

INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS

ABOUT **youth legal** & resource centre

youth legal & resource centre (**youth legal**), is a member of AdviceUK, and has been providing free legal advice since its foundation in March 2013 and has recently set up an office at Ashburton Youth Centre in Roehampton.

We help vulnerable young people living, working or in education in WANDSWORTH and MERTON (South West London) giving free specialist independent legal advice in Housing / Homelessness, and Community Care with a focus on those young people with disabilities, care leavers and carers and families with children. We take a holistic approach, looking at all the problems a client presents with. We aim to provide an advice service in the above areas of law, backed-up by representation in Court or at Tribunals if necessary.

youth legal also provides a legal advice line so people or advisers can get advice over the telephone on a range of legal issues. Additionally **youth legal** provides 2nd Tier advice to other local organisations on legal issues. It is accountable to the Local Community through its Management Committee, which comprises representatives from local people, groups and agencies.

We are also creating a one-stop shop resource centre with a support worker for one to one assistance and support when dealing with statutory services and to help develop the young person's life skills. We are building a Peer Advice Volunteer Project to assist Young People to find the right services they require and to help in contacting and making appointments. The contact services will include help to access training in music, media, the arts and theatre increasing confidence and chances of employment and access to counseling services.

We provide Public Legal Education to young people and advice workers through training sessions and seminars and creating a project of Peer Trainers. We will achieve this by working with the already existing youth services in the area thereby avoiding duplicating services.

We strive to concentrate on more complex cases which are beyond the expertise of other local groups. We are not a generalist advice agency and cannot undertake work, which falls outside our specialisms. We advise Clients by appointment; we do not normally run drop-in sessions but can do outreach and home visits. We will give advice on the telephone and accept referrals from other agencies but unfortunately cannot at this time take on client's who are not eligible for Legal Help/Aid or do not fall under one of our Grant Funder's criteria.

PRINCIPAL AREAS OF WORK

HOUSING

We provide assistance and representation in court for tenants facing possession proceedings and failed homeless applicants to both public and private sector tenants. This includes advise on rent arrears, illegal evictions, and Landlord harassment etc. At present we do not have funding for and regret that we cannot normally provide face to face advice on such matters as routine housing transfers, mutual exchanges, right to buy, housing waiting lists, improvement grants, Leaseholders' enquiries and neighbour disputes Security of Tenure, e.g., advice on signing Tenancy Agreements but may do by phone. In common with most Not for Profit agencies, we cannot undertake to advise Landlords.

COMMUNITY CARE

YOUTH LEGAL represents clients from the local community who have issues with regard to community care provision. Any issues relating to social services and their service provision to the disabled, elderly and minors.

WELFARE BENEFITS

We give basic, non-specialist advice on welfare benefits issues relating to disability, employment support allowance, housing benefit and rights of residence in relation to our Housing and Community Care cases. If specialist advice is required, we will refer out.

VOLUNTEERING POSITIONS

We want to make sure Young People between the ages of 16-25 are at the heart of our organisation and have input on how it is run, what services are available (within our remit) and how those services are accessed.

There are at present two different projects now running and two we are seeking funding for that we need volunteers to work on.

1. Office work both Admin and Legal
2. YOUth Advice Network
 - a. Update information for Website and information database – researching agencies and organisations in the area.
 - b. YOUth Peer Advisors – answering the phone to requests for information about local agencies/services, assisting making appointments if necessary and follow up.
3. Management Committee/Trustees
 - a. To attend meetings about every 6-8 weeks in the evening, making decisions about the running of the Centre and its development.
4. YOUth Public Legal Education presenters (funding being sought) – 5 day training the trainer in several different areas of law, to then present 2 day long seminars about the different areas of law to peer groups – (age group for trainers under 18 - 30)
5. Help with social media including infographics

We want to make sure Young People of the area have the opportunity to shape the services and have a voice in its development.

This means there are several types of volunteer opportunities in:

- Admin assistant
- Legal assistant
- Youth Peer Advisor
- Management Committee member/Trustee
- Social media co-ordinator

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT TO DO

Duties could include:

Admin assistant

- Answering the telephone
- Triaging clients on reception and phone
- General admin tasks such as processing incoming and outgoing post
- Archiving files

Legal assistant

- Assisting advisors with their cases
- Letter drafting
- Legal research
- Filing papers at court
- Data entry on case management system and data base

Youth Peer Advisor

- Supporting and advising clients with various tasks including accessing community resources they require
- Providing referral and signposting advice to clients
- Follow up to find if client has attended appointments / obtained the information of service they required and if not assist to rebook
- Attend marketing events

Management Committee member/Trustee

- Making decisions about the running of the Centre
- Representing YOUth Legal at local and regional meetings and possible with grant funders.

You will have a Volunteer Diary that you keep which is a record of the work you have done with us and signed off by us. You can use this for references for future employment opportunities or other volunteering work.

You do not need to do just one area of volunteering, you can do different areas, for instance a new project may start that you would like to work on.

You will be reimbursed with a small amount for lunch if you are in the office all day, and travel.

Most importantly you will be helping the Young People of your community.

Disability, Medical Condition or Special Needs

If you have a disability or medical condition, tell us about it at in the application. Also tell us if you need some additional help or resources to be involved in the project. When we meet you we will be pleased to discuss what we can do to help.

WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU

- A commitment from you for at least one half day a week for 6 months for the office duties and Peer Advisor, and 1 year + for the Management Committee, including evening meetings.
- Your patience and understanding in dealing with sometimes very vulnerable and distressed people.
- To treat all client information as confidential.
- To listen and respect our clients.
- To take your responsibilities seriously.

If you are interested in these volunteering opportunities with us and making a difference in your community, then please complete the application form making sure to tell us what area(s) of volunteering you are interested in, and email to info@youthlegal.org.uk, or post to YOUth Legal, Ashburton Youth Centre, Westleigh Avenue, Roehampton, London, SW15 6XD.

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