



Policy and Community Engagement Officer

(PENGO-March 24)

Candidate Pack

March 24

Foreword from Director

Thank you for considering developing your career at the Law Centre. 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 legal organisation that works across all communities in Northern Ireland 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 and engagement has delivered tangible outcomes in all our areas of work. You can read more about our policy and engagement work and our other areas of work on our website at www.lawcentreni.org

As a regional infrastructure organisation 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 and anti-poverty, asylum, immigration, trafficking and employment law and exploitation.

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 a UK Law Centres 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, community engagement, casework and representation before the tribunals and courts, including in the higher courts. 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 produce 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/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 and engagement 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 work with colleagues in the *Cliff Edge Coalition* and other collaborations. Your research and engagement will be responsive to the ever-changing landscape and provide a reliable evidence base that supports legal and policy change.

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 engaging and influencing the development of social security and anti-poverty law and policy in NI.

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

General Candidate Information

This is a permanent post, subject to ongoing 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.

Benefits are:

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

The successful candidate will be expected to take up the 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: Monday 15th April 2024 at 4pm.

INTERVIEW DATE: 29th April 2024.

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

Job Description

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| Job Title | Policy and Community Engagement Officer |
| Location | Belfast |
| Post | Full time (35 hours per week) |
| Salary | SO2, £30,451 - £32,234 (under review) + 5% employer pension contribution |
| Reports to | Director of Innovation and Engagement |
| Purpose of job | This is a key role within Law Centre NI. You will work to overcome the challenges experienced by those who rely on the social security system in NI and work to tackle poverty and inequality so that people and families are able to uphold their rights and live a life of dignity. You will work closely alongside community organisations to identify legal and policy issues affecting people experiencing poverty and inequality and to increase their capacity to advise and support their communities. |
| Contact with | Community and voluntary organisations. Advice sector Law Centre staff, volunteers, and students Law Centre members Relevant organisational sub-committees Elected representatives and advisers Academics and think tanks Government departments in NI and GB Policy makers and other external stakeholders Legal profession Media |

MAIN DUTIES

POLICY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TASKS

- 1.1 Work with community organisations to identify issues affecting the communities they support, compiling data and trends about the experiences of people and families across NI facing poverty and identify the legal or policy issues that need to be resolved;
- 1.2 Develop the LCNI's collaborative social security and anti-poverty policy advocacy work; influence officials and policy makers in relation to the development and implementation of law, policy and practice on social security and antipoverty in NI;
- 1.3 Proactively identify law, policy and practice issues and develop appropriate solutions for progressing these to achieve LCNI's policy priorities, as agreed;
- 1.4 Represent LCNI as appropriate at relevant external meetings and events, for example, give evidence to NI Assembly Committees, other parliamentary committees, present

conference papers, develop and maintain appropriate effective relationships with elected members and officials;

1.5 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;

1.6 Write and produce policy materials on relevant issues for the LCNI website and other outlets e.g. blogs/journal articles/conference papers etc. and work with colleagues and others to produce relevant public legal education tools that support community organisations;

1.7 Build the capacity of community and voluntary sector organisations to advocate for progressive change on poverty justice issues and identify issues amenable to legal resolutions and make timely referrals for legal help.

COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC LEGAL EDUCATION

2.1 Work with the LCNI team to ensure that LCNI's anti-poverty and social security policy is communicated effectively, including through social media and ensure that relevant policy updates are communicated effectively and undertake media work.

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Identify community organisations that will benefit from LCNI training and organise & contribute to training.

3.2 Work collaboratively across teams to promote knowledge sharing that achieves positive results.

3.3 Ensure timely and accurate management information is provided through work reports to management as required.

3.4 Act as an ambassador for LCNI.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Continuously build professional knowledge and skills.

4.2 Build stakeholder confidence in LCNI activities through high standards of personal and professional accountability.

4.3 In consultation with line manager, identify training and professional development needs and source appropriate support.

OTHER DUTIES

5.1 Be available to work outside standard business hours on occasion in order to meet the demands of the role.

5.2 Undertake relevant administrative duties in the performance of this role.

5.3 Undertake such other duties as may be required from time to time.

***NOTE: this role description will be subject to review from time to time in line with the changing needs of the organisation.**

March 2024

Person Specification

Policy and Community Engagement Officer

(PENGO-March 24)

Essential

Desirable

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| <p>Qualifications, Knowledge and Experience</p> | <p>*E1 Degree in social policy, law or other related discipline and at least one year demonstrated experience of social policy advocacy and research on behalf of an organisation.</p> <p>*E2 Knowledge of welfare and poverty issues currently affecting individuals in NI</p> | <p>D1 Experience of achieving progressive law and policy change.</p> <p>D2 Knowledge of UK and NI government structures</p> <p>D3 Experience of undertaking research on social welfare law or policy</p> <p>D4 Experience of providing social welfare advice</p> <p>D5 Experience of delivering training</p> <p>D6 Experience of effectively mobilising others to advocate for progressive change</p> |
| <p>Abilities & Skills</p> | <p>E3 Excellent ability to work independently and collaboratively, promoting knowledge sharing in support of organisational strategic priorities.</p> <p>E4 Excellent oral and written communication skills with a diverse range of stakeholders. Creative and with the ability to identify and proactively address immediate challenges and opportunities.</p> <p>E5 Administratively self-supporting, proficient with ICT and able to prioritise to meet tight deadlines, working independently to achieve results.</p> | |

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| <p>Aptitudes/Commitment</p> | <p>E6 Self-motivated with a passion for affecting progressive social change, commitment to on-going professional development and Open to self-reflection and growth</p> <p>E7 Aptitude for building and maintaining good interpersonal relationships with colleagues and external stakeholders and for responding proactively to immediate challenges</p> <p>E8 Commitment to aims of Law Centre NI</p> | |
| <p>Circumstances</p> | <p>*E9 Available for occasional out of hours work in accordance with the requirements of the post.</p> <p>*E10 Willingness to travel as required</p> <p>*E11 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