**JOB TITLE:** Youth Casework Manager

**TEAM:** Youth Services

**GROUP:** Services

**LOCATION:** London, East of England, Yorkshire and Humberside, and Remote

**REPORTS TO:** Head of Youth Services/ Youth Development Programme Manager

**GRADE:** 7

**SALARY:**

**HOURS:**  28

**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. Our [strategy](https://media.refugeecouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/14074348/Refugee-Council-Strategy-Report.pdf) sets an ambitious 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.

## The Refugee Council is one of the leading organisations in the UK working with asylum seekers and refugees. Our operational teams based in various locations in England provide advice and assistance across a wide range of issues, including helping asylum seekers through the complexities of the asylum system, addressing issues of destitution and assisting refugees and asylum seekers to access key services including housing, welfare benefits, health, education and employment. Our teams work with relevant agencies including the Home Office, Refugee Community Organisations, Local Authorities, Legal Service Providers, Housing Providers, Health Institutions, Job Centre Plus and other mainstream service providers.

**Context and Purpose of the Job**

The Refugee Council’s services strategy is aimed at delivering high impact, sustainable services that are centred on the needs of people seeking asylum and refugees in the UK, and improving the system of support that they rely on for their safety and future lives in local communities. We seek to significantly improve early access to information, advice and support for people seeking asylum and refugees in crisis and those seeking to integrate into the UK.

In December 2023, with consultancy support, we designed an exciting youth service strategy with a delivery model centred around children’s needs and with the vision for change on how separated children and young people are treated in their asylum journey by creating holistic casework, high quality joined up relationships across the organisation, collaboration with local partners and supporters through learning and sharing best practice to transform their experience and bring systemic change.

With the Youth Casework team, we seek to deepen the impact by supporting more children and young people now dispersed across England through information, guidance, and expert advice and casework support on complex issues including those facing adversarial UK asylum system, homelessness, poverty; not being able to access healthcare, education, and employment or their age being disputed as over 18 by the Home Office and/or by the local authorities.

The Youth Casework Manager will manage a team of specialist casework advisers in a very busy service, lead the delivery of complex casework, liaise and work with various legal representatives. They will maintain an understanding of the changing of policy and practice context in which the team is working, and work with a wide range of stakeholders including local authorities, legal practitioners, government departments, charities, and the Refugee Council advocacy team to use casework evidence to address inequities in policy and practice. The post holder will provide line management for staff and volunteers, and will, in conjunction with the Youth Development Programme Manager, liaise with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure that children’s needs and young people are being recognised and met. The post can be based in one of the strategic areas but may be required to regularly travel across designated places.

Based within the Youth Services of the Refugee council, the Youth Casework Manager will be responsible for:

* Working with children and young people to understand their experiences and needs.
* Collaborating with other colleagues, including other Youth Services managers to ensure that we provide effective service delivery and practice.
* Working with other Youth Services teams to ensure that children and young people receive the right support through effective internal referral systems, and other RC departments including external affairs, so our work is informed by young people’s experiences.
* Developing networks for collaboration, creating new and maintaining existing partnerships as dictated by local realities and needs of children and young people.
* Working closely with the Head, Youth Services managers, and practice development coordinator to identify any gaps in the casework service, develop solutions internally and strengthen the understanding of the risks separated children and young people face in their asylum journey externally whilst sharing good practice to reduce those risks
* Line managing, supporting and supervising casework advisers and volunteers.
* Maintaining expert knowledge and understanding of the environment and barriers that separated children seeking asylum face with regards to the assessment of their age, and issues related to access to high quality information, advice and legal representation on immigration, asylum and welfare, and always working in the best interests of the child.
* Learning from others and sharing the best practice internally.
* Representing the Refugee Council at external stakeholder forums and developing external links to enable best practice internally and make a collective impact.

Main duties and responsibilities

Casework management

1. Oversee the casework service delivery by managing a potential high number of referrals colleagues in the regions and professionals effectively, by deciding eligibility for services, and providing timely, helpful, and legally accurate responses at all times.
2. Line manage all casework advisers by supporting and enabling them to provide high quality information and advice support, and signposting to external specialist agencies in a sensitive, confidential and professional manner.
3. Ensure quality information, advice and complex casework service for people from the age of 12 to 21 years old seeking asylum across our key strategic areas (London, Yorkshire& Humber and East of England) are offered.
4. Connect young people with complex needs to essential services where they exist and provide advice and information, advocacy, and casework interventions where there are gaps in provision, in order to reduce crisis and for them to access the support to which they are entitled.
5. Continuously build knowledge and understanding of young people’s needs and factors that can impact on an individual’s ability to access services and support.
6. Hold specialist knowledge of the children protection, immigration, housing, welfare, legal and support systems available to children and young people seeking asylum, keeping abreast of government policy, legislation and guidance changes that may affect the information, advice, casework, and support needs of our clients.
7. Ensure that staff have the guidance and support required to carry out their roles, including collaborating with the Youth Services Practice Development Coordinator to develop training material for staff, and holding regular meetings with caseworkers to discuss open cases, action plans and learning.
8. Maintain expert understanding of the environment and barriers that separated children seeking asylum face with regards the assessment of their age and how our interventions (services or capacity building) improve their experience of seeking protection, drawn from regular dialogue and involvement with them about the issues they face and the solutions they seek from our services.
9. Work closely with internal teams, including youth services managers, advocacy, refugee involvement to improve policy and practice, by providing statistics, case studies, and where possible involving young people to give their voice and promote their rights.
10. Provide management support around safeguarding issues for the team, ensuring that safeguarding concerns are identified and responded to appropriately, liaising with the Safeguarding and Practice Manager as required, and following Refugee Council policies and procedures.
11. Participate and communicate of the Refugee Council’s age disputes and asylum work and restrictive legislation to internal and external stakeholders to strengthen practice knowledge and relationships with peers.
12. Intervene in complex casework with young people who have had their age disputed, asylum refused, and housing denied, and supporting them through complex legal proceedings via advice, emotional support and acting as litigation friend, including attending court hearings, including those listed outside of London, to ensure that the best interests of the child are represented.
13. Provide quarterly, annual and any other ad hoc reports, or other pieces of work, including case studies when requested to meet the reporting requirement of funders and the Refugee Council.
14. Ensure the youth participation and involvement approaches are embedded in the casework delivery service and involve young people in sharing their voice and seek their views where possible and relevant.
15. Maintain current knowledge of relevant immigration legislation and good practice sufficient and maintain OISC 2 accreditation.

Service development and delivery

1. Maintain high quality, current client records in accordance with organisational policies, funder requirements, and relevant legislation, and support advisers and volunteers to manage their data within the client database.
2. Develop and maintain excellent professional relationships with a range of practitioners including local authority social workers, managers, legal representatives, health and education professionals and voluntary sector agencies, referring children who are age disputed to other agencies where it is in the best interests of the child.
3. Collaborate with other colleagues, including other managers to ensure an effective embedding of youth involvement approaches, and that refugee children and youths’ ideas inform our service delivery and practice.
4. Work closely with the Youth Development Programme Manager and Head of Service to produce the annual plan for the casework services to drive up the quality and outcomes with young people in areas of the age disputes, asylum, health, accommodation, health and wellbeing, as part of the continuous improvement programme, and contribute to the future direction of the service.
5. Travel across strategic areas to assist colleagues and young people, including visiting and supporting young people in a range of settings including Home Office adult contingency hotels and immigration removal centres, and be available occasionally out of hours to deal with urgent cases.
6. Provide an effective and manageable triage and casework process for determining and prioritising interventions to be undertaken, ensuring that cases are progressed and resolved responsibly.
7. Ensure that the service is accessible to people for whom English is not their first language, including ensuring effective use of interpreters.
8. Ensure organisation and service information directories are maintained as part of day to day processes, in support of the signposting and referral needs of the team.
9. Work with the Head of Youth services, managers and colleagues in Business Development, and others to ensure a safe and workable level of funding for the service, and influence and manage change as required.
10. Ensure suitable management cover is available as required.

Financial

1. Work with the Youth Development Programme Manager to monitor the allocated finances and ensure that the team and all expenses are working within the budget.
2. Manage and reconcile small petty cash for young people, staff and volunteers’ expenses, and process own travel and expenses as per the Refugee Council policy.

For the organisation

1. Represent the Refugee Council professionally, both internally and externally, and promote effective multiagency partnership and stakeholder working.
2. Commit to the organisations Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy.
3. Support new business development, supporter engagement and organisational growth through active engagement with relevant teams.
4. Undertake any reasonable duties as directed by your line manager.
5. A degree of flexibility is needed and the postholder may be required to perform work not referred to above, such duties will fall within the scope of the job, at the appropriate grade.
6. Be a visible advocate for children and young people within Refugee Council and regionally.

Additional Information

**Health & Safety**

The post holder is responsible for:

Cooperating with the Refugee Council in delivering all legal responsibilities in respect of your own and your colleagues, volunteers, clients and others health and safety whilst at work.

Becoming familiar with the Refugee Council’s Health & Safety Policy and procedures including evacuation procedures at your workplace.

Carrying out risk assessments of your own work and especially of your own workstation to ensure that you do not expose yourself or others to unnecessary risk.

**Flexibility**

In order to deliver services effectively, a degree of flexibility is needed and the post-holder may be required to perform work not specifically referred to above. Such duties will, however, fall within the scope of the job, at the appropriate grade. The job description will be subject to periodic review with the post-holder to ensure it accurately reflects the duties of the job.

**Equal Opportunities Statement**

As part of its recruitment policy, the Refugee Council intends to ensure that no prospective or actual employee is discriminated against on the basis of race, sex, nationality, marital status, sexual orientation, employment status, class, disability, age, religious belief or political persuasion, or is disadvantaged by any condition or requirement which is not demonstrably justifiable.

**Working at the Refugee Council**

A commitment to the work of the Refugee Council.

**Personal Effectiveness**

With the support of their manager the post-holder will need to effectively manage their own workload and medium and long term plans and objectives.

**Flexible working**

This job allows hybrid working but depending on the work demands, prior agreement and authorisation from line management, you may work on certain days from home.

**The post of Youth Casework Manager 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 Disclosure and Barring Service check. Repeat DBS checks are initiated every two years.**

# RC-16-person-specification

### JOB TITLE: Youth Casework Manager

### Qualifications

### Essential

1. Office of Immigration Services Commission (OISC) accreditation level 2 or the ability to attain accreditation within six months, with the support of the Refugee Council. The post-holder must at all times adhere to the required standards as laid down by the OISC.

**Experience**

**Essential**

1. Experience of working with diverse groups of separated children and young people seeking asylum in the UK – and with good understanding of their complex and diverse needs linked to trauma and displacement.
2. Extensive experience of providing advice to children and young people on immigration, asylum and welfare issues, including the ability to oversee assessment, action planning and case management for asylum seeking young people.
3. Experience of managing safeguarding in front line service provision.
4. Experience of working with vulnerable clients who may present a range of intersectional needs.
5. Strong track record of managing a complex and demanding caseload including setting eligibility criteria to limit access to oversubscribed services.
6. Experience of decision making in a pressurised, busy and demanding environment.
7. Solid background of recruitment, induction and managing staff and volunteers.
8. Demonstrable experience of working with legal representatives to plan strategic litigation.
9. Strong track record of producing management reports and handling budget.
10. Experience of involving young people in peer support work or volunteering, including activity/program designing, event planning, and delivery.

## **Knowledge, skills and abilities**

**Essential**

1. Clear understanding of safeguarding risks for young people seeking asylum, and how to respond to, manage, and report safeguarding concerns effectively with relevant statutory authorities.
2. Good knowledge of the rapidly changing asylum legislation and awareness of their impact on separated children and young people seeking protection in the UK.
3. Understanding of the local authority’s responsibilities to separated children and young people, accurate knowledge of UK welfare legislation affecting separated children, such as the Children Act 1989, the 2000 (Leaving Care) Act, and Sexual Offences Act (2003).
4. Awareness of UK legislation related with Education and Employment, such as Education Act 2011 and Employment Rights Act 1996 respectively.
5. Understanding of the risks to young people associated with age dispute casework and strategic litigation, and the ability to provide strategic advice on the direction of the work to mitigate or manage these risks.
6. Ability to design practice development initiatives to enable internal and external peers to strengthen their practice in supporting young people who have had their age disputed.
7. Ability to operate calmly, sensitively and authoritatively within a pressurised environment, and able to recognise when colleagues need assistance, and to support them as appropriate.
8. Ability to make reasoned decisions regarding clients, colleagues and other resources, both over time and when under pressure, and to delegate effectively.
9. Ability to provide easily understood impartial advice to vulnerable children and young people.
10. Good understanding of equality and diversity legislation and good practice, and in particular how it relates to working with refugee children who are age disputed.
11. Good knowledge of issues and entitlements as they affect children and children turning 18 and issues facing young care leavers once they are 18 and over.
12. Good written and spoken English of a sufficient standard to produce concise written records for external bodies such as for court hearings or funding reports.
13. Ability to work effectively with interpreters.
14. Good negotiation and advocacy skills with the ability to represent a child professionally.
15. Ability to build effective working relationships with a wide range of external stakeholders.
16. Good knowledge of IT sufficient to maintain database records and case notes.
17. Flexibility to travel and work in other parts of the UK, cover for absent colleagues, sometimes at short notice, and the willingness to work outside of office hours from time to time.

**Desirable**

1. Ability to speak and/or write in one or more languages commonly used by children seeking asylum in the UK.

***People with lived experience as a refugee are encouraged to apply.***

**February 2024**