**Housing and Welfare Casework Volunteer**

**Ideal time commitment:** 1-2 days per week on a regular pattern (in person or remote)

**Reports to:** Housing and Welfare Manager

**About the Helen Bamber Foundation Group**

The Helen Bamber Foundation (HBF) is a human rights charity based in London which was founded in 2005. HBF grew from the recognition that people who have suffered prolonged inter-personal violence – whether from human trafficking; war; community, domestic or gender-based violence – present with similar physical and psychological symptoms to torture survivors and experience the same complex and enduring responses to their trauma.

Our specialist team of therapists, doctors and legal experts have an international reputation for providing therapeutic care, medical consultation, legal protection and practical support to survivors of human rights violations. We offer our clients a Model of Integrated Care (MOIC), providing legal, medical, psychological and welfare support, as well as an Integration Programme which includes arts-based groups, and skills-based classes such as English and IT. Through this, we help our clients to develop a sustained recovery from extreme trauma.

Asylum Aid, (previously merged with Migrants Resource Centre under Consonant) is, and has long been, a leader in the Immigration and NGO sector: providing high-level legal support to ensure the protection of vulnerable refugees, people seeking asylum and migrants. Since August 2020, Helen Bamber Foundation and Asylum Aid have combined efforts to support the vulnerable people seeking asylum and refugees who need us the most, operating as two separate entities joined under a group structure, known as the Helen Bamber Foundation Group.

**About the role**

The Housing and Welfare team is a fast-paced team which works to make sure that all of our clients have safe and comfortable accommodation and are able to access any benefits to which they are entitled. People seeking asylum are restricted in the benefits they can access, if any, and their legal status determines whether or not they can engage in employment and what statutory accommodation is available for them, so the Housing and Welfare team is vital in helping HBF’s clients to navigate this system. People recently granted refugee status and those who have experienced exploitation are also at high risk of destitution, homelessness and unsuitable accommodation.

As a very busy team, our casework volunteers are invaluable, supporting the staff team on anything from liaising with statutory bodies and voluntary agencies, to drafting grant applications for individual welfare needs. To be able to meet the enormous demand for welfare and housing support, we ideally need to have volunteer support throughout the week.

**Main tasks and activities**

* Assisting clients to access asylum support, community care, housing, mainstream benefits, charitable support (etc.), within the remit of prevention of homelessness and destitution;
* Maintaining contact with clients within the remit of prevention of homelessness and destitution;
* Liaising with statutory bodies (Asylum Support, DWP, local authorities), solicitors and voluntary agencies to ensure client needs are met;
* Referring clients internally and externally as appropriate for specialist help with issues that fall outside the remit of the housing and welfare casework service, including health/therapeutic services, referrals to immigration/housing/community care solicitors;
* Maintaining accurate and timely client records and follow-up work;
* Other administrative duties as required, including database management and filing.

**Skills and experience needed**

* Understanding of, and commitment to, the objectives of the Helen Bamber Foundation;
* A demonstrable empathy for our vulnerable clients, including people seeking asylum, refugees and survivors of torture and trafficking;
* Some knowledge of the challenges facing vulnerable clients including people seeking asylum, refugees and survivors of torture, trafficking;
* Some experience in a casework and/or advice role;
* Some knowledge of the rights and entitlements of people seeking asylum and refugees;
* Some knowledge of mainstream benefits, housing, social care;
* Ability to keep up to date with legislation, case law, policies and procedures relating to welfare, housing and immigration;
* Punctual, reliable and self-motivated;
* Able to commit regularly (ideally same day each week)
* Awareness of confidentiality/data protection;
* Excellent communication and interpersonal skills;
* Excellent organisational skills and ability to manage own time and workload, and to prioritise a range of competing demands;
* Excellent IT skills including the use of databases, email, word processing;
* Flexibility and willingness to undertake other duties as required.

**What you will get out of the role:**

* A better understanding of UK processes and systems which concern people seeking asylum and refugees (including asylum support, homelessness, welfare benefits, local authority support etc.) and what support is available;
* Increased confidence in working on a one-to-one basis with clients;
* Stronger administrative skills;
* Ability to process large amounts of data and prioritise or categorise it;
* An ability to multi-task between competing priorities;
* Experience of working with a multi-disciplinary team in a Human Rights charity.

**Equal Opportunities**

The Helen Bamber Foundation and Asylum Aid is an equal opportunities and Living Wage employer. We are committed to attracting and recruiting diverse candidates as we are keen to make sure that our staff, trustees, volunteers and ambassadors reflect the communities we serve and the wider community we work in at every level within the organisation. We particularly welcome applications from those with BAME backgrounds and those with lived experience of the UK’s immigration systems.

**Please note that successful candidates will be offered the position subject to a DBS check.**