

**North East Law Centre provides both
free and affordable legal advice services
to people across the North East. We
fight for justice on behalf of those who
need it, without prejudice.**

**Treasurer Recruitment Candidate Pack
Aug 2021**

ABOUT US

We cover all of North East England, from Berwick to Redcar & Cleveland/. We have been established since 1978. We are successful, we are growing (we have increased turnover by 300% over the past four years), we work in partnership, we are committed to social justice and to excellent service for our clients. Last year we helped over 1200 people from 83 nationalities, saved clients over £500k in legal fees, and gained £320k in additional benefits for clients.

We are committed to change to reflect our growth and our community of need. We are determined to explore new ways of working and to seize opportunity, whilst building strong governance and systems and ensuring we are still here for clients in the future. Our Vision is to empower our service users to become people who know their legal rights and can exercise them, are confident, have allies, and have a route to a better life through our intervention. Our Mission is to:

- Educate people about the law at scale, so that people are not scared, confused or stressed by it, but understand what rights they have.
- Help people get justice who would not otherwise be able to through high-quality advice, advocacy and representation.
- Create new routes to secure justice that are accessible, local, and values-driven.

Our Services We provide free legal services to those who are not eligible for Legal Aid and can't afford to pay for any legal representation whatsoever but need legal support. The areas of law we provide support for include family, immigration, education, employment, discrimination and welfare benefits. Our affordable services are ideal for those who can't access Legal Aid and aren't eligible for our free legal services but also can't afford the expensive bills of a private law firm or solicitor.

Because we are a not-for-profit organisation, we are able to offer high quality legal services at a much lower cost than your average high street solicitor. We currently offer affordable legal support in family and immigration law. We develop services that are targeted at groups within the community who have the greatest need including the unemployed and low paid; people with disabilities; Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities; women and children.

Case Studies Immigration –

Family Reunion We assisted Mr K with his applications to bring his wife and 4 children to the UK from Iran. Sadly, the initial applications were turned down for unconvincing reasons and as the oldest child was now over 18, an appeal was necessary for her. We made successful fresh applications for his wife and

younger children, but we had to wait over a year for an appeal hearing for the older child. We represented the family at Tribunal appeal and thankfully this was successful. The family are now fully reunited and adapting well to life in the UK.

Family Law What is Domestic Abuse? Mrs L came in for a free family advice appointment regarding a divorce. Her husband had been having an affair and while discussing the situation our Family Solicitor discovered that Mrs J had in fact been suffering years of domestic abuse, mainly emotional and sexual. She was very vulnerable. Mrs L had already been to see her GP regarding support and counselling and our solicitor assisted her in obtaining the pro forma letter needed to prove domestic violence before referring her to a solicitor that does offer legal aid. Without this appointment our solicitor is sure that she herself would not have recognised the domestic abuse and would not have obtained legal aid.

TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT We are seeking an interim Treasurer owing to the absence of our Treasurer while he supports his wife through medical treatment. The appointment will initially be for a period of six months as Treasurer, and it is anticipated that the successful candidate will become a full Trustee and join our Board whether or not the Treasurer role is extended, Our Trustee Board is a diverse, enthusiastic and friendly team. We support and challenge the work of the executive staff and help to create future opportunities and growth. We are fully committed to further increasing the diversity of our Board. A more diverse Board will:

- Understand better the needs of all sections of the community
- Offer a broader range of perspectives about issues.
- Be more creative in generating ideas and solutions.
- Improve decision making.

To this end we want to recruit people with different skills, life experiences and from different backgrounds. We would especially welcome applications from people from a variety of ethnic minority backgrounds. This is a great way to learn about charities, communities, legal affairs, and do work of real social benefit. Induction and training will be offered.

Main Responsibilities – All Trustees

- Governance To ensure that North East Law Centre complies with its Memorandum and Articles of Association, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- To support and provide constructive challenge to the Director and senior team of staff, to ensure their safety and wellbeing, and take decisions on the appropriate delegation of responsibilities to them.
- To contribute to the strategic direction of Newcastle Law Centre, setting overall policy, defining goals and regularly reviewing performance.

- To act in the best interests of North East Law Centre at all times.
- To read Board papers and contribute to discussions
- To attend North East Law Centre Board meetings (usually bi-monthly).and other training, planning and strategy events as required
- To contribute in other ways to the work of North East Law Centre, depending on the individual's skills, interests, contacts and experience (the Chair to discuss with each Trustee at the outset and review annually).
- To ensure the financial stability of North East Law Centre.
- To be an ambassador for North East Law Centre in the wider community.
- To introduce new contacts to the Law Centre from your personal and professional network.
- To attend North East Law Centre's public events whenever possible and participate actively, if requested.
- To participate, as appropriate, in the national network of Law Centres, in order to contribute to its development and set the work of North East Law Centre in a wider context.

Person Specification – All Trustees

- Commitment to the vision, mission and values of North East Law Centre
- Understanding of and commitment to equal opportunities.
- A willingness to take an active part in running North East Law Centre.
- Ability to work effectively as part of a team.
- Strategic Vision.
- Good independent judgement with the ability to think creatively.
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties and responsibilities of trusteeship

TREASURER

We particularly want our interim Treasurer to help our management team to review our financial systems, processes, reports and skills to reflect the growth we have achieved, and to ensure they are fit for purpose, robust and scalable for further growth. We would hope for recommendations to be made to our Board on these issues by the end of the interim period of between six and nine months.

The role of the Treasurer will be ideally suited to a trained accountant or to someone used to preparing, analysing and monitoring Budgets of £1m plus per annum, although anyone with strategic financial management skills will be considered.

Community experience and experience of a range of business and/or third sector organisations is also desirable.

Main Responsibilities

- To provide advice, guidance and critical support to the Director and finance manager on financial policy, systems, processes and decisions
- To support the Board to develop the long-term financial stability of the Law Centre
- To review financial systems, structures, skills and processes to ensure that they are robust and fit for purpose, and to make recommendations for improvement to the Board of Trustees
- To drive forward budgeting, monitoring and risk management to support the continuing growth of the Law Centre
- To oversee the annual Audit process, and ensure that any audit recommendations are actioned
- To ensure that legal requirements relating to Company and Charity finance are complied with, and that they are within accepted accounting practice

Person Specification

- Good financial management and analysis skills
- A good grasp of financial strategy and planning
- The ability to assess and manage risk in an appropriate, timely and practical way
- Familiarity with leading financial, CRM and reporting systems would be an advantage
- Knowledge and experience of current and fundraising law and finance practice relevant to voluntary and community organisations is desirable.

Time commitment

The Board meets bi-monthly, on Thursday evenings. We are open to discussing some flexibility around attendance with remote access to some meetings. Workshops, training events and other events, including the national Law Centre Network Conference, are arranged by agreement or available if wished approximately every other month.

Terms Appointments are for 3 years.

Meetings are currently being held remotely, but will normally be held at the North East Law Centre Offices, 3rd Floor, MEA House, Ellison Place Newcastle upon Tyne.NE1 8XS

Application process

In order to apply, please submit your CV and a short covering letter stating why you wish to join the organisation, what skills and experience you will bring to the Board and including any other relevant information. Please email applications to the Director, Michael Fawole, Michael@nelawcentre.co.uk.

Please feel free to contact the Chair, David Slater for an informal chat about the role, on 07963 788407 or via email at ds002e1019@blueyonder.co.uk

Initial applications will be followed by an informal conversation, an opportunity to observe a Board meeting, and possibly shortlisting and an interview if there are multiple candidates. The appointment will be made by the Board of Trustees at the end of a Board meeting. Referees are not required, but candidates will be asked to certify that they are not disbarred as a company director or charity trustee.