

Children's Law Centre

**Trustee
Recruitment
Information
Pack**



childrenslawcentre.org.uk

children's law centre



Contents

Chairperson's Report	3
Vision Mission Values	4
Who We Are	5
What We Do	7
How We Are Organised	9
Trustee Information	10
How to Apply	11

Chairperson's Welcome

As Chairperson of the Children's Law Centre (CLC) and a board member of 6 years I am acutely aware of the important work carried out by the staff team and the impact it has had on children's lives.

Annually CLC works with around 3,000 children and young people, their parents, carers and professionals to provide legal advice, advocacy and representation so they can access the services to which they are entitled. We highlight to duty bearers where services are not meeting the assessed needs of children and young people, and we work in partnership with other representative organisations to campaign for better rights and equality of treatment for children and young people, particularly the most disadvantaged.

For almost 30 years, the Children's Law Centre has been working diligently for children and young people to defend their rights and their access to services. We continue to punch above our weight, having achieved some significant changes in promoting children's rights. This has included enabling those with disability and mental health needs to access services, and supporting those with assessed special educational needs to access the support they need to grow and thrive. We have also dealt with broader issues around the treatment of children and young people in custody, through to supporting the rights of children and young people who are care experienced, LGBTQ+, homeless, those from minority backgrounds and those with rare diseases.

As with all charities, our Board of Trustees provide vital support to this work – bringing a range of expertise that has enabled CLC to provide ongoing support to children and young people across Northern Ireland. They bring a range of skills and experience that drives our strategy, supports our staff team,



and contributes to the defence of children's rights.

With John O'Doherty recently taking over leadership of the centre as CEO, we have conducted a review of organisational governance, identifying key areas to improve the strengths of the charity even further. We are now seeking to recruit up to three new Trustees that will allow CLC to address both the skills gaps and the underrepresentation identified through a skills and representation audit of the Board.

New Trustees will participate in a full induction and ongoing governance training to support effective Board contribution. They will also benefit from developing their skills in charitable governance, as well as learning about our areas of work and the impact of disadvantage and poor decision making on children's lives. They can grow their knowledge and work collegiately with others within a growing network of people who support societal change and want to see how their contribution can make a difference.

If you feel you want to be part of an organisation that drives change to improve children's lives and helps build better futures, we would love to hear from you.

Alicia Toal
Chairperson

CLC's Strategic Plan 2022-25 can be downloaded [here](#)

Vision Mission Values

Vision

Children's rights are guaranteed without discrimination.

Mission

Ensuring children's rights are respected, realised and vindicated through participation, partnership and representation.

Values

- We are child centred
- We have integrity
- We are accountable
- We are rights based
- We are independent
- We promote equality



Children's Rights
Change Children's Lives

Who We Are



At CLC we have always believed that children's rights change children's lives.

Founded upon the principles laid down in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), we were established in 1997 to provide legal advice for children and young people. We have since developed into the leading children's rights charity in this jurisdiction, helping thousands of children vindicate their rights each year, ensuring their access to services and equality of treatment.

In recent years we have overseen rapid growth in CLC, rising to meet the increasing pressures on children and young people and demand for rights protections.

As a leading charity at the forefront of progressing and implementing children's rights, CLC has worked on some of the key issues emerging both locally and internationally.

Our freephone advice line for children and young people, was launched in 2000 and has provided help and assistance ever since.

For almost 30 years, we have worked to protect the rights of all children living in this jurisdiction, particularly those who are the most disadvantaged, including children with disabilities, special educational needs, mental ill health and homelessness issues.

As a leading organisation at the forefront of progressing and implementing children's rights, CLC has worked on some of the key issues emerging both locally and internationally. We were instrumental in the implementation of key aspects of the UNCRC, such as the introduction of the NI Commissioner for Children and Young People in 2003. We have also been at the heart of key domestic achievements around children's rights, including the Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015.

More recently, CLC has led the way in protecting children and young people's rights during COVID-19, securing a vulnerable child action plan to ensure decisions do not adversely impact vulnerable children and

Who We Are (continued)

young people. CLC also leads the voluntary sector through the UNCRC reporting process, having submitted the NGO stakeholder report most recently in 2022.

Through the years, CLC has had a positive impact on the lives of children through strategic litigation. Successes have included a declaration to ensure health trusts carry out assessments of needs for the carers of disabled children, and a judgment that ensured a duty to provide accommodation to homeless 16 and 17 year old children. The strategic litigation work of CLC has rapidly grown in recent years, with significant ongoing litigation in the areas of mental health and education.

The work of CLC has been guided by our youth panel, Youth@CLC. Our panel of young people have led the way in campaigning on young people's rights. Their work has covered issues as broad as child poverty, mental health, education rights, global rights, ending violence against women and girls and anti-racism. Youth@CLC has led delegations to meetings at the UN and have

Our belief that children's rights change children's lives continues to be the force that drives our work forward.

met with a wide range of decision makers ensuring the voices of children and young people in this jurisdiction are heard.

The Children's Law Centre continues to grow as a leading children's rights organisation, with work continuing on a broad range of children's rights issues. Our belief that children's rights change children's lives continues to be the force that drives our work forward.



What We Do

The Children's Law Centre is a unique charitable organisation in this jurisdiction. Guided by our youth panel, we work to create a society where all children and young people can access services and opportunities to enjoy their childhood and realise their full potential.

We give a voice to children and young people, including the most disadvantaged, and provide legal advice and representation. We develop policy to inform decision makers, and host training and events on children's rights issues, including a prestigious annual lecture, attended by senior members of the judiciary, high level government officials and a diverse range of NGOs.

Youth Advocacy

Our youth advisory panel, Youth@CLC, is a group of young people aged between 14 – 18 years old. Youth@CLC campaigns on key issues affecting children and young people, seeks to influence decision makers, raises awareness of children's rights and guides the work of the Centre.

Youth@CLC collaborates with a range of organisations and in 2025 launched a new

podcast series 'Rights Unmuted', planned, hosted and delivered by young people for young people.

Legal Services

We provide a free legal advice service and legal representation for children and young people. Our legal services are child focused and the child is always our client. We work to ensure that public authorities, tribunals and courts recognise children as rights holders with the right to express their views and have those views considered.

We strive to ensure that when decisions are being made:

- The decision is UNCRC and children's rights compliant.
- The voice of the child is always heard.
- The child's best interests are at the heart of decision making.
- All children have equality of access to their legal rights, regardless of their age, background or circumstances.

We run a freephone legal advice line, providing advice for thousands of young people each year. We also provide free legal



What We Do (continued)

representation, particularly at SENDIST and Mental Health Review Tribunals, and undertake strategic litigation following the criteria contained within our casework policy.

Policy

Our policy research and advocacy work informs and influences decision makers. We ensure that government is reminded of their international obligations including under the UNCRC when drafting policy and legislation. CLC also leads the NI NGO stakeholder engagement through the UK reporting process. Through our casework we identify key issues impacting on children and propose evidence based solutions, underpinned by the children's rights framework. Supported by our team of legal experts, we provide analysis of law and policy in practice.

Training and Engagement

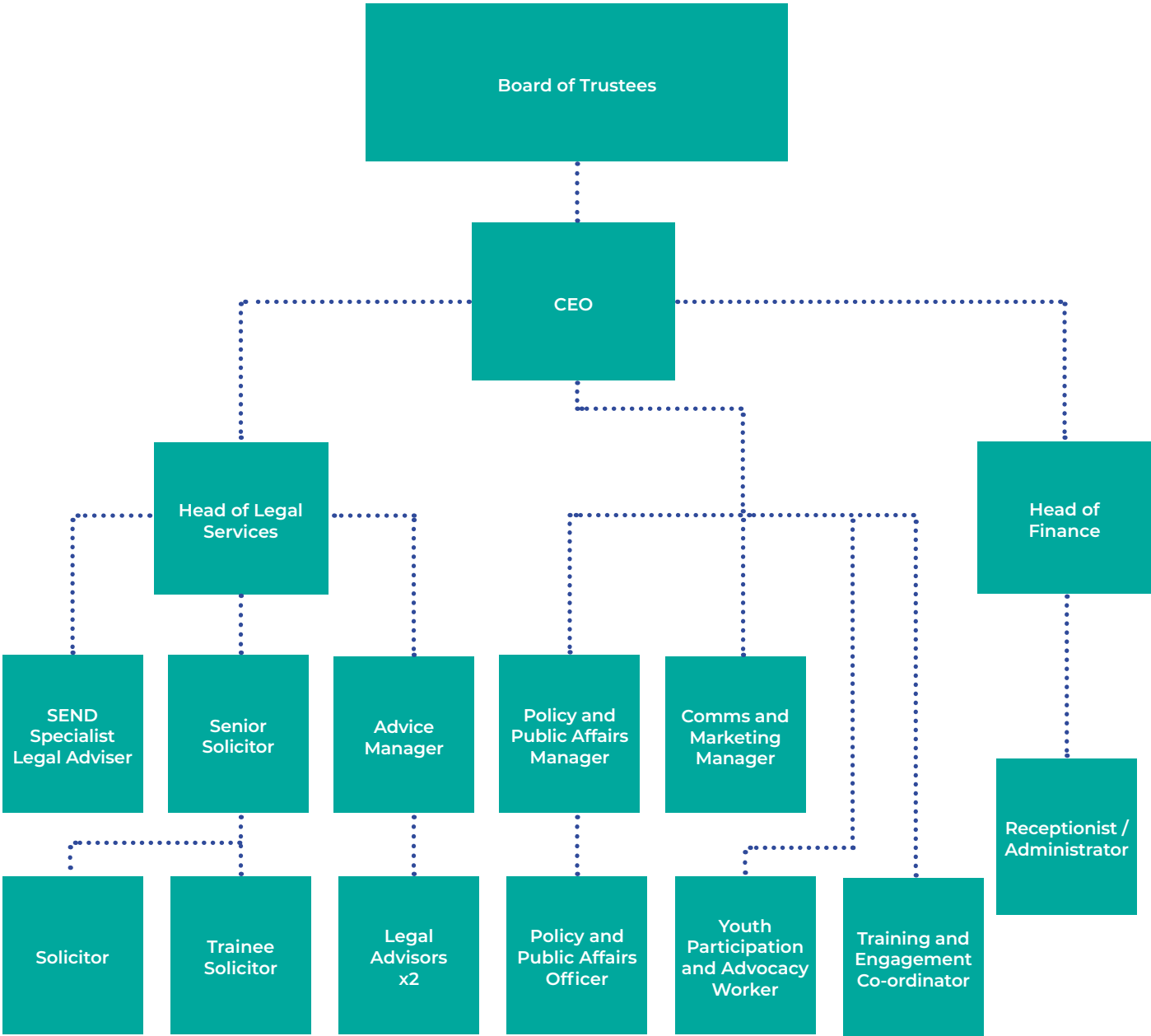
Providing training and learning is one of the best ways in which we can inform children and young people, their parents and carers of their rights. We also provide a range of tailored programmes to professionals in the children's sector and to the wider voluntary

and community sector, to duty bearers in government departments and to the legal profession. Topics include mental health capacity, special educational needs, Article 21 – Children's (NI) Order 1995 and the UNCRC. These can be tailored to suit each audience.

The Children's Law Centre has a small membership of mainly individuals and organisations working in the children's services and human rights field. As part of our current strategic plan we will be looking at how we can grow our engagement with current and new audiences and how, through this, we can develop new methods of support and service to children and young people, parents, carers, educators, employers, sector colleagues and others who advocate for children's rights and access to services.



How We Are Organised



Youth@CLC

Trustee Information

Who We're Looking For

We welcome applications from people with a wide range of professional and lived experience. In particular, we would value experience in any of the following areas:

- Finance and financial oversight.
- Legal expertise (particularly in children's rights, human rights, education, health, family law, or public law).
- HR & organisational development.
- Communications, media and marketing.
- Policy development and influencing.
- Fundraising and income generation.
- Strategy, governance and organisational leadership.

We also strongly encourage applications from individuals who will broaden the diversity and representation of our Board, including:

- Young adults (16+).
- People living with a disability.
- People from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities.
- People with lived experience of the issues affecting children and young people including as parents, carers, service providers and wider professionals.

Why Join Us?

Becoming a Trustee at the Children's Law Centre is an opportunity to:

- Influence real, systemic change for children and young people.
- Support strategic litigation and policy

reform aimed at upholding children's rights.

- Work alongside a committed team dedicated to equality, justice and participation.
- Help shape CLC's impact as we approach three decades of advocacy.

If you share our passion for children's rights and want to play a role in strengthening the future of the organisation, we would be delighted to hear from you.

What You'll Do as a Trustee

As a Trustee, you will:

- Help guide the strategic direction of the organisation.
- Ensure strong governance and accountability.
- Support our mission to advance children's rights through legal advice, representation, policy work and youth participation.
- Provide oversight of organisational performance, risk, and financial management.
- Act as an ambassador for the Children's Law Centre.

This is a voluntary role, with reasonable expenses reimbursed. Full induction and ongoing training will be provided.

Time Commitment

Trustees attend:

- 4 Board meetings per year in person (2-3 hours each).
- 4 sub committee meetings or strategic planning sessions online (2 hours each).

How to Apply

To apply, please submit:

- Your CV.
- A cover letter outlining why you are interested in becoming a Trustee and what you would bring to the role.
- A completed monitoring form.

Applications should be sent to:
reception@childrenslawcentre.org

The deadline for applications is Friday 29th May.

Children's Law Centre

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Fax: 028 9024 5679
Email: info@childrenslawcentre.org

CHALKY Freephone Advice Line:
0808 808 5678
chalky@childrenslawcentre.org

REE Rights Responder
#Ask REE at reerights.com

The Children's Law Centre is a charity and can accept donations to support our work.

If you are a UK taxpayer, Gift Aid your donation and we can claim back an extra 25p from your taxes for every £1 you donate. Donate securely online at www.cafonline.org by selecting Children's Law Centre under 'find a charity' or send your donation directly to Children's Law Centre.

Children's Law Centre is a company limited by guarantee.

Charity Registration No. NIC101148
Company Registration No. NI033998 (Northern Ireland)

