

Head of Legal Services

Job description

Salary: £46,500.00 + 5% employer pension contribution

Responsible to: Director

Location: Finsbury Park

Hours of Work: Full time, 35 hours per week. Hybrid working with 4 days in the office

Contract: Fixed term for one year

About BID

BID is a leading human rights charity challenging immigration detention in the UK. We provide free legal advice and representation on bail and deportation to people held in immigration detention, alongside our research and policy advocacy work and strategic litigation.

BID currently has eleven staff and 75 active volunteers and our small but busy offices are in Finsbury Park. Since BID's inception in 1998, we have assisted thousands of individuals, played a leading role in documenting and challenging the injustices of immigration detention and highlighted the need for adequate legal safeguards against arbitrary detention.

We are a registered charity and accredited by the Immigration Advice Authority (IAA).

About the role

This is an exciting opportunity to join BID at a pivotal point in our 27-year history. As Head of Legal Services, you will support the leadership team in shaping our priorities and strengthening the delivery of expert, trauma-informed legal advice to people in immigration detention. In an increasingly hostile environment, your strategic input will help us refine our services and grow our impact.

We are looking for someone who will thrive from leading a successful team with the ability to manage a team of experienced staff and volunteers, working co-operatively to maintain transparency and effective working relationships within the organisation. You will ensure that BID's Legal Managers and Casework Volunteers continue to deliver high-quality, expert advice in complex cases, while being supported in their professional development and well-being.

The Head of Legal Services will be responsible for: providing line management to BID's team of six Legal Managers and supporting the team with their day-to-day casework and management of volunteers. To succeed in this role, you will need experience of managing the delivery of frontline casework relating to people seeking to secure immigration bail and the revocation of deportation orders.

Beyond core line management duties, you will play a strategic role in shaping BID's legal services. This includes streamlining service delivery and identifying, managing and balancing competing priorities. We are looking for someone who is strategically minded and passionate about providing supportive and inclusive leadership to our expert team.

This is an interim role as the Charity is reaching the end of its 2022-2026 organisational strategy. The Head of Legal Services will work closely with the Head of Policy and Strategic Litigation, and with BID's Director, to collect & analyse data and plan for BID's 2026 – 2029 strategy. It is a unique opportunity to provide vital support to BID's award-winning legal services team whilst working to guarantee the future success of BID's mission. We offer a generous benefits package including 27 days' annual leave per calendar year, a continuous professional development programme, hybrid working, Cycle to Work Scheme and an Employee Assistance Programme.

How to apply:

The process will consist of an application, interview and a task. Depending on how these go there may be an additional interview or follow up meeting. We will keep you informed about any changes to the process.

Please send your CV and a covering letter (no more than 1 A4 page) to the below email address, in support of your application.

Alternatively, you have the option of emailing in a video file alongside your CV, if you would prefer to outline your interest in the role in video format.

Your covering letter/video should include consideration of the following questions:

1. *How do your skills and experiences align with the requirements of the role?*
2. *What do you think you will find the most challenging aspects of the role, and how will you approach these challenges?*

Please send your application by email to recruitment@biduk.org with the subject line: Head of Legal Services Application.

The person specification below details the key criteria for this position. When assessing the applications, the shortlisting panel will focus on the details supplied in your cover letter and CV.

If you have any questions regarding the role, please email us at recruitment@biduk.org

Timing: Applications will close at 23:59 on Sunday 13th of July. We will confirm the outcome of your initial application. Interviews are expected to take place week beginning Monday 21st of July.

How to access support to apply:

BID is a member of the Experts by Experience Employment Initiative Network. If you have first-hand experience of navigating the challenges of the UK's immigration system you can receive career support such as reviewing covering letters, CVs, and interview preparation.

Visit <https://www.ebeemployment.org.uk/> to request support.

Role Responsibilities

Line Management and Casework Management:

- Provide line management support for six Legal Managers including regular one-to-ones and annual appraisals
- Manage the development and training budget for Legal Managers and organise in-house legal training for Legal Managers and Volunteers
- Complete casework audits (file reviews) to ensure IAA compliance
- Participate in ongoing professional development and oversee urgent casework when Legal Managers are on leave
- Co-ordinate bi-weekly casework management meetings, ensuring efficient project management within the Legal Services team
- Ensure that there is continuous cover in the Legal Services team through management of sickness absence, annual leave and volunteer attendance
- Manage external complaints received by the Legal Services team
- Fulfil duties as Designated Safeguarding Officer within the Legal Services team

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Support the Legal Services team to collect data on the impact of BiD's legal work to inform and shape the creation of BiD's next long-term strategy
- Work with the Director and Participation Officer to create a monitoring and evaluation framework for the Legal Services team
- Oversee BiD's feedback mechanisms within the Legal Services team, ensuring that staff, volunteers and clients are able to contribute to continuous learning and service development.

Volunteer Support:

- Lead on the recruitment of Legal Volunteers
- Oversee volunteer onboarding processes and organise volunteer inductions, in partnership with BiD's Participation Officer
- Work with the Director to develop support mechanisms for BiD's volunteers and volunteer handbook
- Support Legal Managers with ongoing development strategies for Legal Volunteers
- Co-ordinate monthly training updates for Legal Volunteers

Cross-team working

- Develop cross-team working strategies between legal services and BiD's strategy, policy, parliamentary, strategic litigation and communications work
- Work with Head of Policy and Strategic Litigation to ensure that BiD's expertise on securing immigration bail and bail accommodation is shared within the sector
- Work with the Participation Officer to ensure that individuals, with lived experience of immigration detention who are properly supported within the legal services team (including clients, volunteers and staff.)

Supervision and Regulatory requirements

- Act as the main point of contact between BID and the IAA; maintain regular communication and update the IAA on the status of BID's Legal Volunteers
- Manage annual IAA audits and remedial actions, ensuring IAA compliance
- Responsible for adherence to professional ethics within the Legal Services' team
- Ensure GDPR compliance within the Legal Services team

General

- Foster a supportive and inclusive team culture at BID in which each member feels valued and supported to develop professionally and to perform to the best of their ability.
- Ensure the team's well-being and that self-care practices are established, working with the Director and Participation Officer to ensure trauma-informed ways of working.

Person Specification

Essential

- Accreditation to IAA Level 3 (or IAAS Level 2 with IAA accreditation)
- Significant recent experience of preparing and/or presenting appeals/bail applications before the First-tier Tribunal or other courts
- Knowledge of housing policy and law, as relevant to accommodation issues faced by people in detention seeking release on bail
- Experience of managing a casework team in a busy office
- Experience of line management and supervision of staff
- Experience of working with volunteers in a supervisory capacity
- Experience of delivering training and/or developing a training programme
- Excellent communication skills both written and oral
- A demonstrable commitment to Human Rights
- An ability to communicate and empathise with detainees from many different cultures
- Ability to work as part of a team
- Ability to attend occasional evening meetings and travel to court, prison and detention centres

Desirable

- Other relevant legal qualification (Solicitor or Barrister)
- Languages in addition to English language
- Experience of coordinating and presenting evidence to policy makers
- Experience of analysing data and presenting for campaigning and external communications
- Experience in developing and implementing monitoring and evaluation frameworks to support data-informed decision-making within a Legal Services team.
- Experience managing or working within an open-access advice line, with the ability to navigate the competing priorities such services involve.