CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Candidate Information Booklet

September 2026

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FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Thank you for your interest in the role of Chief Executive of the Law Centre NI (LCNI). By joining LCNI, you will lead a dynamic and award-winning team that makes a big difference in the lives of people across all communities in NI, working in a challenging and contested legal and policy environment.

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 49 years, our mission has remained unchanged: to use the law to transform people's lives.

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

Our new Chief Executive will be an exceptional leader who shares our vision to use 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 comfortable and skilled in leading change, and you will have a strong understanding of how human rights and public law can positively impact people's lives. You will lead a high performing team with authenticity and integrity, setting high standards of excellence. As the Law Centre's principal ambassador, you will have the necessary strategic focus to influence and shape public policy, engaging effectively with decision- makers across sectors.

LCNI's work is cross-cutting, dynamic and deeply rewarding demonstrated by its contribution to real and lasting societal change. You can find out more about our work by visiting: www.lawcentreni.org

If you believe you have the appropriate skills to take Law Centre on the next stage of its journey, I look forward to receiving your application.

A contact point for enquiries about the role is included in this pack.

Sean Donaghy
Chair of the Board

ABOUT LAW CENTRE NI

Since 1977, LCNI has been at the forefront of using the law to drive meaningful change in Northern Ireland. As a not-for-profit legal organisation, we are committed to advancing social justice by transforming lives through innovative legal solutions. Our work spans all communities, and we are known for our independence and relentless dedication to justice.

With a proven track record in strategic litigation and policy advocacy, we create impactful change through a unique combination of legal services, training, education, community engagement, and advocacy. We provide free, independent legal advice, casework, and representation before tribunals and courts, while also empowering the community and voluntary sector with the knowledge and tools needed to address pressing legal challenges.

As a referral agency, we work in partnership with other delivery organisations to resolve critical issues facing those in need. Our extensive training programs, public legal resources, and support services ensure that everyone has access to the information they need to understand and defend their rights. Our passion for using the law as a force for transformation is unwavering, and we continue to lead the charge for justice in Northern Ireland.

Joining LCNI means becoming part of a team that believes in the power of the law to shape a fairer, more equitable society.

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 work is Lexcel-accredited and regulated by IAA. The legal work of the Law Centre is led by the Director of Legal and Senior Solicitor.

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 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 tailor our services to meet the evolving needs of communities, including addressing unmet legal needs. Currently, our work is focused on three key areas of legal and policy expertise.

Migration Justice & Refugee Centre

We work 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.

Migration Justice Project

"We provided legal advice to over 1,000 Ukrainians, their families and sponsors to help them with their resettlement in Northern Ireland through our work at the Ukraine Assistance Centres".

Anti-Poverty (Social Security Rights)

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.*

"A Law Centre NI case before the Court of Justice of the European Union resulted in a landmark judgment, which established that access to the NHS meets the requirement for EU citizens in the UK to have Comprehensive Sickness Insurance in order to be entitled to social security support. This impacts not only our client, but thousands of EU citizens in the UK"

Employment Rights

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.

"We supported a client who was dismissed after asking for payslips and an employment contract. The case settled for £20,000, providing a financial cushion for a client who had suffered years of financial hardship and which meant he was able to put his life back together"

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 pipelines 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.

Read our 2024-2025 Summary Impact Report here

OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Our Strategic Plan for 2024-28 outlines our ambition to sustainably grow LCNI, ensuring we remain responsive to the needs of our communities.

Our strategic priorities focus on expanding access to justice, empowering communities, and driving policy change. These priorities aim to enhance legal support across Northern Ireland, equip individuals to uphold their rights, influence law and policy, nurture future social justice lawyers, and ensure the long-term sustainability of LCNI's work.

Our Strategic Priorities

Priority 1: Enhance Access to Justice across communities in NI

Priority 2: Help people understand and uphold their rights and empower others to support their communities

Priority 3: Translate people's experiences into law and policy influence

Priority 4: Create new openings for future social justice lawyers and deepen support for our work

Priority 5: Future-proof for our long-term sustainability

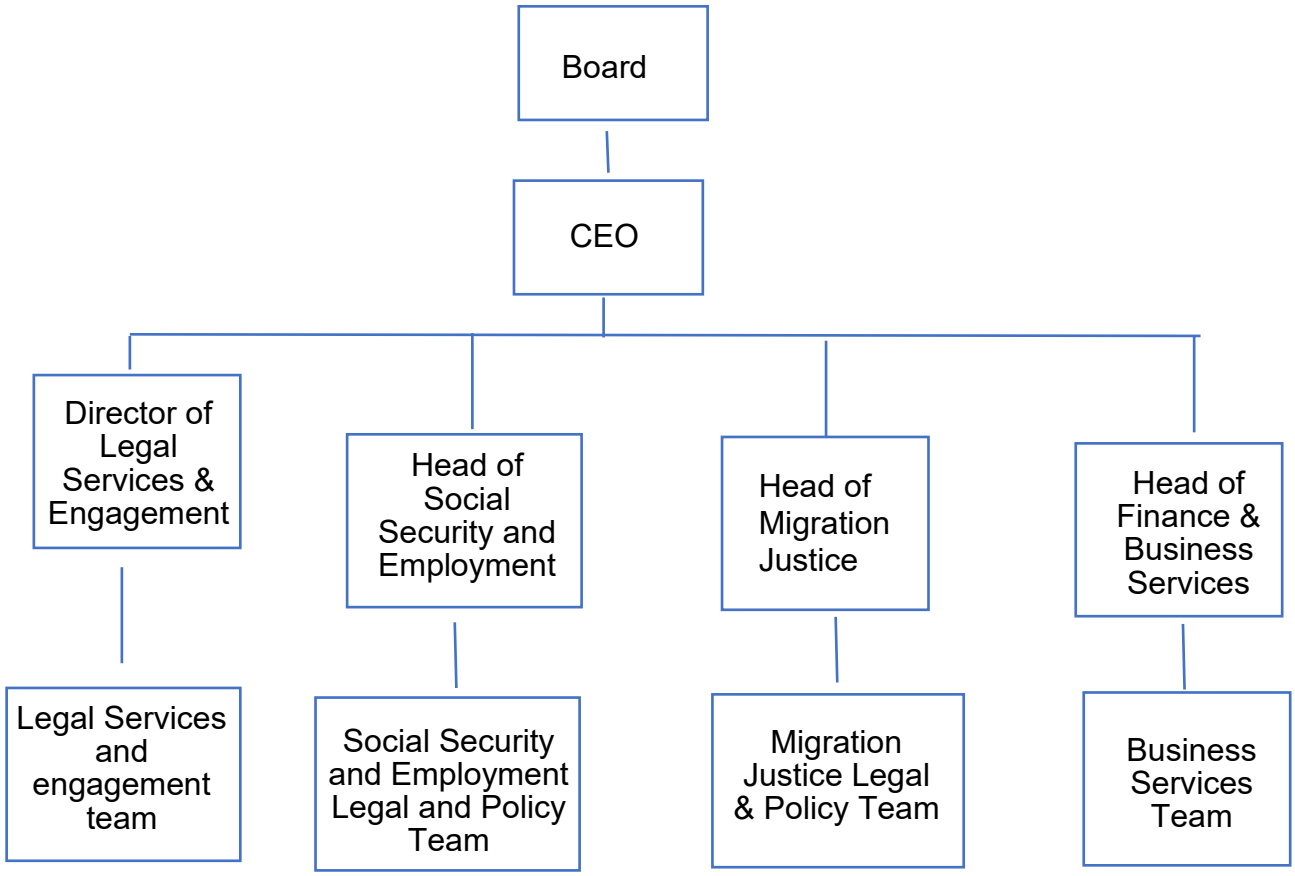
A copy of the Law Centre's Strategic Plan for the period 2024-28 is included as part of this pack.

Our Organisational Structure

The Chief Executive leads a Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to ensure the efficient and effective operation of LCNI services.

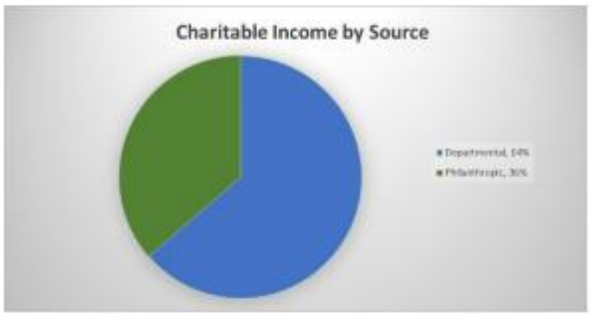
The SLT is supported by a middle manager team, comprising of senior subject matter specialists.

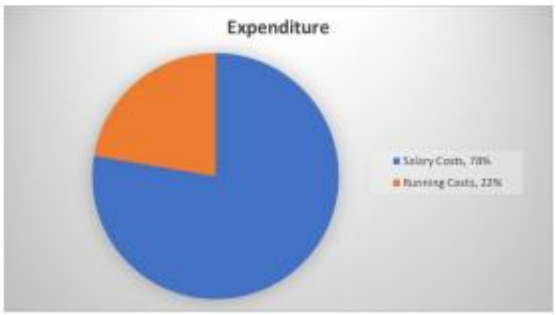
We employ a total of 30 employees across our teams, organised as set out below.



Our Financial Resources

LCNI had an operating budget of approximating £1.7 million for the 2024/25 financial year (financial information for 2025/26 is not currently available). Our services are funded primarily through charitable support from departmental and philanthropic sources, which account for 92% of our annual income, with 8% being raised through the provision of training, legal education, membership and legal services. Salary and staffing costs are the core costs of the organisation and represent 78% of our total expenditure.





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

THE ROLE

We are seeking a dynamic individual who shares our values and brings a creative, strategic mindset with a deep passion for justice. You will be driven to advocate for those unable to uphold their legal rights, and as a self-motivated, committed professional, you are always eager to learn and reflect on your practice.

You will possess the passion, skill and resilience to manage and lead complex, multi-disciplinary work, while also understanding the legal and policy landscape in Northern Ireland and the needs of the advice, community and voluntary sector.

In addition to joining a values-driven organisation committed to social justice, this role offers the opportunity to make a tangible impact on the lives of individuals and communities across Northern Ireland. You will be at the forefront of legal and policy work, influencing change at a systemic level while supporting marginalised communities in their fight for justice.

LCNI provides a collaborative and supportive work environment, where innovation and fresh ideas are encouraged. You'll have the autonomy to shape strategic initiatives and the chance to lead meaningful projects that align with your passion for justice. In this role, you will also be part of a network of like-minded professionals dedicated to transforming lives through law.

We offer ongoing professional development opportunities to help you grow and excel in your field, along with the chance to mentor and inspire the next generation of social justice lawyers. Additionally, you'll be supported in maintaining a healthy work-life balance, as we prioritise both your well-being and your professional fulfilment.

Joining LCNI is not just about building a career; it's about being part of a movement that makes a lasting difference.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title	**Chief Executive Officer**
Post	Full-time, 35 hours per week with flexibility required, including evening work when necessary.
Location	Based in Belfast although there will be a degree of flexibility regarding working arrangements after an initial induction period.
Reports to	Chair of the Management Committee

Job Purpose

The post holder will have strategic and operational responsibility for leading, developing and growing LCNI. Working with the Management Committee and Senior Management Team, the post holder will lead and support the development and delivery of the organisational strategy and ensure effective monitoring and reporting is in place.

The post holder will be responsible for engaging with key stakeholders and developing collaborative partnerships to support the delivery of LCNI's aims.

MAIN DUTIES

Strategic Leadership

i) To provide a clear strategic vision and direction for the organisation, and in partnership with the Management Committee and others, develop, agree and deliver LCNI's strategic plan.

ii) To ensure there is a common understanding and commitment to the delivery of the organisation's strategic plan, it's vision and values.

iii) To lead, manage and motivate all staff to deliver high levels of performance and to develop their full potential and ensure the culture of a learning organisation committed to excellence permeates throughout the team

iv) To ensure appropriate performance measurements and key performance indicators are in place and measured on a regular basis and to take appropriate action if they are not met.

v) To report on performance metrics to the Management Committee at agreed intervals.

Policy Work

i) To work with Senior Management Team to contribute to the development and implementation of a policy strategy in accordance with LCNI's objectives.

ii) To work with the Senior Management Team to ensure there is appropriate measurement of LCNI policy related activities.

iii) To work with the Senior Management Team to ensure LCNI responds to consultations and communicates LCNI's policy position in relation to relevant legal matters at all times.

iv) To work with the Senior Management Team and to respond and/or act as a spokesperson on policy related matters as required.

Business Development

i) To maintain a strong external profile to create opportunities for LCNI to be seen as a credible partner.

ii) To be innovative and creative in developing new funding and income generation ideas and encouraging the same culture in the wider staff team.

iii) To actively seek out and pursue new funding and income generation opportunities in line with the aims and ethos of LCNI to ensure the long-term sustainability of the organisation.

iv) To set ambitious and realistic income generation and financial growth targets and actively drive the organisation to achieve these.

Developing Internal and External Partnerships

i) To act as an ambassador for LCNI and to present a positive professional image of LCNI and its work at all times.

ii) To represent LCNI on external committees as required.

iii) To develop relationships with external stakeholders including developing strategic partnerships and alliances as appropriate to ensure the future sustainability of the organisation.

iv) To build and maintain strategic relationships with primary funders.

v) To be responsible for the organisation's media profile and for seeking opportunities to promote LCNI's role in the social justice sector.

vi) To develop and implement a marketing and communications strategy to enhance LCNI's profile and new business opportunities.

vii) To ensure good communication and collaborative working relationships among internal and external stakeholders.

Operational Management

i) To ensure the organisation has an appropriate staff structure and in conjunction with the Management Committee, to review and update this as and when the operational, budgetary and policy context necessitates organisational change.

ii) To put in place appropriate systems and controls to ensure the efficient and smooth running of all aspects of the organisation.

iii) To ensure that appropriate systems are in place to monitor and review the quality of LCNI's work outputs.

iv) To ensure that organisational and other relevant policies and procedures are up to date and applied appropriately.

v) To nurture and develop a positive and supportive workplace culture and ways of working across all teams.

vi) To ensure that the organisation is aware of best practice and that it works to achieve this to the extent possible and within the constraints laid down by the Management Committee and other resources available.

Financial Management

i) In conjunction with the Management Committee, assume full responsibility for the financial status and future sustainability of the organisation, making decisions around budgets, spending, allocation of costs and ultimate responsibility for negotiation of contracts with key funders.
ii) To ensure that appropriate financial systems are in place to ensure that the financial position of the organisation is known and understood at all times.

Governance and Risk Management

i) In conjunction with the Management Committee, to ensure that an appropriate organisational governance framework is put in place and followed systematically by the Management Committee and other staff.

ii) To ensure that all material risks to the organisation are identified and regularly reviewed and that systems are put in place to mitigate these to the extent possible.

iii) To act as Company Secretary and to ensure that the organisation fulfils all its legal, statutory and regulatory responsibilities within prescribed statutory and non-statutory deadlines.

iv) To secure appropriate professional advice and guidance in order to fulfil the above duties as necessary.

Developing Staff and Others

i) To monitor and evaluate own outputs and that of the wider team through effective performance management systems.

ii) To foster a learning and development culture and seek ways to provide learning and development opportunities for self and others when available.

iii) To develop and maintain a working environment that attracts, retains and motivates good quality staff through collaborative leadership.

To undertake any other reasonable duties as and when required by the Management Committee.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Below, we have outlined the essential and desirable qualities and skills that LCNI considers important for the role of Chief Executive. Some of these will be assessed during the shortlisting process (as indicated in the application form), while others will be evaluated during interviews with shortlisted candidates.

Essential Criteria

Applicants must, as at the closing date for receipt of applications, either:

E1. Have a degree in a relevant subject (for example, Law, Social Policy, Business) and at least 3 years' proven experience in a senior management role[1] leading and managing a team of professionals to deliver organisational objectives and meet funder requirements **OR**

E1. At least 5 years' experience in a senior management role leading and managing a team of professionals to deliver organisational objectives and meet funder requirements.

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

E2. Demonstrable experience of working in a legal and policy environment with an ability to influence and shape policy and public affairs.

E3. Proven ability to identify and successfully pursue new funding opportunities and generate income through the development of new services

E4. Experience of developing and maintaining key strategic relationships, driving stakeholder engagement across sectors to deliver change.

E5. Proven ability to provide oversight of complex financial information and experience of effective budgetary and operational planning.

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. A proven ability to communicate the organisation's vision and mission to the public, funders, media, government and other stakeholders

D2. Strong strategic decision-making skills

[1] A senior management role is defined as a role that either leads on making strategic decision or one that has significant input into strategic decision making on behalf of the organisation and providing detailed advice and guidance at Board level

D3. Ability to lead in a rapidly changing environment

D4. Experience of working with a Board to deliver effective governance

D5. Experience working in the legal and policy environment in Northern Ireland

Skills and Qualities

Applicants must be able to demonstrate evidence of the following competencies which will be tested at interview:

Leadership and Strategic Vision

The ability to look ahead, assess options and lead others to make plans based on the best options.

Legal and Policy Expertise

In-depth understanding of the legal and policy landscape, with the ability to influence and navigate complex regulatory environments.

Stakeholder Engagement and Partnership Building

Skilled at fostering collaborative relationships with key partners, funders, and community organizations to advance shared goals.

Operational and Financial Management

The ability to manage resources effectively, including budgeting, financial planning, and ensuring operational sustainability.

Communication and Influencing Skills

Strong communicator with the ability to advocate persuasively and convey complex information clearly to diverse audiences.

Analytical and Decision Making Skills

The ability to assess complex situations, identifying key issues, and making informed decisions that drive positive outcomes.

Innovation and Problem Solving

The ability to develop creative and practical solutions to address challenges and improve service delivery.

Passion for Social Justice

A deep commitment to advancing equality, human rights, and justice for marginalised communities.

PAY AND BENEFITS

Salary:	The salary ranges from £67,686 to £71,191 per annum. In normal circumstances, the starting salary is the minimum point; however it may be negotiable depending on experience.
Pensions:	LCNI offer a choice of two pension schemes: a Law Centre NI group pension scheme and an auto-enrolment 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.
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.
Family Friendly Policies:	LCNI are committed to fostering a family-friendly workplace that supports the diverse needs of our employees. We understand the importance of work-life balance and offer a range of policies designed to promote flexibility and wellbeing.
Other benefits:	Professional learning and development opportunities Employee Assistance Programme Health and wellbeing initiatives Special and compassionate leave Accessible city centre location

LCNI may consider assistance with relocation expenses for successful applicants who are relocating from outside Northern Ireland.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Completed applications must be received by **12.00pm on Monday 12th October 2026.**

Completed applications will only be accepted by email to recruit@headstogether.com 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 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

It is envisaged that short-listing for this post will take place on **Friday 16th October 2026.**

Candidates who meet the shortlisting criteria will be invited to complete an online psychometric assessment during **w/c 19th October 2026**. Interviews are envisaged to take place on **6th** and/or **13th November 2026**. Candidates will be asked to prepare and deliver a presentation on an unseen topic, followed by a panel interview.

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.

FURTHER INFORMATION

HeadsTogether Consulting Ltd are managing the recruitment process on behalf of LCNI.

If you have any questions about the recruitment and selection process, please contact Jane Hamilton or Shauna Devlin at HeadsTogether Consulting Ltd on 028 9042 4030 or at recruit@headstogether.com.

If you have any questions about the job role or LCNI itself, please contact HeadsTogether in the first instance, who can arrange for a telephone call with a member of the LCNI Board.