



Director of Legal & Senior Solicitor

DL-10-24

Candidate Information



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FOREWORD FROM THE CEO

Thank you for your interest in leading our legal work. By joining the Law Centre, you will be part of an award-winning team making a big difference in the lives of people across all communities in NI and be part of a dynamic and forward-looking senior leadership team.

The Law Centre (LCNI) is the lead regional not-for-profit legal agency working to uphold the rights of people across all communities in NI. Our vision is that we all live in a more just and equal society and for the last 47 years, our mission has remained unchanged: to use the law to transform people's lives.

Law Centre NI is a member of the Law Centres Network so you will also be part of a wider network of law centres driving change across the UK. In 2021, the wider significance of LCNI's work was recognised in the award of Regional Legal Aid Firm/Not for Profit at the *Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year Awards*.

We are seeking an exceptional lawyer who shares our vision of the power of law to deliver progressive change in our society, creating a world in which everyone has access to justice so they can uphold their rights. You will be our senior lawyer with a good understanding of human rights and public law. You will lead a high performing team with authenticity and integrity, setting high standards of excellence in legal services. You will continuously improve our services so we make an even bigger difference.

Our specialist legal work currently focuses on social security, asylum, immigration, trafficking, forced labour and employment law. Our work is challenging, cross-cutting, dynamic and deeply rewarding and you will see how your work makes real and lasting change. You can find out more about our work in our by visiting www.lawcentreni.org

If you are an experienced lawyer who can see the big picture and who understands that strategic legal work emerges from the day-to-day work of supporting communities, then we'd love to hear from you. We promise you excellent professional development opportunities. If you share our belief, commitment and our values, then please consider an application.

Ursula O'Hare
CEO

ABOUT LAW CENTRE NI

Since 1977, LCNI has been using the law to drive change in Northern Ireland. We are constantly innovating, working in all communities, using the law to transform people's lives. We are fiercely independent and unrelenting in our pursuit of justice. We have a strong track record of strategic litigation and policy advocacy that brings about wider change through a unique blend of legal, training, education, community engagement and policy advocacy work.

We provide free, independent legal advice, casework and representation before the tribunals and courts, and build capacity across the community and voluntary sector in Northern Ireland. As a referral agency supporting the community and voluntary sector, we support other agencies to resolve issues facing people in need. We deliver extensive training and legal information support to the sector as well as making public legal information resources available and accessible so that everyone understands their legal rights.

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

Our Vision

A just and equal society where people live in the dignity of their rights.

Our Mission

We use the power of law for social change. To stand for everyone's rights by informing and educating people about their rights and by protecting and advancing people's rights, working collaboratively for social justice.

Our Values

The following values underpin all aspects of our work with each other, with clients and with other stakeholders.

Authentic

We act consistently with our commitment to social justice.

Integrity

We honour our word.

Expert

We are driven by learning and we bring expert knowledge of the law and evidence of people's experiences of the law to all our work.

Professional

We deliver quality services.

Trusted

We are credible and respectful. We build trusted relationships. We care for our clients and each other and when we commit, we can be trusted to see it through.

Independent

We work without fear or favour.

Cutting-edge

We test the boundaries of law and policy to advance the rights of people in Northern Ireland. We are creative in developing new solutions for social justice.

Inclusive

We work with and for others. We innovate to make sure our services are accessible to our clients



WHAT WE DO

We develop our services in response to the needs of communities. This includes unmet legal need. Currently, our services are clustered in three main areas of legal and policy work:

Migration Justice & Refugee Project

LCNI works with asylum seekers, refugees and victims and survivors of trafficking and domestic abuse to uphold their legal rights and campaigns for a fairer and more humane immigration system. We lead the Refugee and Asylum Forum, a network of organisations with direct experience of providing support and services to asylum seekers and refugees. Our policy advocacy and influencing work draws heavily on our community engagement and our legal expertise, so decision makers know and understand the impact of how law and policy is working on the ground.

Anti-Poverty (Social Security Rights) Project

LCNI works to address poverty in NI by ensuring the social security system works as an effective safety net for people when they need it. We are members of and convene the *Cliff Edge Coalition* that works to sustain and strengthen the essential welfare reform mitigations to safeguard people from the harshest aspects of social security change. Our test case challenges in the public interest have secured change to law and policy, improving the *lives of countless people*.

Employment Rights Project

LCNI works to uphold the employment law rights of workers across NI and to challenge unfair employment law practices. With a particular focus on labour exploitation and protecting the rights of insecure workers, we provide an essential support to people who would otherwise be unable to seek redress.

Alongside our legal and policy work, we are constantly seeking to ensure that the advice sector and others are equipped with the information and support they need to deliver their services and that there is a future pipeline of social justice lawyers who will carry our work into the future. Our Engagement Team is always looking for new ways to help people to harness the power of law.

Training & Professional Learning

LCNI understands that everyone needs to be able first to know their rights to be able to uphold them so we produce public legal education resources to help people understand the law. Our training ensures that people working across communities can understand the impact of changes to law and policy on the people they support.

Legal Education

We partner with the Law School at Queen's University Belfast to deliver a Clinical Law Programme for final year law students so they can gain vital experience of social welfare law work to shape their future career choices. We also provide legal apprenticeships with the support of The Legal Education Foundation's Justice First Fellowship.

OUR FUNDERS

Law Centre is generously supported by a diverse blend of public and philanthropic funds. We are deeply grateful to all of our funders for their support which makes the work of the Law Centre possible.

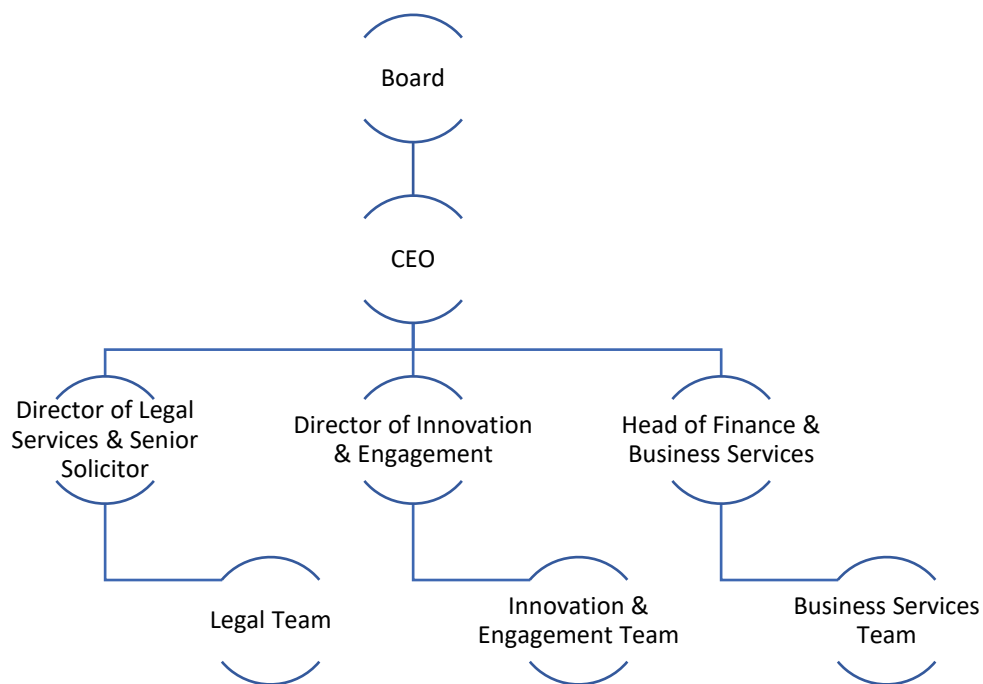


OUR ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Director of Legal & Senior Solicitor is part of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) which ensures the efficient and effective operation of LCNI services.

The SLT is supported by a middle manager team, comprising of senior subject matter specialists.

We employ a total of 28 staff across our teams organised in the way set out below.



THE ROLE

This is the most senior legal role in the Law Centre. It will require you to be ambitious for a better future. You will lead the legal team at LCNI to deliver a high quality legal service to our clients being responsible for ensuring we live our vision, mission and values.

You will be part of the senior leadership team that gives overall strategic leadership to the organisation and you will deputise for the CEO and report to the Board as required. You will also be expected to be part of our policy advocacy and influencing work with politicians, policy makers and others, giving evidence to parliamentary committees, other fora as required.

We're looking for someone who shares our values and who is a creative and strategic thinker with a passion for justice, driven to stand for people who would not otherwise be able to uphold their legal rights. You will be a self-motivated, committed, and talented professional, always learning and reflective in your own practice. You will have the passion, skill, and resilience to manage and lead complex legal work. You will understand the context of legal services in NI and of the advice and community and voluntary sector. You will be able to identify opportunities for developing the law and policy environment in NI and through our education schemes, you will help to develop the next generation of social justice lawyers in NI. You will have strong inter-personal skills and credibility in representing LCNI in relevant legal and policy contexts.

How We'll Measure Success

This role is key to the ongoing success of LCNI. We will be looking to measure how effectively this role operates and what contribution it makes to achieving LCNI's vision and mission. To do this we will consider:

- The outcomes and impact of LCNI legal work;
- The breadth and reach of new legal projects developed that help to challenge injustice;
- The impact that those projects have and the traction they get in the sector and elsewhere;
- The breadth and depth of the strategic partnerships developed with other support services.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	Director of Legal & Senior Solicitor
Post	Full-time, 35 hours per week with flexibility for consideration of reduced hours, subject to business needs.
Job Purpose	To lead the Law Centre's legal team and as part of LCNI's Senior Leadership Team, to provide overall strategic leadership to the organisation.
Location	LCNI, Belfast (Law Centre is currently located in Queen Street)
Salary	£46,549 - £49,590 (PO6) + 5% employer pension contribution
Report to	Chief Executive Officer
Contact with	Law Centre staff Law Centre members Legal professionals and tribunal/courts Relevant organisational sub-committees Funders and potential funders Media Elected representatives Policy makers and other external stakeholders Management Board Other appropriate individuals and agencies

Key Responsibilities

- 1.1 You will lead a high-performing legal team that achieves both positive outcomes for clients and that shapes and influences the development of the law in NI. You will provide expert guidance and leadership to the legal services team, ensuring the team is resourced to deliver legal services in accordance with LCNI's mission and achieves its key performance targets.
- 1.2 As Senior Solicitor, you will be responsible for compliance and quality in all aspects of LCNI's legal work.
- 1.3 You will maintain a good understanding of all areas of Law Centre NI's legal practice and identify opportunities for progressive change in law and policy in NI, including through strategic interventions, litigation and policy advocacy. You will be responsible for leading and managing strategic litigation in the Law Centre NI.

- 1.4 You will role model high quality work with the ability to hold a small legal practice portfolio where necessary.
- 1.5 You will have overall responsibility for legal income generation and training activity by the legal team that supports organisational sustainability. You will identify and progress the generation of new income streams from Law Centre NI's legal services/activities that support the sustainability and growth of the organisation.
- 1.6 You will line manage relevant staff in the legal team, monitoring performance, preparing reports to funders and ensuring the work of the legal services team complies with all quality and regulatory requirements and maintains a culture of client care in legal services.
- 1.7 You will provide advice to the Director and Board on legal matters relating to LCNI's areas of practice and on the development of legal services.
- 1.8 You will be a public face of the Law Centre and you will champion and represent LCNI's work within the legal and advice sector and with other stakeholders, including with the media, as a "go to" person in the field.
- 1.9 You will lead the development of pathways for new social justice lawyers, including leading the LCNI apprentice programme.
- 1.10 You will develop proposals and prepare applications for funding and sustain and develop effective relationships with funders.
- 1.11 You will establish credible relationships with members and other stakeholders to identify and progress opportunities for the legal services team to respond to their needs and you will ensure members and others are fully aware of Law Centre NI legal services and how these can support their work.
- 1.12 You will represent the Law Centre NI to external stakeholders and organisations as required and act as ambassador for the Law Centre NI, upholding its public image in carrying out the role of Director of Legal Services and Senior Solicitor, building stakeholder confidence in Law Centre NI's services through high standards of personal and professional accountability.
- 1.13 You will be a member of the LCNI's Senior Leadership Team. Your role is to contribute to overall organisational sustainability by identifying and implementing strategies for growth and innovation specifically within the legal services team and across the organisation.

- 1.14 You will contribute to the policy, public legal education, training and other activities of the Law Centre NI.
- 1.15 You will deputise for the Director and report to the Board, as required.
- 1.16 Uphold and model the agreed values of the organisation.
- 1.17 Ensure the policies and procedures of the organisation are observed; identify skills development opportunities for the legal services team.
- 1.18 Monitor your own professional development and identify growth and development opportunities.
- 1.19 Be available to work outside standard business hours on occasion in order to meet the demands of the role.
- 1.20 Undertake such other duties as may be required from time to time.

*The postholder must be able to travel throughout Northern Ireland as required and be available for occasional out of hours work in accordance with the requirements of the post.

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

PERSON SPECIFICATION

We have set out below what LCNI sees as the essential and desirable qualities and skills for the role of Director of Legal & Senior Solicitor. Some information will be tested at the shortlisting stage (see section on application form) and some during the interview process with suitable candidates.

Essential Criteria

E1 Qualified solicitor, eligible to practise in NI, with significant experience in social welfare/public law and eligible to supervise legal apprentices.

E2 Experience of leading and managing a team to deliver legal services that achieved successful outcomes.

Applicants must also be able to demonstrate on the application form:

E3 Experience of litigation that achieved broader law and social change and good knowledge of social welfare law.

E4 Experience of developing and sustaining positive, collaborative partnerships that achieved successful outcomes.

E5 Excellent interpersonal and communication skills with proven ability to effectively negotiate and influence others to achieve successful outcomes.

E6 Evidence of resilience and creative problem-solving ability including in crisis-management situations.

E7 Track record of leading excellent customer service skills

E8 Ability to effectively manage time and resources, working at pace in a fast moving and changing environment to tight deadlines and administratively self-supporting.

E9 Demonstrable commitment to the aims and values of the Law Centre NI.

E10 Demonstrable commitment to on-going professional development.

Desirable Criteria

In addition to the above experience, LCNI reserves the right to shortlist only those applicants, who, as at the closing date for receipt of application forms have:

D1 At least five years' relevant experience in social welfare law/public law.

D2 Management qualification.

D3 Experience of managing compliance with regulatory and quality requirements as they relate to legal and advice services.

D4 Experience of working as part of a management team.

D5 Experience of identifying funding proposals and preparing funding applications.

D6 Experience of project management and evaluation.

D7 Knowledge of the legal aid system in NI and of relevant solicitor accounting regulations.

PAY AND BENEFITS

Pensions: Law Centre NI offer a choice of two pension schemes: a Law Centre NI group pension scheme and an auto-enrollment plan. Law Centre provides 5% contribution to your pension and employees are able to contribute a higher percentage of their pay into their pension scheme.

Annual leave: Employees are entitled to 24 days annual leave. This rises to an additional day's holiday per year after 3 years of service, reaching a maximum of 30 days annual leave in total. In addition, employees are entitled to 14 statutory and other days. The leave year runs from April – March. We encourage all our employees to make full use of their annual leave entitlement each year, although we allow employees to carry forward some unused annual leave every year.

Flexible Working: Given the leadership requirements of this post, the post is predominantly office-based but with flexibility for agile working at home in line with business need.

Other benefits: 35 hour working week
Professional learning and development opportunities
Employee Assistance Programme
Health and wellbeing initiatives

The successful candidate will be subject to a probationary period of six months which may be extended in accordance with LCNI policy.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Completed applications must be received by **12noon on Monday 4th November 2024**.

Completed applications will only be accepted by email to humanresources@lawcentreni.org on the relevant application form. Please note CVs will not be accepted. The application **must** include the equal opportunities monitoring form. Unfortunately late applications cannot be accepted.

Only information contained in the application form will be taken into account in the shortlisted process, so please ensure that you include all relevant information and provide relevant examples where appropriate including relevant dates.

We may only interview those applicants who appear, from the information provided, to be the most suitable in terms of the person specification provided.

Selection and Assessment Process

Candidates who meet the shortlisting criteria will be invited to participate in an interview process, further details of which will be advised to shortlisted candidates.

Important Dates

Interviews are envisaged to take place on **Monday 11th November 2024**.

In the event that a candidate is invited to interview and is unavailable on the proposed date and time due to reasons beyond their control the panel may try to accommodate an alternative arrangement subject to their own availability, although this is not guaranteed unless an adjustment is required in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Safeguarding Checks

As this post involves working with children and/or vulnerable adults, this post will be offered subject to Access NI vetting. The post will also be subject to professional disciplinary checks.

References

All appointments are subject to receipt of at least two satisfactory written references covering the last three years of your employment.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you have any questions about the job role, please feel free to contact Ursula O'Hare, CEO at ursula.ohare@lawcentreni.org.