

# BURY LAW CENTRE

## INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS

### WHAT WE DO

Bury Law Centre gives free legal advice and representation to individuals who are receiving welfare benefits or who are on a low income.

We specialise in the following areas of work:-

Housing Law, Employment Law and Immigration, Nationality and Asylum Law.

### HOW THE LAW CENTRE WORKS

The Law Centre is run by a Management Committee, which is made up of people from the local community. These people are responsible for the management of the law centre. The members of staff that are currently employed by the Law Centre are:-

Kevin Miles	– Managing Solicitor / Housing caseworker
Rebecca Lacey	– Employment Caseworker
David Pountney	– Immigration and Asylum Caseworker
Wendy McManus	– Immigration and Asylum Caseworker
Brian Coulson	– Housing caseworker
Joanne Tucci	– Legal Secretary
Sally Williams	– Immigration and Asylum Administrator (part-time)
David Wildman	– Volunteer Services Project Development Worker
Lynn Moore	– Volunteer Services Administrator

Bury Law Centre's opening hours are Monday to Friday from 9:30am to 4:30pm. The centre closes to the public over lunchtime from 12.45 to 1.45pm.

Appointments with clients are made during opening hours although home visits can be arranged and appointments can be made outside of office hours, in exceptional circumstances.

### THE ROLE OF VOLUNTEER STAFF

The role of volunteer staff is not to replace paid staff or posts, but to supplement them. Volunteer staff are required between the Law Centre opening hours to help the Law Centre staff as detailed below:-

#### Reception

This will include:

- Answering the door buzzer and letting clients in when necessary.
- Taking clients details, informing caseworkers when clients arrive;
- Using the computerized diary;
- Assisting with keeping reception areas tidy, ensuring posters and display information is current.

## **Telephone**

Assisting with answering phones:

- Giving general information about Law Centre services
- Signposting enquirers to other agencies, where appropriate
- Taking detailed messages from clients or other agency staff
- Taking messages when staff unavailable

## **Administration**

General administrative tasks to include:

- Assisting with incoming and outgoing mail
- Photocopying and filing
- Updating loose-leaf legal manuals
- Using MS Office word processing
- Typing general information and external letters, under supervision
- Assisting with other routine admin tasks as necessary

## **Observing advisors**

Volunteer administration staff are not used as advisors, however, where client consent is given, they may observe interviews. Where a volunteer can speak another language, s/he may be asked to help interpret at initial level advice interviews. No volunteer will have any task imposed upon them.

## **RECRUITMENT OF VOLUNTEER STAFF**

Bury Law Centre is usually able to fill volunteer staff vacancies with people who contact us offering their services. Enquirers will be provided with a description of tasks and a person specification, which form the basis for selection, and an application form.

The Law Centre operates a thorough selection procedure, due to the confidential nature of client casework, and all volunteer appointments will be made subject to an informal interview, references and agreed probationary period.

## **INDUCTION AND TRAINING**

An induction will be provided by a member of the Law Centre staff. On their first day volunteer staff will be introduced to staff members, shown around the Law Centre premises, taken through fire and health and safety procedures and shown their area of work. Any initial training required will be provided at the Law Centre by experienced volunteer staff and/or paid members of staff.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

During a volunteer's first day at the Law Centre they will be provided with background information about Bury Law Centre and the Equal Opportunities Statement of Intent.

## **SUPPORT & SUPERVISION**

Although their role requires a high degree of independent working, Volunteer staff are encouraged to ask for assistance at any time, primarily from the Volunteer Service Administrator, but, if necessary, from the Managing Solicitor or any other member of staff. Informal appraisals are held to review work and offer an opportunity to discuss individual development and any work related issues.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All information given by clients or by other parties in connection with their case must be treated as confidential by Bury Law Centre staff, including volunteers. No information may be given to a third party outside the organization without the client's prior written consent. Volunteer staff should not discuss cases with each other or with anyone else outside the Law Centre. Conversations in public places can be overheard and listeners may be able to identify who sought advice. If there are exceptional circumstances these must be discussed with a member of staff before any action is taken. A breach of confidentiality is a very serious matter.

## **EXPENSES**

Volunteer staff will be paid their expenses for travel to and from the Law Centre and, if working a full day, will also be given an allowance of £2.50 for lunch.

## **Review of Volunteer staff Policy**

The Law Centre keeps its Volunteer Policy under review. Any criticisms, suggestions etc are welcomed and invited.

Upon offer of a placement, volunteers will be given a copy of the Volunteer Policy along with the Equal Opportunities Statement of Intent, and asked to sign a copy, which will be held on their staff file.

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