Candidate Information

Director of Legal Services

(Ref: DLS-10-26)

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Foreword from CEO

Thank you for considering developing your career at the Law Centre.

The Law Centre (LCNI) is a regional not-for-profit legal organisation working across all communities in Northern Ireland, in pursuit of our vision of a more just and equal society. Our mission is to use the law to change people's lives.

Specialising in social security, asylum, immigration and employment law we seek to address inequality, tackle poverty and improve access to justice for those who need it most.

For almost 50 years, LCNI has delivered meaningful, impactful outcomes in all our areas of work. You can read more about our impact over the last year here: **https://heyzine.com/flip-book/f07ceceddb.html**

By joining LCNI you will be part of a highly respected social justice organisation. Working within a supportive and collaborative team you will have the opportunity to make a real and lasting impact . Our work is deeply rewarding. You will have the opportunity to contribute to shaping the social justice landscape in NI, contribute to work that directly improves people's lives and gain excellent opportunities for personal growth and development .

If you share our commitment to social justice and have the skills, enthusiasm and determination to make a positive impact please consider an application - we'd love to hear from you.

Julie Wilkinson
Interim Chief Executive Officer

Background to the Law Centre

Thank you for your interest in joining Law Centre (NI). Law Centre NI (LCNI) is an award-winning organisation and for 49 years, LCNI has been using the law to drive change in Northern Ireland. We are constantly innovating, working in communities, and using the law to transform people's lives. We are fiercely independent and unrelenting in our pursuit of justice. With a strong track record of strategic litigation and policy advocacy we make change through a unique blend of legal, training, education, community engagement and policy advocacy work.

The Law Centre's work is focused primarily on three distinct key projects.

- The ***Migration Justice Project*** 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.

- The ***Social Security Rights Project*** works to tackle poverty across Northern Ireland by ensuring that the social security system provides an effective safety net for people when they need it most. Through strategic litigation, the project has been at the forefront of significant legal and policy developments, achieving outcomes that have improved the lives of many people both within Northern Ireland and beyond. As a specialist second-tier support organisation, we strengthen the advice sector by providing expert legal support through our adviser helpline, comprehensive legal resources, and high-quality training on all aspects of social security law. Our work helps build the knowledge, confidence and capacity of frontline advisers supporting some of the most vulnerable members of our communities. We play a key role in influencing social security policy and have helped secure a number of successful policy outcomes to strengthen the welfare system and mitigate the risk of welfare reform.

- The ***Employment Rights Project*** supports workers across Northern Ireland to challenge unfair working practices and uphold their employment law rights. Our team provides a dedicated employment law advice line, providing free and confidential advice to workers. We provide legal representation to claimants at the Employment Tribunal in Northern Ireland and produce regular public legal education resources to empower people to understand their legal rights. As a regional support organisation, we provide specialist employment law advice and practitioner led training to the Northern Ireland advice sector. We also

contribute to the development of employment law and policy in Northern Ireland with our policy advocacy work.

Law Centre NI work is supported by both government funding and a range of philanthropic foundations. Our work is Lexcel-accredited and regulated by the Immigration Advice Authority (IAA). The Law Centre 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.

About the role

This is a unique opportunity for an experienced legal leader to shape the future of a highly respected social justice organisation. As Director of Legal Services, you will play a pivotal leadership role working alongside the CEO to lead, develop and grow Law Centre NI's legal practice while helping to drive the organisation's wider strategic direction. You will have the opportunity to make a significant contribution, strengthening legal services, developing future social justice lawyers and helping to ensure that people across Northern Ireland can access the advice, representation and advocacy they need.

This role offers an exceptional blend of strategic leadership, legal expertise and organisational influence. You will lead a highly skilled team of lawyers and legal professionals, providing direction, support and inspiration while ensuring the delivery of high-quality legal services.

Beyond legal practice leadership, you will be a key member of the Senior Leadership Team. Working closely with senior colleagues, you will identify emerging legal issues, develop innovative responses and help create opportunities for growth, sustainability and impact.

Contributing to organisational strategy, funding development, stakeholder engagement and policy influence you will champion access to justice ensuring that Law Centre NI continues to be a powerful voice for those whose rights are at risk.

This role offers the chance to make a lasting impact, both within Law Centre NI and across the wider legal and policy landscape.

General Candidate Information

The successful candidate will be expected to take up post as soon as practicable, and within 3 months of offer. The successful candidate will be subject to a probationary period of 6 months which may be extended in accordance with LCNI policy.
Holiday entitlement is 24 days annually, building to a maximum of 30 days. This is in addition to 14 statutory and other days. The leave year runs from April – March.

We're looking for a committed, enthusiastic and skilled professional who shares our values and our commitment. If that sounds like you and you're self-motivated with the passion, skill and resilience to support our work for some of the most disadvantaged people, we'd love to hear from you. If you would like to have an informal discussion to find out more about LCNI or this post, please contact us at humanresources@lawcentreni.org and we'll get in touch.

Benefits are:

- 35 hour working week;
- Opportunity to be part of making change happen;
- Access to career enhancing training opportunities;
- Flexible working arrangements;
- Employee Assistance Programme;
- Health & Wellbeing Initiatives;

How to Apply

Please note the following important information about the application process:

- Please complete the application form **in full**. You should ensure that you give examples that **demonstrate** how you satisfy the relevant criteria, including relevant dates. CVs will not be considered.

- 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. Please also return a completed monitoring form as directed.

- Applications received after the closing date will not be considered.

- Applications should be submitted by email to: humanresources@lawcentreni.org by the closing date.

- We will communicate with candidates by email so candidates should ensure that they regularly check their inbox.

- The panel reserves the right to enhance the criteria as appropriate in the event of a large volume of applications.

- Please be advised that further appointments may be made from this competition should similar posts arise within the next 12 months.

Closing date for receipt of applications: **Friday 13th November 2026 at 12.00 noon.**

Interview date: **Wednesday 25th November 2026.**

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.

We are an equal opportunities employer. We welcome applications from all suitably qualified persons. However, as Protestants are currently under-represented in our workforce, we would particularly welcome applications from the Protestant community.

Job Description

Job Title	**Director of Legal Services**
Post	Full-time permanent, 35 hours per week

Job Purpose

The Director of Legal Services is a key role in the organisation. Working closely with the CEO and deputising where required, the role will be critical in establishing and promoting LCNI legal services as a sustainable legal practice. Recognising LCNI's unique position in NI as expert legal advisers working to achieve change through, strategic litigation in the areas of Social Security, Immigration and Employment rights your role will be to lead and drive that vision, to ensure cohesion across all areas of our legal work.

Location	Belfast
Salary	PO6 £49,764 – £52,805 *(under review)*
Reports to	CEO
Contact with	Law Centre staff Law Centre members Relevant organisational sub-committees Policy makers and other external stakeholders Elected representatives Funders and potential funders Media Management Board Other appropriate individuals and agencies

MAIN DUTIES

LEGAL SERVICES

1. Provide strategic leadership and oversight of the delivery of Law Centre NI's legal services.
2. Deliver legal services as a sustainable legal practice, identifying areas of growth and development that will ensure long term sustainability.
3. Be the legal practice lead with overall responsibility for the provision of legal services including leading and managing strategic litigation.

4. Ensure legal services are delivered to a high quality, ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory standards.
5. Strengthen the work of LCNI's legal teams, by providing expert legal support, training and guidance on legal processes and frameworks and contribute to complex legal matters and case reviews.
6. Promote a culture of innovation and reflective practice within the legal team.
7. Work closely with LCNI's Senior Solicitors and subject matter experts to develop and/or maintain a good understanding of all areas of Law Centre NI's legal practice, identifying emerging legal issues and opportunities for strategic intervention, policy development and litigation.
8. Line manage and develop a team of Senior Lawyers.
9. Provide advice to the CEO and Board relating to litigation matters and the development of legal services.
10. Manage and lead the Legal Services support team.

SENIOR LEADERSHIP

11. As a member of the Senior Leadership team, you will support and actively contribute to organisational decision making, providing particular input in respect of legal knowledge and expertise.
12. Advocate to improve access to justice, and contribute to policy engagement to support LCNI's policy priorities.
13. Build relationships with key funders and to identify new funding opportunities that will enhance the work of the legal services team.
14. Work with the CEO to secure funding not only for the projects that you are developing but also for Law Centre's work more generally.
15. Contribute to the development of new services and contribute to funding bids and business cases to attract investment.
16. Attend and contribute to Board meetings.
17. Positively promote the work of LCNI's legal team at external events and be an ambassador of the organisation at external events and engagements.
18. Contribute to the policy and research, community engagement, training and other LCNI activities and events.

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

19. Oversee recruitment within the legal services team and contribute to recruitment and selection of the wider team.
20. Lead on developing effective career pathways for legal apprentices and law students, building collaborative relationships with Universities, Law Society of NI and others to support long term vision.
21. Lead on developing and implementing an effective volunteer strategy to support long term sustainability.
22. Manage and develop legal apprenticeships and act as the Master for the supervision of Law Society of NI legal apprenticeships.

23. Act as the organisation’s nominated safeguarding officer and money laundering officer.

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

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October 2026

Person Specification

Director of Legal Services

	Essential criteria	Desirable criteria
Qualifications & Experience	***E1** Qualified solicitor eligible to practise in NI **and** meets the minimum post qualification requirements to act as a master for the supervision of legal apprenticeships as per the Solicitors Admission and Training (Qualification of Masters) Regulations Solicitors-Admission-and-Training-Qualification-of-Masters-Regulations-1988.pdf ***E2** Significant experience of legal practice including leading and representing on litigation matters. ***E3** Experience of leading, developing and managing legal teams ***E4** Experience of contributing to organisational leadership and strategy. ***E5** Experience of the legal aid system in NI and billing of legal matters. **E6** A strong understanding of the legal, social and policy landscape affecting Access to Justice in NI.	**D1** Experience acting as a training principal/master for trainee solicitors **D2** Experience of practising in the areas of Social Security, Immigration or Employment law.
Skills and Aptitudes	**E7** Strong communication skills with proven ability to effectively negotiate and influence others to achieve successful outcomes. **E8** Excellent stakeholder engagement and relationship management skills.	

Circumstances	**E9** Willingness to travel throughout Northern Ireland and available for occasional out of hours work in accordance with the requirements of the post.	

*Please note criteria marked * will be used for shortlisting purposes. All other criteria will be assessed at interview stage. The panel reserves the right to extend shortlisting criteria to desirable criteria in the event of a high volume of applications.*

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
Independence	we work without fear or favour
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
Cutting-edge	we test the boundaries of law and policy to advance the rights of people in NI. 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.
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.
Professional	we deliver quality services