

CANTERBURY HOUSING ADVICE CENTRE

HOUSING ADVISER

Job title:	Housing adviser	Location:	Canterbury
Length of contract:	6 months fixed-term if full-time (12 months fixed-term if 0.5 FTE)	Salary scale:	£24,491pa to £27,741pa (part-time salary is pro rata)
Hours:	Full-time (37hrs) or part-time (18.5hrs minimum)	Holiday:	25 days pro rata per annum plus public holidays
Responsible to:	Manager	Application closing date:	28 March 2022
Start date:	As soon as possible after interview	Interview:	w/b 4 April 2022

Canterbury Housing Advice Centre (CHAC) is seeking to employ a new housing adviser at its Canterbury office.

Canterbury Housing Advice Centre (CHAC) is a registered charity with the objective of relieving poverty and homelessness in the Canterbury District. Our work primarily focuses on preventing homelessness. We provide a free, confidential, independent and impartial advice service on a wide range of housing issues and problems including homelessness, accessing accommodation in the public, private and voluntary sectors, repossession, landlord/tenant issues, and housing benefit. We also assist those who become (or are about to become) homeless to access alternative accommodation. We have been awarded London Legal Support Trust Centre of Excellence status in recognition of the quality of our service.

We are seeking a new housing adviser to join our team of three paid staff and small team of volunteers at our Canterbury office. With the removal of safeguards provided to renters during coronavirus, and the rising cost of living, we are anticipating an increase in the number of housing advice inquiries, particularly from those unable to pay their rent. We're looking for those with experience in the provision of housing advice to join our dedicated and passionate team.

You will join our casework team which is responsible for delivering housing advice casework to London Legal Support Trust Centre of Excellence standards and for meeting the Centre's overall casework targets annually. The post holder is also expected to share the duty rota for giving housing advice on legal and non-legal housing matters, and to give advice and support to the Triage Worker (who provides initial advice to service users on legal issues as well as more comprehensive advice on general housing problems including accessing accommodation and housing benefit entitlement) and to volunteers. The post is initially for a fixed-term of 6 months if full-time (12 months if half-time), although we aim to secure funding for its extension. CHAC provides training opportunities (external and internal), supervision and support to enable the post-holder to meet the requirements of the job description.

Qualifications and experience required:

- Experience in the provision of housing advice, preferably those listed below
- Legal qualifications are desirable but not required
- Good IT skills, in particular MS Office packages (such as Word)

Key responsibilities:

1. To carry out high quality housing advice casework, including advocacy and representation, to London Legal Support Trust Centre of Excellence standards, in the following areas:
 - Housing benefit and universal credit: entitlement, claims, backdating, overpayments, discretionary housing payments;
 - Repossession proceedings for owner occupied, council, housing association and private tenancies including checking notices, completing defence forms, requesting adjournments, attending court for possession hearings to mitigate the terms of suspended order, applying to suspend bailiffs warrants and attending warrant hearings;
 - Rent & mortgage arrears: checking accounts, preparing income/expenditure statements, maximising income through benefit entitlement, advising on payments, negotiating with landlords/lenders;
 - Landlord harassment and illegal eviction: advising on options, "quiet enjoyment", court applications to reinstate;
 - Disrepair: advising on statutory and contractual landlord obligations and on options to secure repairs including local authority role;

- Other tenancy issues including tenancy status, tenancy conditions both contractual and statutory, giving notice, assignment, succession, subletting, overcrowding, right-to-buy, recovery of deposits;
 - Homeless applications: eligibility, priority need, intentionality, local connection, rights to review, and suitability of accommodation;
 - Neighbour nuisance: advice on options to both victims and alleged perpetrators.
2. To assist in covering the CHAC's housing legal and general advice service on a rota basis.
 3. To assist in providing housing legal advice support to the Triage Worker and to volunteers.
 4. To manage effectively a varied caseload covering a wide range of housing law problems.
 5. To keep up-to-date with relevant legislation, policies and practices, and to attend training courses as necessary and as directed.
 6. To assist in the general running of the Centre as required, including attending staff meetings.
 7. Embrace diversity and share in our commitment to equality of opportunity and to eliminating discrimination.

How to apply

To apply please email send a covering letter and CV (including name, position and contact details of two referees) to Paul Wilkinson: paul@chac.co.uk. Applications will close at 5 pm on 28 March 2022. We anticipate interviews taking place the week commencing 4 April 2022, with the job starting as soon as possible thereafter.

About CHAC

CHAC is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. Its policy is directed by trustees of the charity and implemented by the full-time manager and casework supervisor, Paul Wilkinson, who is responsible for the co-ordination of the Centre's activities and the supervision of its staff and volunteers. CHAC is funded through a combination of charitable donations, grants and service contracts.