

advocate



ACADEMIC YEAR CASEWORK VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY 30 September 2019 – 31 January 2020

Information sheet

Who we are

Advocate is the Bar's national charity, based in the National Pro Bono Centre on Chancery Lane, London, which helps to find pro bono legal assistance from volunteer barristers. We can assist with:

- advice, representation and help at mediation
- cases in all legal areas
- cases where proceedings have not yet been started
- cases in all tribunals and courts in England and Wales

Pro bono assistance is only available to those who cannot afford to pay and who cannot obtain public funding (Legal Aid). We are a small staff dealing with over two thousand cases each year, and rely a great deal on Casework Volunteers, who come into our office and help applicants get the assistance they need.

Academic Year Casework Volunteer

This is a fantastic opportunity to help a small charity that works closely with the Bar. It will give you exposure to the practical working of the courts and the needs of litigants in person. You will learn a great deal about the real workings of the Bar as a profession and you will come into contact with a wide range of areas of law.

You will assist and support the Casework Team from the initial request for assistance, to the point of allocating cases to a barrister. Some of the tasks include:

- Taking telephone calls from the public and providing updates to existing applicants
- Drafting case summaries using the case papers provided by individuals who need legal assistance; these case summaries are then used by experienced barristers when reviewing the file
- Drafting case allocation summaries which are used to try to find volunteer barristers around the country to take on the case on a pro bono basis.

What we are looking for

We are looking for dedicated and enthusiastic individuals to volunteer at our office for one day a week over a four month period. Advocate can offer a degree of flexibility around other work experience or commitments.

You will have an interest in law and be motivated to help those who cannot afford legal assistance. As a key part of our team you will possess strong inter-personal skills and be ready to adapt to the changing need of the casework team. You must have completed at least one year of law-related study/work and ideally have some experience in the voluntary sector. Office experience is preferred but not essential.

You may state a preference for when you would like to volunteer on the application form and we will do our best to accommodate it. We can discuss your availability further at your interview if you are shortlisted.

How to apply

Please complete our application form (available to download at: www.weareadvocate.org.uk) and email it to bwells@weareadvocate.org.uk. Please note that CVs and covering letters will not be considered.

The deadline for applications is 9pm Monday 26th August 2019.

Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed at Advocate's offices at the National Pro Bono Centre on Chancery Lane during the **week commencing 9th September 2019**, please specify all the times you are available on the application form. As a small charity with limited staff and resources we are not able to provide feedback or discuss the volunteer applications process with you.

Volunteer expenses

Academic Casework Volunteers may claim their out of pocket expenses up to an amount specified by Advocate. Travel costs incurred will be reimbursed up to £15 a week and lunch expenses up to a maximum of £5 per day.

Testimonial from previous Casework Volunteers

BPTC Student

"I volunteered at Advocate for one year and I found the experience both enjoyable and useful. Due to the nature of the work Advocate deals with, you have the opportunity to see lots of different areas of law and gain a practical understanding of the work barristers undertake. It was a great team to be a part of, particularly as they were very understanding in accommodating my studies alongside volunteering with them. I thoroughly enjoyed my time

there and I recommend that anyone who wishes to gain a better understanding of pro bono work should apply for an internship with Advocate."

"I was given a real opportunity to put what I had learnt on the BPTC into practice. Engaging with the law on a practical level enabled me to see the mechanism of social justice at work. I was also given the chance to be exposed to a number of different areas of law, and the work itself was extremely varied ranging from allocation of new cases all the way through to writing up reports on completed matters."

3rd Year Law Undergraduate

"I would strongly recommend to anyone interested in pursuing a legal career to try and spend some time with Advocate. Not only does it look great on your CV, it also helps you hone crucial skills such as succinctly summarising the key facts of a case and identifying the relevant legal issues, something that should stand you in good stead for any pupillage or training contract interviews. The staff are all wonderfully welcoming and helpful, and whilst a key benefit is the range of areas you will experience (anything from Defamation to Child Protection), they will also accommodate specific requests to see more work in certain areas. Ultimately you are doing genuinely important work that makes a material difference to people's lives, whilst being supplied with copious amounts of tea and cake. What's not to like?"