



Recruitment pack

Helpline advisor

Dear applicant

Thank you for taking the time to look at this recruitment pack and your interest in the role of helpline advisor. This post is an important role for Unlock, providing information, advice and support to the many individuals with a criminal record who contact us each year.

We've achieved a great deal for the people we support and this is testament to the talents of our dedicated team of staff and volunteers. Through listening and engaging with people who face difficulties because of their convictions we have an impressive track record of identifying issues, finding solutions and putting them into practice. Last year our helpline assisted over 9,000 people, a record number.

Whilst we are a small charity we punch above our weight; we're resourceful, impactful and work efficiently with like-minded organisations so that, together, we can achieve our aims. We are widely recognised as the go-to organisation in this arena.

So, if you believe you have the passion and energy to contribute to our success, and you share and demonstrate our values, we'd love to have you as part of our team.

Kind regards,

Debbie Sadler
Head of Advice

About Unlock

Our mission

Our mission is to advocate for people with criminal records to be able to move on positively in their lives. We:

- Support people with criminal records to navigate their way through challenging times
- Research and raise awareness of the systemic issues that people are facing
- Campaign for changes to legislation, policies and practices of government, employers and others.

Our vision

A fair and inclusive society where people with convictions can move on positively in their lives.

Unlock is an independent award-winning national advocacy charity that provides a voice and support for people who are facing stigma and obstacles because of their criminal record, often long after they have served their sentence.

We exist for two simple reasons.

Firstly, we help people to move on positively with their lives by empowering them with information, advice and support to overcome the stigma of their previous convictions.

To do this we provide information, advice and support through our [website](#), online tools and confidential peer-led helpline. We help practitioners support people by providing [criminal record disclosure training](#). And we support [employers](#) and universities in treating people fairly.

Secondly, we seek to promote a fairer and more inclusive society by challenging discriminatory practices and promoting socially just alternatives.

To do this we [advocate for change](#), working at policy level to address systemic and structural issues. We listen to and consult with people, undertake research and produce evidence-based reports to inform policy makers and the public. We challenge bad practice, influence attitudes and speak truth to power. We co-founded and support the [Ban the Box campaign](#) and we are pushing for [#FairChecks](#), a fresh start for the criminal records system.

Unlock is an equal opportunities organisation committed to increasing diversity. Applications from candidates who are from racialised communities, have a disability or who are from a less privileged background, are particularly encouraged. We warmly welcome applications from all suitably skilled people regardless of background and we are especially keen to appoint people who have themselves met with and overcome the disadvantages of having a criminal record. This is a peer support role and therefore having a criminal record is a requirement for the role.

Terms of employment

Contract	Full time permanent
Salary	£18,900 per annum
Hours	37.5 hours per week. Normal hours are 9 am to 5 pm but we will consider flexible working requests. Occasional work outside of contracted hours may be necessary.
Location	Unlock office, Maidstone
Holidays	20 days (with an additional day for each complete year served) + public holidays + 3 days between Christmas and New Year.
Pension	Automatic enrolment into Unlock's contributory workplace pension scheme into which we contribute 6% of gross pay.
Probation period	6 months.

Job description

The role

Job title	Helpline advisor
Reporting to	Head of advice
Line management	N/A

Purpose of the post

We are looking for a helpline advisor to join our hardworking but friendly team providing information, advice and support to people with a criminal record.

You will play a key role in offering information and advice to individuals in overcoming the effects of their criminal record.

Main responsibilities and tasks

- Act as first point of contact for new and existing clients from various channels including telephone, email, WhatsApp and live chat, prioritising urgent cases when necessary.
- Providing information and advice on a range of issues such as criminal record checks for employment, disclosure of criminal records, applying to college/university, travelling abroad with a criminal record.
- Signpost clients to alternative sources of support when Unlock are unable to assist.
- Provide emotional support as well as practical support to clients who present with complex issues.
- Share experiences with other helpline advisors and participate in team meetings, voicing any concerns regarding the impact of a call upon you personally.
- Ensure clients are treated with dignity and respect taking account of the need for equality and diversity in the way in which clients are assisted.

- Keep accurate and timely records ensuring high quality data is input on our CRM system for the purpose of continuity of work, information retrieval, statistical monitoring and report preparation.
- Keep up to date with policies and procedures relevant to the role and undertake any necessary training.

Person specification

Attitudes and values

- Ambitious person that has a passion for making a positive difference and challenging inequality (E)
- Enthusiasm for the aims and values of Unlock (E)
- A can-do attitude to solving practical problems (E)
- A commitment to Unlock's aims, values and approach (E)
- Empathetic and non-judgemental (E)

Qualifications

- Educated to A level or equivalent, or have relevant work experience (D)

Experience

- First-hand experience of having a criminal record (E). This position is defined as a 'peer' position and a past criminal record is a requirement for this role.
- Experience of using Microsoft Office and a knowledge/understanding of databases (E)
- Experience of answering calls on a helpline (D)
- Experience of working within a confidential environment (D)

Knowledge

- Criminal records disclosure regime (D)

Skills and abilities

- Excellent verbal and written communication skills (E)
- Ability to work in a small team with minimal supervision and self-motivated to excel (E)
- Ability to work constructively with a wide range of people, working in different ways (E)
- Ability to cope with a busy and demanding workload (E)

How to apply

To apply for this role:

- Download the job application form from <https://unlock.org.uk/opportunity/helpline-advisor/>
- Send your completed application form by email to admin@unlock.org.uk with the subject line Helpline advisor.
- If you choose to send in an equality, diversity and inclusion monitoring form, please send it to sue.kent@unlock.org.uk

We shortlist candidates by matching details on your application against the person specification for the role so please make sure your personal statement in the application form carefully addresses this. We're looking for clear evidence of your experience, skills and knowledge and we're interested in all relevant experience, including beyond paid employment, which might contribute to your ability to do the job. To help us recruit fairly we are using anonymous recruitment techniques. This means we will remove your name, gender and other identifying information when sifting and shortlisting candidates.

Closing date for applications is 6 May 2022. Shortlisted and unsuccessful applicants will be notified by email by 13 May 2022. Due to our limited resources, we are unable to provide feedback if you are not invited to interview.

Interviews will take place on 20 May 2022 via Zoom.

If you have any questions about the application form or application process, please call 07358 204839 or email admin@unlock.org.uk.