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Job description

**JOB TITLE:** Children’s Adviser (Regional)

**TEAM:** Independent UASC Support Service

**DIRECTORATE:** Services

**LOCATION:** East Midlands and East England

**REPORTS TO:** Outreach & Responsible Adult Lead

**GRADE:** 5

**SALARY:** £30,296 - £33,945

**HOURS:** 35

**The Organisation**

Founded in 1951, the Refugee Council exists to support people who come to the UK in need of safety and speak out for compassion, fairness and kindness. We achieve this by providing expert advice and casework, building the capacity of refugee community organisations, and working with allies across society to change government policy.

Our vision for refugees to be welcome to live safe and fulfilling lives contributing to the UK has never been more urgent and needed. Today 27 million refugees and 84 million displaced people around the world need of safety, dignity and welcome. We are determined to secure public and government support for safe routes for all people seeking safety, and a fair, effective and compassionate refugee protection system.

Now is an excellent time to join the Refugee Council. We recently launched our new strategy - you can read it [here](https://media.refugeecouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/14074348/Refugee-Council-Strategy-Report.pdf). It sets an ambitious new direction which will see us defend refugee protection in the UK against the Government’s corrosive plans with refugees and like-minded allies, united in our desire to create a just, fair and humane refugee protection system. It will also see us delivering direct services that improve people’s refugee protection journey through targeted advice and casework, and strengthening and connecting Refugee Community Organisations with other service providers and advocates.

**Our Values**

Our values underpin everything we do:

* **Inclusive**: We are inclusive. We work with - not for - refugees and people seeking asylum, so they have an equal voice, co-producing projects and ensuring their expertise and experiences are at the heart of what we do.
* **Collaborative**: We are collaborative. Working with others is a priority in order to have the collective impact that is vital to achieve policy and practice reform.
* **Courageous**: We speak out when we see injustice, cruelty and unfairness. We always stand up for what we believe is the right thing to do to transform the experiences of those seeking protection in our country.
* **Respectful**: We are respectful of all those we interact with. We treat everyone – our staff, volunteers, beneficiaries, partners and people we disagree with – with the same respect, professionalism and understanding.

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## Refugee Council’s Children’s Services:

The Children’s Services are responsible for delivering services to separated refugee children. The service also leads on raising the profile of their clients and advocates on their behalf. Supporting this work, the service also promotes good practice to statutory and voluntary agencies and supports the Refugee Council Advocacy and Engagement Team to influence government to improve policy decisions and policy making at a national level.

**Independent Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children Support Service:**

The focus of the Service is to offer advice and support to separated children, particularly around their asylum application, and to signpost and refer children to statutory and voluntary agencies, working with local authorities to ensure that appropriate services are provided. The service is contracted by the Home Office.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

The postholder will work as part of a team providing advice and support to unaccompanied children and professionals in their area. They will provide an important and professional service, giving accurate, tailored and high-quality advice. Advice will be provided in an accessible manner, usually with the assistance of interpreters.

The focus of the advice and support is the asylum process, help getting a solicitor, rights and responsibilities as a looked after child, and other matters affecting the safety and wellbeing of the child. The postholder will have a clear understanding of the experiences and needs of unaccompanied children, and an ability to source appropriate and available services to connect clients with.

The postholder will be responsible for:

* Working in the best interests of the child.
* Ensuring all safeguarding issues are reported on time to all relevant agencies in line with policies and procedures. Accurately recording all concerns using the appropriate internal recording mechanisms.
* Providing quality advice to children and young people on immigration and asylum to OISC Level 1.
* Providing quality advice using a mix of remote support and face to face as appropriate, which will range from one-off pieces of advice to more intensive follow up casework with children and other professionals.
* Acting as the responsible adult at Home Office interviews as requested by the Home Office or a local authority.
* Working effectively with a range of statutory and non-statutory bodies such as local authority children’s services, health and education professionals and voluntary sector agencies.
* Working with colleagues internally and externally to ensure that any unaccompanied child who contacts us gets access to appropriate and specialist information, advice and support through referrals and signposting.
* Ensuring all work is documented and kept up to date in line with organisational and contractual requirements.
* Working with volunteers as required in order to maximise the service to the children and young people, and to supervise volunteers from time to time as required.
* Working effectively and professionally with interpreters, to ensure children are able to access advice, guidance and information in an accessible way.
* Maintaining professional boundaries, excellent customer services skills, impartiality and confidentiality at all times.
* Working flexibly across the whole service, including covering the National Advice Line as required.
* Undertaking discrete pieces of work such as putting together case studies, assisting in training and collating information on the Refugee Council’s Children’s Section, as required from time to time.
* Working closely and professionally with partner organisations and various stakeholders.
* Taking responsibility for managing your own workload.
* Carrying out all work with regard to the Refugee Council’s organisational policies and procedures.
* Managing and reconciling small amounts of petty cash and own travel and expenses as per the Refugee Council policy.

For the organisation

* Cooperating with the Refugee Council in delivering all legal responsibilities in respect of your own and your colleagues, volunteers, clients and others health & safety whilst at work.
* Committing to the organisation’s Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy.
* Undertaking any reasonable duties as directed by your line manager.
* A degree of flexibility is needed and the postholder may be required to perform work not specifically referred to above. Such duties will fall within the scope of the job, at the appropriate grade.

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Person Specification

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## **Experience, skills, knowledge and abilities**

**Essential**

1. Clear understanding of safeguarding and how to respond to and report safeguarding concerns.
2. Experience of providing quality and tailored advice to children and young people.
3. Experience of working in a busy service which provides direct services to vulnerable clients.
4. Experience of working effectively with a range of stakeholders.
5. Ability to deliver a service to contractually agreed standards, and to ensure that all related reporting is accurate and timely.
6. Ability to work effectively as part of a multi-cultural team and to build positive working relationships with a range of other internal and external stakeholders.
7. Robust understanding of UK asylum and welfare legislation affecting separated children, for example Children Act (1989), Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, and Sexual Offences Act (2003).
8. Excellent written and spoken communication skills.
9. Ability to operate calmly, sensitively and authoritatively within a pressurised environment.
10. Ability to take reasoned decisions regarding the level of support a client needs.
11. IT skills sufficient to meet the demands of the post.
12. Good interpersonal, negotiation and advocacy skills with the ability to engage positively with a wide range of stakeholders.
13. Commitment to the Refugee Council’s values, and the principles of confidentiality, impartiality, non-directive advice and Equality, Diversity & Inclusion.

**Desirable**

1. People with lived experience as a refugee are encouraged to apply.
2. Ability to speak and/or write in one or more languages commonly used by children seeking asylum in the UK.
3. Ability to drive, with access to own car.

**Special circumstances**

The post holder should be aware that:

* The work requires travel within the region and the postholder will require a full driver’s license and access to a vehicle.
* There will be occasional anti-social hours work arising from the need to support children at a time of urgent need, and to act as the responsible adult for a child at their asylum interview.
* This post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Therefore, all convictions, cautions and bind-overs, including those regarded as ‘spent’, must be declared at the application stage. An offer of employment is subject to a satisfactory DBS check. Repeat DBS checks are initiated every two years.
* The postholder will have Office of Immigration Services Commission (OISC) accreditation or the ability to attain accreditation within one month. The postholder must at all times adhere to the required standards as laid down by the OISC.