

## **Assistant Legal Officer, Social Security 2019-20**

### **Recruitment pack**

#### **Application Process / Timetable:**

Send the following documents by e-mail to [admin@thefru.org.uk](mailto:admin@thefru.org.uk) no later than **midday Monday 20th May 2019:**

1. A letter setting out how you meet the person specification (no more than 2 sides of A4).
2. A CV (no more than 2 sides of A4), giving the names and contact details of two referees.
3. A completed test answer.
4. A completed "information for administrator" form.

We are committed to equal opportunities and to selecting the best candidate for the post. We will make any reasonable adjustment required for people with a disability.

The selection timetable will be:

- |            |   |
|------------|---|
| Stage I:   | Applications submitted by midday Monday 20th May 2019                                   |
| Stage II:  | Interviews on Wednesday 29th May 2019   |
| Stage III: | Job offered subject to references   |
| Stage IV:  | Start date of early June (subject to discussion of successful candidate's availability) |

## **Background information**

FRU offers representation in social security and employment cases to those who cannot afford lawyers. Since 1972 we have helped our clients get access to justice in the tribunals. In the current environment, with all forms of legal aid and free advice under pressure, our work is needed more than ever.

We also offer training and advocacy experience for our volunteers, most of whom are law students or recent graduates. Volunteers are supervised by FRU's staff, in particular our Principal Legal Officers and Assistant Legal Officers.

## **Our Assistant Legal Officers**

As an Assistant Legal Officer you will make a vital contribution to FRU's work, but the post is also part of our efforts to give aspiring lawyers and junior practitioners training and experience. That is why it is offered as a paid internship lasting from June 2019 to August 2020.

Over that time we expect you to develop as a lawyer and advocate. With our help you will shoulder significant responsibility for supervising volunteers. You will also have your own clients and will be expected to make a substantial contribution to FRU's overall caseload, especially in complex and appeal cases.

You will be supervised and supported by our Principal Legal Officer, Social Security.

## **What will you do?**

You will spend much of each day in the FRU office helping volunteers. Common situations include:

- Discussing a case with a new volunteer, who needs to demonstrate that they will be able to conduct it properly
- Advising a volunteer on a difficult legal point
- Guiding someone through a difficult client handling situation or point of professional ethics
- Helping a volunteer to prepare written submissions
- Responding to telephone and e-mail queries from volunteers, other organisations and members of the public.

Alongside helping volunteers, you will work on your own cases. You will be expected to manage your work to balance your casework with supervision of volunteers. Over the course of your term with FRU you will be expected to develop a portfolio of cases to advance your experience and expertise. By way of example, previous ALOs have ultimately appeared high profile test cases in the Upper Tribunal concerning the introduction of PIP and the exportability of social security benefits within the EU.

Although you will primarily work in social security you will be expected to be flexible and assist with employment work when necessary. The precise division of work will depend on the needs of the organisation, as well as your own preferences.

## What are we looking for?

An enthusiastic, committed and able candidate, of course!

We expect candidates to have some experience of working in social security law, whether that be at FRU, as a volunteer in another advice agency or in paid employment. But we are primarily interested in finding candidates with ability and potential.

In essence, we are more interested in how good a lawyer we think you will become than in how much experience you have right now. Our ambition for the post is to give people with that potential the experience they need to start their career. We are proud to say that most of our past Assistant Legal Officers have gone onto complete pupillage.

## Job Details

Job title:	Assistant Legal Officer, Social Security
Reporting to:	Principal Legal Officer, Social Security
Hours of work:	<p>35 hours a week. Normal working hours will be 10.00 to 18.00 with an hour for lunch.</p> <p>You will be expected to cover late night opening on Tuesday evenings until 20.00 and will be able to take time off in lieu to compensate (arrangements for this to be agreed).</p> <p>You will be expected to participate in the rota of staff conducting office inductions on Monday evenings. This will occur approximately once every 3 weeks, for about 45 minutes and you will be able to take time off in lieu to compensate.</p>
Salary:	£28,006 p.a.
Annual Leave:	25 days + Bank Holidays + period between Christmas and New Year
Location:	The post-holder will need to be available to volunteers and will therefore be based in FRU's office in central London. However, the post-holder will be expected to travel to tribunal hearings.
Duration:	Fixed term post: June 2019 to August 2020.
Other:	Interest free loan for travel season ticket

## **Person Specification**

Applicants for the post should demonstrate that they have the following:

### **A. Intention to seek to practice at the Bar**

#### *Essential*

This post is funded, in part, by the Inns of Court and the Bar Educational Trust (ICBET). In line with ICBET's charitable objectives, we are seeking applicants who are intending to seek to practice at the Bar, but have not yet completed pupillage.

### **B. Knowledge, experience and qualifications**

#### *Essential*

1. A law degree, a GDL or equivalent qualification
2. Some knowledge of social security law
3. Some experience of managing client cases and advocacy before the Social Security Tribunal

#### *Desirable*

4. Knowledge of and experience in employment law and practice
5. Experience of public speaking

### **C. Skills and abilities**

#### *Essential*

1. Ability to analyse and understand complex legal issues
2. Ability to explain complex legal issues to different audiences
3. Ability to learn skills and information quickly
4. Ability to work in a busy environment with competing demands
5. Good oral and written communication skills

### **D. Personal qualities**

#### *Essential*

1. Commitment to helping people obtain access to justice and to equal opportunities
2. Ability to take responsibility and make sound judgements
3. An interest in developing the skills and knowledge of others
4. Ability to work as part of a small team

#### *Desirable*

5. Ability to attend occasional evening and weekend meetings and events (which are planned in advance)

## **ALO Test 2019**

Below you will find the ALO test, which all candidates should complete. Your performance on the test is an important criterion in both shortlisting and appointment following interview.

### *Test*

Summarise the case of *MM & BJ v SoS Work and Pensions* and, in particular, the point of law it established. Your summary must be no longer than 500 words. The case is available on the Vacancies page of the FRU website.