

Disability Law Service

offering free, confidential
legal advice and representation
to disabled people.

VOLUNTEER ROLE PROFILES

Role Profile – Triage Service

The main area in which DLS uses its volunteers is the Triage Service.

The Triage Service forms one of the most important parts of the advice service DLS offers. The Advice Service provides immediate access by telephone or textphone, letter or email for disabled people requiring legal advice in a number of specialist areas.

The Advice Service is a unique service because:

- It is available on a UK wide basis
- It provides the caller with direct access to a solicitor or specialist adviser
- It gives advice to other organisations working with disabled people
- Is supported by factsheets and referral services.

Working with Triage includes answering calls, assessing legal problems and making appointments with our legal advisers, making referrals and signposting to other organisations. You will be shown how to log enquiries and use our CRM database.

Answering calls with the Triage Service is a vital part of what we do at DLS, and helping us with this will give you experience in listening to the problems that people present, and assessing which area of law will be relevant in each case.

Skills required:

- Have good interpersonal and communication skills
- Have a good telephone manner
- Experience in using computer databases

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- Attention to detail
- Patience.

There may be also opportunities to get involved in some of the events we take part in, both at DLS and externally.

Role Profile – Admin/Reception

If you're interested in volunteering with the Administration/Reception Team, the type of work done at DLS includes:

- Dealing with internal and external correspondence
- Word processing documents such as letters, presentations and reports
- Monitoring stationery supplies and reordering when necessary
- Using office equipment such as printers, scanners and photocopiers
- Answering the telephone and directing calls
- Setting up and maintaining filing systems
- Meeting and greeting visitors/clients in a friendly and professional manner
- Updating information on computer databases.

An administrative assistant's skills are highly transferable. The experience you gain from volunteering at DLS may help you to move into supervisory or management roles or become a personal assistant. With further qualifications and training there are also opportunities to specialise, e.g. in finance, marketing or human resources and in areas such as law and medicine.

Skills required:

- Have good interpersonal and communication skills
- Be able to work to tight deadlines
- Be able to prioritise your workload

- Have numeracy and IT skills
- Have an interest in business and commerce.

Training is usually given on the job under the supervision of experienced colleagues.

Role Profile – Finance

If you are interested in volunteering with the Finance and Admin Department, the role includes:

- Recording and coding incoming invoices,
- Keeping cash books,
- Preparing monthly bank reconciliations,
- Chasing payments and recording incoming payments,
- Assisting Admin Assistant/Receptionist.

We will also tell you about our postal systems, about our leaflets and factsheets, how to log enquiries and other administrative systems.

Once you are confident you will be able to undertake a number of accounting and administrative duties for Disability Law Service as a valued volunteer, with the support and guidance of the staff team.

Role profile – Development

The Development Team at Disability Law Service works largely with other organisations and groups, undertaking visits, giving talks, arranging and delivering training and workshops and attending conferences and other events. The team also organise and promote training sessions that take place at DLS offices twice a year.

The Development Team do not have specific volunteers working with them, but sometimes really value help from a volunteer to assist with specific tasks. Such tasks could typically include:

- Assisting at an event, by helping to man a DLS stall, give out information, talk to members of the public and staff from other organisations about what DLS does
- Typing up information into electronic format such as feedback questionnaires after training sessions
- Helping to photocopy materials for training packs and putting the packs together
- Doing internet or telephone research to find out about other organisations and what they do.

Role Profile – ICT (Information, Communication and Technology)

If you are interested in volunteering with the ICT Department, the role includes:

- General IT duties, such as updating computer software,
- Data entry and database administration,
- Preparing website copy,
- Website updates,
- General administration.

For this role you will be confident with IT, and have a working knowledge of computers and an understanding of network principles. Some knowledge of CSS, HTML and the .Net platform would also be an advantage.

In addition, you will have confidence in your ability to communicate and be keen to develop your copy writing skills. You will learn how to cut through legal jargon and create written information for audiences with different access needs.

This role is ideal if you are considering a career as a website designer / copy writer.

Role Profile – Website Content Volunteer

As a Website Content Volunteer you'll join us in developing our web-based information resources covering our areas of law, specifically:

You will:

- Contribute copy for our website, covering disability law advice and information
- Contribute to the development of new online advice and information resources
- Get involved in a variety of online publication projects
- Help to make sure our information resources are engaging, accessible, user friendly and adhere to quality standards and style guidelines
- Assist in the monitoring and evaluation of the website's usage, traffic reports and user feedback

You will need:

- The ability to write in plain English about complex subjects
- An understanding of web technologies and their application
- A collaborative approach and strong communication skills

Role Profile – Legal Team (Employment and DDA)

The Legal Team is divided into 2 – DDA & Employment and Social Welfare. The DDA & Employment Team conducts advice, casework/litigation, consultancy and training in the areas of employment law, post 16 education and disability discrimination in consumer law (goods and services). The areas of work open to volunteers are mainly 'advice' and casework/litigation support.

Volunteering within the DDA & Employment Team will involve drafting written legal advice (under supervision) in response to written enquiries we receive. It could also involve litigation support as required by members of the team, such as legal research, file management, drafting (under supervision) and preparation of hearing bundles (under supervision).

Skills required:

- Legal qualification, i.e. LLB, CPE, Dip Law
- Have good interpersonal and communication skills (both oral and written)
- Have a good telephone manner
- Experience in using computer databases and MS Works programs (especially Word)
- Attention to detail
- Patience.

Role Profile – Legal Team (Community Care and Welfare Benefits)

The Legal Team within the Disability Law Service is split between the Employment/Disability Discrimination Team and the Social Welfare Law Team. The Social Welfare Law Team deals with cases involving Community Care and Welfare Benefits Law.

Community Care law requires good knowledge of The Civil Procedural Rules including Administrative Law and procedure. Welfare Benefits law requires excellent legal research skills.

Working with the Social Welfare Law team includes researching the law, assessing legal problems and, based on the outcome of your research, providing legal advice. You will be provided with work by a member of the team, who will show you where to research the relevant points and will supervise you throughout the process.

Skills required:

- Legal qualification, i.e. LLB, CPE, Dip Law
- Have good interpersonal and communication skills
- Experience in using computer databases/legal databases
- Good legal research skills
- An interest in the relevant area of law.

Role Profile – Community Care/Welfare Benefits Legal Team Legal Secretary

If you are interested in volunteering in the Community Care/Welfare Benefits Legal Team as a Legal Secretary, the main duties are to type letters and other legal documents such as Completing LSC forms and other court documents. You may work from notes or notes dictated onto audiotape, other duties may include:

- Dealing with telephone calls, letters, faxes and e-mails
- Organising diaries and making appointments
- Keeping records of costs and controlling petty cash
- Dealing with enquiries from clients
- Delivering and collecting documents
- Filing and other general clerical work

In terms of skills and interests you should:

- Have good secretarial skills
- Be interested in law and business in general
- Be reasonably computer literate
- Work accurately and pay attention to detail
- Be very discreet, as you will be dealing with confidential information
- Have a good standard of English, spelling and grammar
- Be able to work to deadlines
- Have a polite, friendly and professional manner

Once you are confident you will be able to undertake a number of legal and administrative duties for Disability Law Service as a valued volunteer, with the support and guidance of the legal team.

Role Profile – Community Care/Welfare Benefits Legal Team Press Officer

If you are interested in volunteering in the Community Care/Welfare Benefits Legal Team as a Press Officer, the main duties are researching, writing and distributing press releases to targeted media. The information may be in relation to casework that we are carrying out or public interest stories; other duties may include:

- Planning, developing and implementing PR strategies
- Liaising with members of staff and key spokespeople
- Liaising with and answering enquiries from media, individuals and other organisations, often via telephone and email
- Researching, writing and distributing press releases to targeted media
- Collating and analysing media coverage

Once you are confident you will be able to undertake drafting of press releases and other duties for Disability Law Service as a valued volunteer, with the support and guidance of the legal team.

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