



**Director of Legal Services and Senior Solicitor
DIR LS-10-21**

Candidate Information Pack

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Lexcel



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Foreword from Director

Thank you for your interest in joining the Law Centre team to lead our legal work.

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

In 2021, Law Centre NI was winner in the Regional Legal Aid Firm/Not-for-Profit category in the Annual Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year Awards.

Law Centre NI is part of the UK-wide Law Centres Network.

This is a new role in the Law Centre in the context of our continuing growth and development as the regional law centre in Northern Ireland serving the needs of all our communities. You will be part of a dynamic and forward-looking senior leadership team, joining LCNI as we develop our new strategic plan for the next three years and as we celebrate our 45th birthday next year.

We are seeking an exceptional lawyer who shares our vision that the law can achieve 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.

Our work is challenging and complex. If you are a 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 would love to hear from you. We are always striving to improve our services and to make an even bigger difference. Our specialist legal work currently focuses on social security, asylum, immigration, trafficking and employment law.

Our work is challenging, but it is also deeply rewarding and we promise you excellent professional development opportunities as well as the possibility of making a lasting contribution to our society.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Ursula O'Hare
Director

About Law Centre NI

Established in 1977 as a community law centre for the Belfast area, the Law Centre expanded its services in the 1990s to cover the whole region. We use a blend of legal, policy and education tools to work for social justice, with a focus on strategic litigation that brings about wider social change.

Law Centre NI is a regional second-tier referral agency for the advice sector and also provides assistance to the public in social welfare law. We provide free legal advice and casework, as well as training and information support to the advice network. This includes professional development training and webinars, Adviser Network Meetings, the Annual Social Security Law Conference and legal information resources. The Law Centre also produces public legal information resources so that everyone understands their legal rights. Through our policy research and advocacy, we seek to secure progressive change to law and policy, grounded in the direct experience of our clients. We work in partnership across the voluntary sector in Northern Ireland to advocate for progressive social change.

The Law Centre is Lexcel-accredited and regulated by the OISC and the Law Society of Northern Ireland.

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

Our Vision

We live in a just and equal society

Our Mission

We use law to change lives

Our Values

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

<i>Independence</i>	We advocate consistently on behalf of clients without fear or favour on their behalf in seeking justice and promoting and protecting their rights, independent of any vested interests
<i>Rights-based</i>	We promote and protect people's fundamental rights
<i>Excellence</i>	We deliver services to a consistently high standard
<i>Innovation</i>	We continuously innovate to respond to meet current needs and to plan for a future of changing law and policy
<i>Co-operation</i>	We work together and with others to achieve shared goals
<i>Valuing and developing people</i>	We value the inherent dignity of all people. We support the development of staff, volunteers, trustees and members and provide an environment which encourages and facilitates continuous learning, professional development, and mutual support.

About this role

This is the most senior legal role in the Law Centre. You will be part of the senior leadership team that gives overall strategic leadership to the organisation and you will deputise for the Director and report to the Board as required. You will lead the legal team at LCNI being responsible for ensuring that we live our vision, mission and values. You will work closely with your leadership team colleagues and your managers to ensure that we deliver a high quality legal service to our clients.

You will be a creative thinker with a passion for justice. You will be able to understand the context of legal services in Northern Ireland and of the advice and community and voluntary sector. You will be able to identify opportunities for developing the law and policy environment in Northern

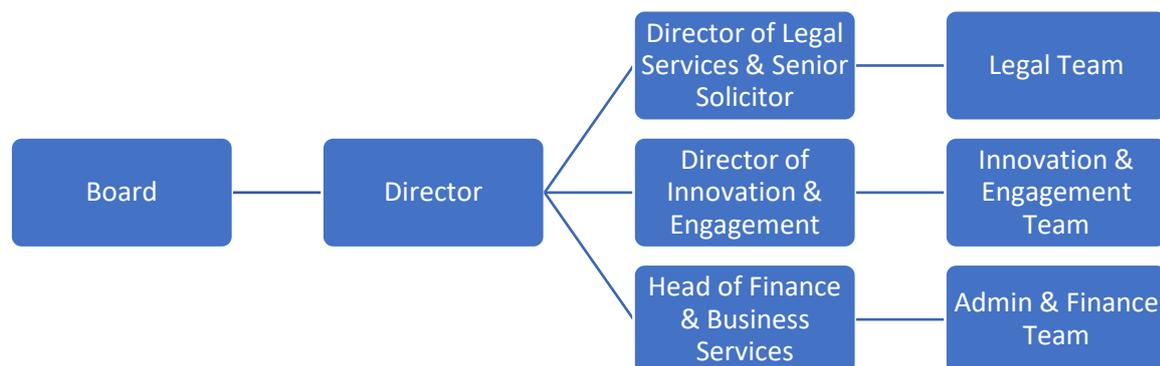
Ireland and through our education schemes you will help to develop the next generation of social justice lawyers. You will have strong credibility in representing the Law Centre in relevant legal and policy contexts.

How we will measure success in this role

This new role will support the ongoing success of the Law Centre. We will be looking to measure how effectively this role operates and what contribution it makes to achieving our vision and mission. To do this we will consider:

- The outcomes and impact of Law Centre NI's 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.

Our Organisational Structure



The legal team at Law Centre NI comprises solicitors, barristers and advisers/tribunal representatives, a paralegal and a Justice First Fellow apprentice. Currently, it is envisaged that you will have four/five direct reports.

Strategic Plan

The Law Centre's current Strategic Plan 2018 – 2021 is available here: [Strategic-Plan-2019-2021-Final-Web-Version-2.pdf](http://lawcentreni.s3.amazonaws.com/Strategic-Plan-2019-2021-Final-Web-Version-2.pdf)

We are currently preparing a new strategic plan for 2022 – 2025.

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 Law Centre's terms. We will also consider requests for flexible working arrangements.

A reserve list may be drawn up from this competition for a period of up to one year.

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. The successful candidate will be expected to take up post as soon as practicable and will be subject to a probationary period of six months which may be extended in accordance with Law Centre's policy.

Normal office hours are 09.00 – 17.00 with one hour lunch break. Law Centre is located at Queen Street, Belfast.

CLOSING DATE: Monday 8 November 2021 @ 16.00

INTERVIEW DATE: It is anticipated interviews will be held 18 – 19 November 2021. As part of the interview, you will be asked to give a presentation to the panel and complete a short unseen exercise.

Application Process

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.

Role Description

Job Title	Director of Legal Services and Senior Solicitor
Post	Full-time, 35 hours per week
Job Purpose	To lead the Law Centre's legal team in using the law to challenge unfair decisions and to pursue strategic litigation that achieves progressive change to the law and practice in Northern Ireland. To be part of LCNI's Senior Leadership Team, providing overall strategic leadership to the organisation and to deputise for the Director.
Location	Law Centre NI, Queen Street, Belfast
Salary	PO5 (currently 2019 scales) £40, 760 - £43,662, commencing at £40,760
Report to	Director
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

MAIN DUTIES

1.0 LEADING LEGAL PRACTICE

- 1.1 Your role is to lead the legal team providing expert guidance and leadership to the legal services team on their legal practice. You will oversee recruitment within the legal services team and as the senior solicitor, you will be 'master' for LCNI apprentices;
- 1.2 You will maintain a good understanding of all areas of Law Centre NI's legal practice and identify opportunities for innovation in legal practice, including through strategic interventions and litigation. You will specifically have responsibility for leading and managing strategic litigation in the Law Centre NI;
- 1.3 You will role model high quality work in your own legal practice portfolio within the Law Centre NI that achieves both positive outcomes

for clients and that shapes and influences the development of the law in Northern Ireland;

- 1.4 You will have overall responsibility for legal finance and line manage the Head of each legal services team, monitoring their performance in managing their teams 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;
- 1.5 You will provide advice to the Director and Board relating to the development of legal services;
- 1.6 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, with the aim of establishing your reputation as a "go to" person in the field.

2.0 BUILDING SUPPORT

- 2.1 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; contribute to proposals and applications for funding and develop and sustain effective relationships with funders.
- 2.2 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;
- 2.3 You will represent Law Centre NI to external stakeholders and organisations as required and act as ambassador, 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.

3.0 OTHER PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 As part of LCNI's Senior Leadership Team, you will contribute to the policy, public legal education, training and other activities of the Law Centre;
- 3.2 Your role is to contribute to organisational sustainability by identifying and implementing strategies for growth and innovation specifically within the legal services team and across the organisation.
- 3.3 You will deputise for the Director and report to the Board as required;
- 3.4 You will uphold and model the agreed values of the organisation;
- 3.5 You will ensure the policies and procedures of the organisation are observed and identify skills development opportunities for the legal services team;
- 3.6 You will monitor your own professional development and identify growth and development opportunities;
- 3.7 You will be available to work outside standard business hours on occasion in order to meet the demands of the role;
- 3.8 You will 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**

Personnel Specification

Director of Legal Services/Senior Solicitor

	Essential	Desirable
	<p>E1 Qualified solicitor eligible to practise in Northern Ireland or able to be eligible to practise in Northern Ireland by date of appointment and eligible to supervise apprentices.</p> <p>E2 Experience of litigation that achieved broader law and social change.</p>	<p>D1 At least five years' relevant experience in social welfare law/public law.</p> <p>D2 Management qualification.</p> <p>D3 Experience of managing and supporting legal professionals to achieve targets in a legal</p>

<p>Qualifications and experience</p>	<p>E3 Experience of developing and leading legal services that achieved successful outcomes.</p> <p>E4 Experience of developing and managing positive, collaborative relationships that achieved successful outcomes.</p>	<p>practice or legal advice centre.</p> <p>D4 Experience of managing compliance with regulatory and quality requirements as they relate to legal and advice services.</p> <p>D5 Experience of working as part of a management team.</p> <p>D6 Experience of identifying funding proposals and preparing funding applications.</p> <p>D7 Experience of project management and evaluation.</p>
<p>Knowledge</p>		<p>D8 Knowledge of the legal aid system in Northern Ireland and of relevant solicitor accounting regulations.</p>
<p>Skills and Aptitudes</p>	<p>E5 Demonstrable leadership skills, including creative problem solving ability.</p> <p>E6 Excellent interpersonal skills with proven ability to effectively negotiate and influence others to achieve successful outcomes.</p> <p>E7 Client focused with excellent customer service skills</p> <p>E8 Ability to effectively manage time and resources, prioritising and working effectively to tight deadlines and under pressure with ability to be administratively self-supporting.</p>	
<p>Commitment</p>	<p>E9 Commitment to the aims and values of Law Centre NI.</p>	

	E10 Commitment to ongoing professional development.	
Circumstances	<p>E11 Willingness to travel throughout Northern Ireland as required.</p> <p>E12 Available for occasional out of hours work in accordance with the requirements of the post.</p>	<p>D9 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>

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