidence to prove residence for each of these 20 years. Legal Support Volunteers will help visitors collect, organize and present this evidence.

3. Other tasks

In addition to our two main projects above, other tasks may include:

- Assisting in referring visitors to legal aid solicitors and following-up on referrals.
- Chasing solicitors and liaising with external agencies in relation to cases.
- Making Subject Access Requests to the Home Office and checking the files received.

- Assisting with monitoring and evaluation of our casework.
- Compiling case studies.
- Assisting with other casework or admin work as required.
- Maintaining clear records of actions performed and results in our case management system.

Commitment

- Need to be available to volunteer **every week**, on the day and times mentioned above. We understand that there might be circumstances where a volunteer can't attend (e.g., holidays, illness), please try to inform us in advance so that we can organise cover.
- Need a minimum commitment of **6 months** (full training takes 4 weeks and experience is gradually built up 'on the job' and through peer support).
- Need to complete initial training and any additional training provided by HMSC.

Requirements

- A strong interest in gaining experience in the area of immigration law and access to justice. Previous knowledge of the immigration and/or welfare system in the UK would be appreciated but is not mandatory.
- Excellent analytical and writing skills and an ability to grasp complex legal issues.
- Good communication skills: ability to write clear letters and notes, and to deal with a range of people and agencies over the phone.
- Personal qualities
 - ✓ Empathy and understanding of the complex issues faced by migrants.
 - ✓ Patient, calm manner when dealing with vulnerable visitors.
- IT and computer skills
 - ✓ Good computer skills and knowledge of Office 365 are essential. You will be working online, with cloud-based files, shared email addresses, online chats, remote video calls, etc.
 - ✓ Furthermore, we use a case management system / database called Lamplight. Full training will be provided but you should be willing and comfortable to learn and work with new systems.

Benefits

- Valuable experience at the frontline of a grassroots organization with hands-on casework experience, in a small friendly team.
- Better understanding of immigration and refugee issues, rights and entitlements of migrants, as well as ways to deliver practical support to vulnerable migrants facing the 'hostile environment'.
- Professional reference after 4 months.
- Reimbursement of travel and lunch expenses.

Contact: volunteering@haringeymsc.org