



Senior Policy & Research Officer

SPRO-10-23

Candidate Pack

December 2023



Lexcel



Foreword from Director

Thank you for considering progressing your career at the Law Centre. By joining the Law Centre team, you will be part of an award-winning team who make a big difference in the lives of people across all communities in NI.

The Law Centre (LCNI) is a regional not-for-profit that works across all communities in NI in fulfilment of our vision that we all live in a more just and equal society. LCNI's mission is to use the law to change people's lives.

Over many years, LCNI's policy advocacy has delivered tangible outcomes in all our areas of work. You can read more about our policy and other work in our most recent Impact Report available on our website at www.lawcentreni.org

As a regional infrastructure organization within the community and voluntary sector in NI we are here, not just to ensure that people have access to justice but, as a second-tier referral body, to ensure that organisations who support people in their communities have the legal support they need for their work. Our work spans social security, asylum, immigration, trafficking and employment law.

Law Centre was the winner of the Regional Legal Aid Firm/Not for Profit Organisation category in the 2021 *Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year Awards*.

Law Centre NI is part of the Law Centre Network.

Our work is deeply rewarding. We can promise you excellent professional development opportunities, training and the opportunity to make a contribution to people's lives working as part of an amazing team. If you are self-motivated with the passion, skill and commitment to join our team, please consider an application - we'd love to hear from you.

Ursula O'Hare
Director

About Law Centre NI

Established in 1977 as a community law centre for the Belfast area, in the 1990s, LCNI expanded its work to cover the whole region. LCNI uses a blend of legal, policy and education tools to work for social justice, with a focus on strategic litigation and policy advocacy that secures wider change.

We provide free, independent legal advice, casework and representation before the tribunals and courts, including in the higher courts. This year our strategic social

security cases focused on the rules regarding Cost-of-Living payments, Child Benefit Bereavement Support, and Discretionary Waivers.

Our policy research and advocacy, seeks to secure change to law and policy, grounded in the direct experience of our clients. This involves strong partnership with others across the voluntary sector in NI to advocate for progressive social change. We also deliver extensive training and information support to the advice network across NI. This includes professional development training and webinars, Adviser Network Meetings, the *Annual Social Security Law Conference* and legal information resources. We also produces public legal information resources so that everyone understands their legal rights.

LCNI is Lexcel-accredited and regulated by the OISC. The legal work of LCNI is led by the organisation's Director of Legal Services/Senior Solicitor.

As a charity, LCNI is registered with the Charity Commission NI and is governed by a Board/Management Committee, all of whom give their time and expertise freely in support of our mission.

About this Role

You will be shaping the Law Centre's policy work to influence and achieve progressive change to law and policy in NI. Your focus will be on the social security system and strategies to eradicate poverty in NI. You will lead on the Law Centre's work with the *Cliff Edge Coalition* and other collaborations. Your research will be responsive to the ever-changing landscape and provide a reliable evidence base that supports policy development.

The Law Centre is committed to ensuring that the impact of law and policy within communities in NI is evidenced and understood across government and more widely. This is a period of significant change in NI and you will have the opportunity to make a real difference to people's lives by influencing the development of social security law and policy in NI.

This post at the Law Centre is supported by the Department for Communities.

General Candidate Information

This is a permanent post, subject to on-going funding. The post may be filled by secondment of the successful candidate from their current post for a duration to be agreed by all parties and on LCNI terms. LCNI will also consider requests for flexible working arrangements.

Benefits are:

- Opportunity to develop and deepen discrete subject expertise through excellent professional learning and support;
- Generous holiday entitlement is 24 days annually, building to a maximum of 30 days. This is in addition to 14 statutory and other days;
- LCNI has a hybrid and flexible working policy
- Excellent development opportunities;
- Being part of making change happen;
- Accessible city centre Location

The successful candidate will be expected to take up post as soon as practicable. The successful candidate will be subject to a probationary period of 6 months which may be extended in accordance with LCNI policy.

Application Process

CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS: Friday 8th January 2024 @ 16.00

INTERVIEW DATE: TBC

Please note the following important information about the application process:

- Please complete the application form fully. CVs are not accepted;
- Please ensure that you give examples that demonstrate how you satisfy the relevant criteria, including relevant dates;
- Please ensure that you remain within the word limit specified. Any excess will be disregarded by the panel;
- Please return your application form as a Word Document by email to the email address specified in the application form;
- Applications received after the closing date will not be considered;
- In the event of a large number of applicants, LCNI will also shortlist against desirable criteria.

If you would like to talk to us about this role, please contact Sarah Corrigan, Director of Innovation and Engagement, Sarah.Corrigan@lawcentreni.org

Role Description

Job Title:	Senior Policy & Research Officer
Job Purpose:	To lead LCNI's social security and anti-poverty policy advocacy, developing evidence-based policy solutions that influence legal, policy and practice development in NI.
Location:	LCNI, Westgate House, Queen Street, Belfast
Salary:	NJC Pay scales PO2, £32,910 - £35,745 + 5% employer pension contribution (<i>under review</i>)
Post:	35 hours per week (x 0.8 hours may also be considered - by agreement with successful candidate)
Report to:	Director of Innovation and Engagement
Contact with:	Policy makers and officials Advice agencies Media Clients and public Statutory and voluntary & community organisations Volunteers, members, students Academics and think-tanks Other relevant stakeholders

1.0 MAIN DUTIES

- 1.1 Ensure that the Law Centre's direct experience of supporting the sector and the public on social security and poverty issues is translated into effective policy advocacy that contributes to the policy development cycle;
- 1.2 Manage and deliver research and policy analysis that delivers high quality policy advocacy on social security policy, law and practice;
- 1.3 Proactively identify law, policy and practice issues and develop appropriate solutions for progressing these to achieve LCNI's social security and anti-poverty policy priorities, as agreed;
- 1.4 Influence officials and policy makers in relation to the development and implementation of law, policy and practice on social security in NI;
- 1.5 Lead and develop the LCNI's collaborative social security policy advocacy work;
- 1.6 Represent LCNI as appropriate at relevant external meetings and events, for example, giving evidence to NI Assembly Committees, other parliamentary

committees, presentation of conference papers, meetings with government departments, elected representatives, etc.;

1.7 Develop and manage appropriate effective relationships with elected members and officials, as required;

1.8 Write and produce policy materials on relevant issues for the LCNI website and other outlets e.g. blogs/journal articles/conference papers etc.;

1.9 Work co-operatively with other staff of LCNI on relevant policy issues, assisting colleagues on policy issues arising from their areas of work and advising on ways to proceed. You will build and maintain effective relationships with LCNI member agencies and other relevant organisations in the voluntary and statutory sectors that secures progressive change to law, policy and practice in social security in NI.

2.0 COMMUNICATIONS & PUBLIC LEGAL EDUCATION

2.1 You will work with the LCNI's Communications Officer to ensure that LCNI's social security policy work is communicated effectively, including through social media and with the Legal Information Resources Officer to ensure that relevant policy updates are communicated effectively;

2.2 You will undertake media work in relation to social security law and policy issues as required.

3.0 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 You will maintain and develop expertise in social security law;

3.2 You will continually monitor your own training and professional development needs, in consultation with your line manager and source appropriate support;

3.3 You will act as ambassador for LCNI in all your work;

3.4 You will work collaboratively and promote effective knowledge sharing across the organisation that supports the achievement of its overall mission and objectives;

3.5 You will role-model LCNI's values in delivering its vision and mission;

3.6 You will build stakeholder confidence in LCNI activities through high standards of personal and professional accountability.

4.0 OTHER DUTIES

- 4.1 Ensure timely management information reports are available to the LCNI management team and contribute to reports to funders as required;
- 4.2 Develop and maintain effective relationships with LCNI members and other external stakeholders in support of their policy work;
- 4.3 Identify and maximise organisational development opportunities;
- 4.4 Be available to work outside standard business hours occasionally to meet the demands of the role;
- 4.5 Undertake relevant administrative duties in the performance of the above;
- 4.6 Undertake such other duties as may be required from time to time.

As this post may involve work with vulnerable adults, the Law Centre NI will offer the post subject to a satisfactory vetting report from Access NI.

*Note: this Role Description will be subject to review from time to time in line with the changing needs of the organisation

Personnel Specification

	Essential	Desirable
Qualifications, Knowledge & Experience	<p>*E1 Degree in social policy, law or other related discipline and at least three years' demonstrated experience of social policy advocacy on behalf of an organisation, including writing policy responses to consultations.</p> <p>*E2 Experience of achieving progressive policy change.</p> <p>*E3 Experience of research on social welfare law on behalf of an organisation.</p> <p>*E4 Good knowledge of social security law and anti-poverty policy.</p> <p>*E5 Experience of effectively representing an organisation at external meetings / events that achieve positive outcomes.</p>	<p>*D1 Experience of working in the advice sector</p> <p>*D2 Experience of policy advocacy work in social security law and policy.</p> <p>D3 Experience of working effectively with the media.</p>
Abilities & Skills	<p>E6 Excellent ability to work collaboratively that builds strong partnerships based on trust</p> <p>E7 Excellent oral and written communication and influencing skills with sound decision-making ability.</p> <p>E8 Administratively self-supporting and able to prioritise to meet tight deadlines, working independently to achieve results.</p> <p>E9 Creative and with the ability to identify and proactively address immediate challenges and opportunities.</p>	

Aptitudes/ Commitment	<p>E10 Self-motivated with a passion for affecting progressive social change.</p> <p>E11 Aptitude for influencing and motivating others, creating opportunities to share expertise and learning.</p> <p>*E12 Aptitude for learning and accountable for a commitment to high standards of work and professional development.</p>	
Circumstances	<p>*E13 Willingness to travel as required</p> <p>*E14 Available for occasional evening and weekend work in accordance with the requirements of the post</p>	<p>D4 Current UK driving licence with access to a car (note this will be waived where applicants can demonstrate suitable alternative arrangements or in response to disability needs)</p>

*Will be assessed at sift stage