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 4.30pm – 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

The main project that Legal Support Volunteers will work on is our **"20 years project".**

HMSC's 20-year project is dedicated to assisting migrants in regularizing their status through the 20-year private life route in the UK (under the immigration rules, people who can prove that they have lived continuously in the UK for 20 years can apply for leave to remain). As a legal support volunteer, you will work with our visitors to build a strong case: applying for Suject Access Requests (to the Home Office but also to GPs, hospitals, HMRC, etc.), building and compiling evidence, establishing a documented timeline of the visitor's 20-year continuous residence, preparing the applicant's and third-party witness statements, drafting a cover letter/submissions to support the application. Cases are then referred to a legal representative for submission. The project is closely supervised by our in-house immigration adviser.

In addition to the "20 years project", you may be requested to undertake other tasks needed by the immigration team, such as:

- Collecting financial evidence for legal aid applications
- Chasing solicitors and liaising with external agencies in relation to cases.
- Making Subject Access Requests to the Home Office and checking the files received.
- Compiling case studies.
- Assisting with other casework or admin work as required.

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.

Essential 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.
- A good understanding of UK administrative processes and everyday services, needed to support our visitors in gathering evidence of their residence in the UK.
- Excellent English communication skills (written and spoken). Ability to write clear letters and notes, and to deal with a range of people and agencies over the phone.
- Excellent analytical skills and an ability to grasp complex legal issues.

- 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.
  - ✓ Be willing and comfortable to learn and work with new systems, such as our Case Management System (Lamplight)

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