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**JOB DESCRIPTION**

**FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH ASSISTANT**

**Job details**

**Location:** Home-based in the UK, with travel

**Reporting to:** Foreign and Commonwealth Specialist

**Hours:** 20-25 hours per week

**Contract**: This post will be a fixed-term three-year post.

**Salary:** £12,000-£15,000 per annum (depending on hours). The salary would increase to £13,000-£16,500 upon accreditation (see below) and depending on hours.

**Special circumstances:** The post holder will study for Level 1 accreditation[[1]](#footnote-2) with the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC); this will allow for specialised immigration support to be delivered to Armed Forces enquirers.

**Job purpose**

Working within a small team, the role will act as a first point of contact for all non-UK Service personnel and their families who have an immigration related enquiry or issue.  Communication is predominately via email and the post holder will be required to respond appropriately and within a set timescale.

The post holder will support the work of the Foreign and Commonwealth team, assisting with enquiries and keeping published F&C information up-to-date.

**Job responsibilities**

Responsibilities of the post include:

* Along with the other team members, acting as the first point of contact for non-UK families, providing clear and accurate responses to enquiries and helping to resolve any immigration issues.  Ensuring non-UK families are provided with the information they need to actively manage their own immigration pathway.
* Working with the other team members to manage the enquiries mailbox by accurately recording and responding to enquiries (as appropriate) within a set timescale, including referring enquirers to appropriate sources of help and information, or to the F&C Specialist.
* Identifying new issues and trends to the F&C Specialist, and collating evidence from enquiries.
* Actively managing continuing professional development (CPD) through monitoring UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) and other relevant immigration websites to ensure knowledge of legislation, procedures and policy relating to F&C families is current.
* Liaising with key contacts on specific cases, (including but not limited to):

- Unit welfare teams

- Civilian immigration specialists and charities (e.g. Citizens Advice)

- Heads of overseas locations

- Regional Command F&C caseworker

- UK Visas and Immigration

- Service charities (e.g. SSAFA and RBL)

- Naval Families Federation F&C Specialist

* Liaising with AFF Regional Leads to deliver presentations or attend family events
* Where required, representing AFF and Army families at appropriate meetings/events, to brief on the specific concerns of non-UK Army families

**General**

* Completing personal administration using AFF applications and processes, including monthly timesheets and expenses claim form.
* Entering enquiries on AFF’s database and contacts onto the AFF CRM.
* Attending and participating in AFF meetings, training and events.
* Any other duties appropriate to the post, as required by the needs of the organisation from time to time.

**Knowledge, skills and experience needed for the job**

* All applicants must be eligible to work in the UK.
* All applicants will be subject to a DBS check as this is required for registration with OISC.
* All applicants must be willing for their personal image and work contact details to be used on the AFF website

| **ESSENTIAL** |
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| Experience and/or knowledge/understanding of UK immigration issues |
| Willingness to learn: study for Level 1 accreditation test with OISC |
| Understanding and current knowledge of Army life and its impact on families |
| Strong written communication and reading comprehension skills |
| A keen interest in the welfare and quality of life for Army families |
| Clarity of expression, both written and verbal |
| Demonstrable listening skills |
| Self-motivated; ability to work on own initiative and outside of a formal office environment |
| Ability to prioritise workload and utilise time effectively to work to tight deadlines and cope under pressure |
| Effective team player |
| Understanding of principles of client confidentiality |
| Sound working knowledge and experience of using Microsoft Office, in particular Word, Excel, Outlook and PowerPoint |
| **DESIRABLE** |
| Knowledge and understanding of Army non-UK families’ issues |
| Experience of liaising with the non-UK community, including organising events |
| Experience of providing advice and guidance |
| Experience of preparing and delivering presentations |
| Experience of home working |
| An understanding of the impact of military and Government policies on Army families |

**Self-development, team-working and conduct**

All staff members should:

* Undertake appropriate personal development and maintain and develop skills and knowledge as determined by the Performance Review process and in contact with your line manager (subject to the availability of resources).
* Monitor and maintain a safe working environment and working practices, at all times, and report any health and safety issues or risks to the AFF H&S point of contact.
* Work as a positive team member, in accordance with AFF’s Equal Opportunities and Dignity at Work policy and procedures.
* Behave in a professional manner at all times, reflecting and maintaining AFF’s Core Values, and generating a positive image of AFF to all stakeholders.
* Adhere to all AFF policies and procedures to ensure these are maintained at all times.

**What we do for you**

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| **When do I work?** | Generally during normal working hours, Monday-Friday.  However, you will be required to work reasonable additional hours in order to fulfil the requirements of your role, including travel and overnight stays. |
| **Does AFF pay overtime?** | We don’t pay overtime, but we do operate a Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) policy. |
| **How much holiday do I get?** | Work life balance is important, and we give all staff 30 days’ holiday a year (pro-rata if you work part time or on a fixed-term contract), plus 8 recognised public and bank holidays.  PLUS, staff can take the day off on their birthday as an additional day’s paid leave. |
| **How will AFF review my salary?** | A pay committee, made up of Trustees and the Chief Executive (with contributions from senior managers), reviews pay annually. |
| **Will AFF help me save for the future?** | AFF has a workplace pension scheme with NEST, and contributions are based on statutory auto-enrolment rates. |
| **How will AFF help with my development?** | Your induction will include time with your line manager.  We offer internal training (1-2 times per year), and you will receive an annual Performance Review with your line manager. |
| **Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)** | The EAP provides confidential and independent advice and support on many of life’s challenges including mental, physical and emotional health issues and financial difficulties. |

**Job context and other relevant information**

* References will be taken up on appointment. The successful applicant must be prepared to travel within the UK to meetings as required and to attend staff training events, usually held in the South East of England, some of which may require overnight stays.
* There will be a 6-month probationary period and you will be required to sign an agreement that you will abide by the AFF Data Protection & Confidentiality Policy as part of your contractual obligations.
* We rely on home-based staff to supply electricity and use of broadband for purposes of working effectively from home.  You may be able to claim working from home tax relief from HMRC in support of these small costs incurred.  Full details are available on the gov.uk website.
* AFF supplies a laptop and mobile phone with this position. All equipment provided is for work purposes only and must be used in line with the IT Acceptable Use Policy. All home-based staff are expected to provide a suitable home working environment in which to use this equipment effectively and assessment of suitability may need to be carried out before an appointment is made.
* Expenses incurred in the course of fulfilling the duties of the post will be paid according to AFF’s Expenses Policy in force at the time.
* Staff who are expected to drive on AFF business (see essential criteria above) should have access to a suitable vehicle, insured for business use, during working hours, and to adhere to the AFF Driving at Work Policy.

Army Families Federation is a charitable incorporated organisation registered in England and Wales with registered charity number 1176393 and a charity registered in Scotland with registered charity number SC048282 having its principal office at IDL 414, Floor 1, Zone 6, Ramillies Building, Marlborough Lines, Monxton Road, Andover SP11 8HJ

1. The successful applicant will need to attend a Level 1 immigration course and would be required to study for and take a test for Level 1 accreditation. The staff member will need to retain their OISC Level 1 qualification to retain the higher rate of pay. The staff member would be supervised whilst not qualified OISC Level 1. The F&C Specialist and Policy & Research Director would confirm with the role holder an appropriate timeframe to obtain this qualification. Study can be completed on AFF time, and training and supervision costs would be borne by AFF. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)