



LRU Member Solidarity Organiser job description

The Member Solidarity Organiser will support our members and branches to take action against landlords and estate agents and win better housing conditions for our members. With an overview of all of the union's disputes and casework, you'll be providing guidance and training to make sure we're organising and taking action in a way that builds the power of renters most affected by the housing crisis and reflects our "solidarity not charity" approach. The member solidarity organiser will balance knowledge of the housing system with an ability to empower and encouraging renters to use different tactics to stand up to landlords, from peer support to protests to resisting evictions through direct action.

Ideally, successful candidates will be available to start in March.

Main responsibilities

- Ensuring union members and branches support members with housing issues in a way that builds our power and reflects our strategy decisions and values and is taking place within the limits of our capacity.
- Supporting renters to take action against estate agents, landlords and other power holders who profit from the housing crisis.
- Support the development of capacity building and knowledge sharing within the union regarding our member solidarity organising.
- Ensuring that Member Solidarity information is kept up-to-date in the union-wide database.
- Provide support to specific disputes or pieces of casework as decided collectively.
- Ensuring the union responds to requests for support, including by coordinating members to carry out this work.
- Contributing to the union's collective management processes (25% of time).

Terms and conditions

- The pay is £24,277 per year. The post is 30 hours per week usually spread over 4 days. LRU workers are expected to be available to work some evenings and weekends.
- This position fixed term for 2 years, with the intention of the role becoming permanent depending on the union's financial situation.
- There is a 6-month review period.

- Workers receive 23 days of paid holiday each year plus bank holidays and the week between Christmas and New Year. Sick pay is provided.
- The LRU provides its workers with up to £100 per month towards counselling.
- A phone and reasonable expenses are provided.
- Membership of the LRU is not open to landlords or people who carry out evictions.
- The LRU provides a 3% pension contribution.
- The post is based at the LRU office in Liverpool Street with frequent travel around Hackney or Lewisham and elsewhere in the city.

Main tasks

Capacity building and knowledge sharing

- Ensuring union members and branches support members with housing issues in a way that builds our power and reflects our 'Solidarity Not Charity' approach and values and is taking place within the limits to our capacity.
- Training and supporting a network of members from across the union to take on responsibility for disputes in each branch (working with Branch Organisers and the union coordinator, where appropriate).
- Supporting the Member Solidarity Working Group to compile learning from disputes across the union and run union-wide evaluations and trainings of our member solidarity strategy and organising model, based on the learning emerging at branch level.

Coordinating member solidarity work

- Having an overview of all Member Solidarity casework and disputes taking place across the union
- Helping Member Solidarity teams in branches and the Member Solidarity Working Group to identify and take opportunities for collective action on housing issues, including helping connect individual disputes into wider campaigns.
- Supporting union members to quickly identify and summarise the legal and strategic situation that a member facing a housing issue is in.
- Helping to organise weekly Member Solidarity check-ins.
- Working with members to build relationships and maintaining communications with lawyers, Council workers, advice centres and other outside professionals.
- Developing and maintaining a network of law firms and lawyers who we can make referrals to and utilise as part of our member solidarity organising.
- Working with the union's Comms working group to ensure we tell compelling stories about our member solidarity organising and the issues that London's renters face.

Direct work with members on housing disputes

- Ensuring the union responds to online requests for housing solidarity and support, including by providing simple relevant information and relevant law and signposting members to relevant branch meetings and external organisations, including by supporting members to carry out this work.

- Supporting individual renter-landlord/estate agent disputes, when needed and as capacity allows and collective prioritisation decisions dictate.
- Supporting members to believe in the power they can hold as part of the union and the importance of collective struggle.
- Providing advice and casework support to Member Solidarity Teams in different branches, including by helping to draft correspondence to members and landlords.

Collective management (25% of time)

- Co-organising and taking part in regular peer-to-peer support and co-management w/ other union staff
- Taking part in monthly staff support days w/ staff supervisor and other meetings and discussions to ensure your work is accountable to the membership and the people you are organising with.
- Participating in evaluation and strategising workshops and coordinating group meetings
- Take part in introducing new staff to the processes and structures of the union.
- Identifying and taking opportunities for continued professional development.
- Providing 2 hours support per month with back office work as agreed with colleagues e.g. membership database, welcoming new members, replying to emails sent to the general inbox.

Who we're looking for

Candidates are not expected to meet all of these criteria, but the ideal candidate will have a good mix of the following.

Essential

- Excellent communication skills and an ability to communicate with a wide range of people, including people in distress.
- Ability to empower people to participate in and lead collective struggle, including people who face oppression.
- Ability to quickly identify key details from complex conversations and documents.
- Passionate about the London Renters Union and building the power of private renters to win better housing conditions.
- Active involvement in movements or community campaigns for social justice.
- Ability to speak and build trust with people in the area and different organisations.
- Commitment to working with honesty and integrity and to equal opportunities and opposing oppression.
- Self-motivation and ability to prioritise tasks and work to urgent deadlines in an unstructured environment and able to work independently as well as in a team.
- Ability to keep boundaries and help look after yourself and those you're organising with, when doing stressful work.

Desirable

- Understanding of the housing crisis in London and its impacts on people and communities in Hackney or Lewisham.
- Active involvement in movements or community campaigns for social justice.
- Good working knowledge of housing law.
- Experience of conducting case work.
- Experience of coaching others to carry out political organising work according to an agreed organising model.
- Experience of supporting people to take action.
- Understanding of different approaches to organising and building power.

For information on how to apply, see

<https://londonrentersunion.org/2019/member-solidarity-organiser/>.