# Trustee Recruitment Pack 2023

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Trustee with Luton Law Centre.

The Law Centre movement has been active in the UK since the 1970s. Law Centres are community-led, not-for-profit organisations that help local people to understand and enforce their legal rights. Their services are free, and they attempt to target the people who most need them – people who are at risk of discrimination and ill-treatment and those who are least able to protect themselves, for example because they lack the money to hire someone with legal expertise to help them. The right to use the name “Law Centre” is protected by the Law Centres Federation.

We are actively seeking committed and enthusiastic candidates aspiring to become part of our Board of Trustees. We have included in this pack information about Luton Law Centre and the Board of Trustees, a role description, and a person specification to help you decide if the role is right for you. If you feel it is, you can find the forms required to make an application to become a trustee at the back.

If you would like to talk to us or have any queries, please feel free call Pauline Gilson, the Centre Director, on 01582 482000 or email her at pgilson@lutonlawcentre.org.uk.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Fiona Carfrae

**Chair of the Board of Trustees**

Luton Law Centre

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# About Luton Law Centre

Luton Law Centre was formed in 1989. We are a member of the Law Centres Network, a [not-for](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Not-for-profit)-[profit](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Not-for-profit) [legal practice,](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Legal_practice) a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. This means that we hold money on trust to deliver services in line with objects set out in our governing document, and the organisation has trustees whose role is to oversee the trust and make sure it is doing what it is supposed to. The objects of Luton Law Centre are the prevention and alleviation of poverty, and the education of the public, by the provision of legal advice and representation, in Luton and surrounding areas.

We help people each year with a face-to-face service covering 3 broad services:

* expert casework and representation in the social welfare law covering community care, housing, and immigration/asylum;
* emergency representation as part of the Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme; and
* a free advice line.

Amongst the results we achieve that make us proud of what we do are:

* the prevention of homelessness;
* the prevention and reduction of poverty;
* the protection of family life by reuniting people living in the UK with those living abroad;
* the prevention of torture and death beyond our borders by the provision of advice and representation to people fleeing persecution; and
* the prevention of ill-health by successfully challenging unfit living conditions.

In 2022-23 we dealt with 1258 enquiries and 299 cases.

We are staffed by 7 solicitors and caseworkers (3 full-time, 4 part-time), a full-time administrator and a full-time Centre Director.

We can’t solve all the problems through legal work, so we maintain a high level of awareness of the services available in the area and refer our clients to those services where appropriate for other specialist support.

Luton Law Centre is funded by grants, Legal Aid contracts, and charitable donations. Although the extent and scope of legal aid has decreased in recent years, Luton Law Centre remains a key resource in our community.

# The Board of Trustees

Our Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for Luton Law Centre. It acts collectively and effectively in its interests by giving strategic direction and determining our mission and vision.

The Board makes decisions required for Luton Law Centre’s control and management. It ensures compliance, good governance and adequate financial resources for our services, and protects our assets and property. It also ensures the organisation manages risks carefully, acts as a responsible employer and upholds the principles of diversity and equality.

The Trustees have to act within charity law and should follow the guidance of the Charity Commission. As long as they act in good faith and do their best to use the funds of the charity to meet the objects of the charity, their liability, should something go wrong, is very limited. The Trustees are also the directors of the company, and again in that role their liability is strictly limited, as long as they act in the interest of the company and its objects, setting the organisation's strategic direction and scrutinising the actions of Luton Law Centre’s management.

The Board currently comprises 6 Trustees, but we can have up to 12.

### Who are we looking for?

We are looking for people who believe in what we do and are prepared to help oversee the charitable trust so that we can continue to do it. We need you to bring your expertise, energy and networks to the law centre. The role isn't glamorous, it's unpaid, and it's sometimes unacknowledged, but it is rewarding in other ways.

We're looking for people prepared to give their time, generally by attending meetings at the Law Centre or on Zoom every two months in the evening, and by taking the time to read the papers sent to them in preparation for asking appropriate questions and taking decisions at those meetings. They might need to attend training to support them in their role – perhaps training to help in recruiting staff, or to ensure that the charity is reaching the whole of the local community. Ideally the person should live, work or study in the borough of Luton, although this is not an absolute requirement.

### Main areas of expertise and skills we need

Skills and experience in the following areas would help to complement those already present on our Board:

* Fundraising
* IT & Facilities
* Marketing
* Communications
* Finance: particularly charity accounting, Legal Aid accounting or both
* Human Resources
* Law: solicitors, barristers or legal executives with an understanding of Legal Aid

### What is in it for you?

You get the satisfaction of giving something to people who need your help, and to seeing the help you give result in things that most of us take for granted, like having enough food to eat, a safe, warm place to sleep, and protection from violence.

You will get to challenge yourself by switching your brain from what you do during the day to something different, whether that's from the for-profit to the not-for-profit world, from a place where you carry out the decisions to one in which you make the decisions, or from a role in which it is up to you to deliver results to one in which it is up to you to help someone else deliver them.

We will arrange for you to meet our Chair and Centre Director before you decide to join us. We will provide an induction, including an overview of our organisation and the responsibilities of the role.

### How you can help us

Many of these of these areas are interlinked and overlap:

## Fundraising – As well as attracting main grants, we are looking to generate and attract more general donations and giving.

## IT & Facilities – Our office space is limited and we are considering a relocation. Our IT is cloud based. We ave recently secured funding to replace some of or older computers and laptops to improve efficiency. We are in the process of developing better methods of capturing and using data and work-flows. All other expenditure on equipment and services, such as book keeping, is regularly reviewed, to ensure we are getting the best deals.

##

## Marketing **-** We need to get the message out about what we do and what we can help with. We have a catchment area of 670,000 people. It is a challenge for the centre director to cover this area and to maintain contacts in Luton and Bedfordshire. We are looking for people to help act as ambassadors of the law centre alongside the management team. We are looking to further develop our website, leaflets, twitter and marketing materials.

##

## Communications **-** We get many good results for services users and we are looking at ways in which we can better capture, develop and communicate the impact that we have on people that use our services.

* Finance **-** We are looking for trustees with a financial background, particularly charity accounting, Legal Aid accounting or both to support our trustee is a qualified accountant and a finance transformation specialist. The effects of austerity and cuts to legal aid have meant that the law centre has had to operate for a number of years within an extremely tight financial environment. This will only be compounded by the reduction in funding to Luton Law Centre from Luton Airport.
* Human Resources – We are looking for trustees with a HR background to support our trustee, who specialises in employment law. We want to look at better ways of developing, rewarding, recognising and retaining staff in an environment where pay and conditions has not kept up with the public and private sector. There is a relatively new task of keeping the law centre connected as staff now work from home more following the pandemic as well as the ongoing task of keeping a close connection between the board and staff group.

## Law: solicitors, barristers or legal executives, especially with an understanding of Legal Aid -We are essentially a community based legal practice. We are regulated by various bodies. Although the law centre isn’t regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority, individual solicitors that work with us are. We are always looking for expertise to back this business model.

# Trustee - Role Description

The statutory duties of a Trustee:

Main duty

Under charity law Luton Law Centre Trustees have and must accept the ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of Luton Law Centre, and ensuring that it is solvent, well-run, and delivering the charitable outcomes for the benefit of the public for which it has been set up. In law trustees of Luton Law Centre have three duties — care, compliance, and prudence — which are set out below following the wording given by the Charity Commission.

Duty of care — Trustees must:

* Use reasonable care and skill in their work as trustees, using their personal skills and experience as needed to ensure that Luton Law Centre is well-run and efficient.
* Consider getting external professional advice on all matters where there may be material risk to Luton Law Centre, or where the trustees may be in breach of their duties.

Duty of compliance — Trustees must:

* Ensure that Luton Law Centre complies with charity law, and with the requirements of the Charity Commission as regulator; ensure that the charity prepares reports on what it has achieved and Annual Returns and accounts as required by law
* Ensure that Luton Law Centre does not breach any of the requirements or rules set out in its governing document and that it remains true to the charitable purpose and objects set out there.
* Comply with the requirements of other legislation and other regulators which govern the activities of Luton Law Centre.
* Act with integrity and avoid any personal conflicts of interest or misuse of Luton Law Centre funds or assets.

Duty of prudence - Trustees must:

* Ensure that Luton Law Centre is and will remain solvent.
* Use Luton Law Centre funds and assets reasonably, and only in furtherance of Luton Law Centre objects.
* Avoid undertaking activities that might place Luton Law Centre endowment, funds, assets or reputation at undue risk.
* Take special care when investing Luton Law Centre funds, or borrowing funds for Luton Law Centre to use.

Specific duties of Trustees:

Vision, values and strategic direction

* To contribute actively to the Board of Trustees’ role in giving firm strategic direction to Luton Law Centre, setting a vision, goals, policy and plans, and targets and key performance indicators
* To ensure that Luton Law Centre seeks and considers the views of beneficiaries and stakeholders in setting strategic direction and policy
* To ensure breadth and diversity in the vision, values, policy and strategy of Luton Law Centre
* To serve as an ambassador for the charity, promoting understanding and recognition of, and support for, Luton Law Centre vision and values
* To be aware of current issues relating to recovery from mental ill-health

Performance management

* To monitor and evaluate performance against plans, targets and key performance indicators, and its wider impact on stakeholders
* To appoint the Centre Director and monitor their performance
* To safeguard the good name and values of Luton Law Centre

Compliance

* To ensure that Luton Law Centre complies with all legal and regulatory requirements
* To ensure that key risks to Luton Law Centre are identified and effectively managed and that professional advice is sought and considered where appropriate

Prudent management of assets

* To ensure the financial stability of Luton Law Centre through creation of an effective fundraising strategy
* To ensure the proper management of the charity’s assets both physical and intellectual; and sound financial management

Good governance

* To comply always with Luton Law Centre’s Governance Manual and other Trustee policies
* To uphold the principles and practice of good governance
* To participate in Trustee development and training as appropriate
* To prepare for and attend Trustee Board meetings regularly and contribute to discussion and collective decision making
* To use any personal knowledge, skills and experience to help the Board of Trustees to further the objects of the charity

Trustee Person Specification

Luton Law Centre works actively to ensure that its Trustee Board has the right skills and experience to lead the charity effectively.

Personal competencies

Luton Law Centre Trustees are expected to demonstrate the following personal competencies:

ESSENTIAL

Commitment

1. Ability to understand and accept the duties and liabilities of being a charity Trustee.

2. Empathy with the vision, mission and aims of Luton Law Centre

3. A willingness and ability to devote the necessary time and effort

Focus

4. Ability to think and apply knowledge strategically

5. Ability to think creatively

6. Ability to keep mission-focused

7. Ability to analyse and evaluate management information and other evidence

8. Willingness to listen and learn

Communication and team working

9. Ability to communicate clearly and sensitively and to take an active part in discussions

10. Ability to influence and engage

11. Ability to work effectively in a group

12. Willing to express their own opinion in a reasoned way, while also listening to the views of others

13. Ability to challenge constructively and ask questions appropriately

Accountability

14. Ability to exercise sound and independent judgement

15. Willingness to make and stand by collective decisions, including those which may be unpopular

16. Ability to manage difficult and/or challenging situations

17. Ability to maintain confidentiality on confidential and/or sensitive information

Skills and experience

DESIRABLE

Luton Law Centre wishes to see the following knowledge, skills and experience represented on its Board. All Trustees will be expected to meet at least one of these criteria. During a particular recruitment one or more of the following may be identified as priorities, depending on the needs of the Board at the time as identified through a skills audit.

* Senior level strategic management experience within a third, commercial or public-sector organisation.
* Recent experience (within the last 5 years) of fundraising for, or in, a third sector organisation.
* Experience at senior level of financial management
* Experience at senior level of strategic human resources or organisational development.
* A professional qualification and significant practitioner experience in an area of relevance to Luton Law Centre such as accountancy, legal aid, project management.
* Knowledge and experience of marketing or public relations in the third sector.
* Experience as a trustee in a similar size or larger organisation, together with implementation of best practice in corporate governance.
* Experience of service provision at a senior level to people recovering from mental ill-health in a health, education or social care setting.
* Experience at a senior level of developing and delivering services to people recovering from mental ill-health which promote inclusion, equal opportunities and diversity.

# How to Apply

 Please complete the following forms:

1. Application Form
2. Trustee Eligibility Declaration
3. Trustee Monitoring Form

Please send your completed forms to: pgilson@lutonlawcentre.org.uk at any time.

Current trustees will review your application. If we think your skills and experience are a good fit with the law centre, we will invite you to meet me and/or the Centre Director for an informal discussion about our work and the trustee role and you can spend some time at our office, and we will ask you questions about your knowledge, skills and experience. You may also be invited to visit the law centre or attend a meeting of the Board of Trustees as an observer.

# Application Form for Election as Trustee

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **A**  | **Personal Details**  |  |
| Name  |   |  |
| Address  |   |  |
|  | Postcode  |   |
| Email  |   |  |
| Daytime telephone  |   | Evening telephone  |   |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **B**  |  | **Employment Details – please give brief details of your last employment (up to 5) (You may wish to attach a separate CV to the application form.)** |
| From  | To  | Title  | Employer  |
|   |   |   |   |
|   |   |   |   |
|   |   |   |   |
|   |   |   |   |
|  |  |  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **C (about 250 words)**  | **Interest and Motivation: please tell us why you are interested in being a Trustee of Luton Law Centre**  |
|   |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **D (about 250 words)**  | **Relevant Expertise: any further information including relevant memberships, board positions, Qualifications or other relevant expertise or experience**  |
|   |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **E (about 250 words)**  | **Personal Qualities – please give concrete examples of how you demonstrate the personal qualities of a Trustee as per Person Specification**  |
|   |  |
| **F**  | **Skills – looking at the skills we need (see page 6), please identify skills that you can bring to the Board, what areas of work you have an interest in and/or would like to become involved in, and how you anticipate using your skills as a Trustee of Luton Law Centre.**  |
|   |

**References**

Please supply us with the names and contact details of two referees that we may contact.

|  |
| --- |
| Name:Address:Postcode:Tel: (daytime)Email: |
| Name:Address:Postcode:Tel: (daytime)Email: |

#

# Trustee Eligibility Declaration

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  **Section 1**  | **Personal Details**  |  |
| Name  |   |  |
| Address  |   |  |
|  | Postcode  |   |
| Email  |   |  |
| Daytime telephone  |   | Evening telephone  |   |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section 2** | **Charity Details**  |
| Charity name  | Luton Law Centre  |
| Registration number  | 1039998  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Section 3 Declaration**  |
|  **I declare that:** * I am willing to act as a trustee of the organisation named above
* I understand the organisation’s purposes (objects) and rules set out in its governing document • I am not prevented from acting as a trustee because I:
* o have an unspent conviction for one or more of the offences listed in the Annex.
	+ have an IVA, debt relief order and/or a bankruptcy order
	+ have been removed as a trustee by the Charity Commission, the Scottish charity regulator or the High Court
	+ have been removed from management or control of any body in Scotland (under relevant legislation)
	+ have been disqualified by the Charity Commission
	+ am a disqualified company director
	+ am a designated person for the purposes of anti-terrorism legislation
	+ am on the sex offenders register
	+ have been found in contempt of court for making (or causing to be made) a false statement
	+ have been found guilty of disobedience to an order or direction of the Charity Commission

 **I also declare that:** * the information I provide to the Charity Commission is true, complete and correct
* I understand that it is an offence under section 60(1)(b) of the Charities Act 2011 to knowingly or recklessly provide false or misleading information
* the organisation’s funds are held (or will be held) in its name in a bank or building society account in England or Wales
* I will comply with my responsibilities as a trustee – these are set out in the Charity Commission guidance ‘The essential trustee (CC3)’
* (if applicable) the primary address and residency details I provide in a charity registration application are correct and I will notify the Charity Commission if they change

**Personal Benefit** * If the organisation pays or will pay any trustee for being a trustee OR any Trustee or person connected to them for providing goods and services, I declare that this will:
* Be in the organisation’s best interests
* Be lawful and authorised
* Help the organisation carry out its purpose (or be a necessary by-product of it carrying out its purposes)
 |
| Signature  |   | Date  |   |

# Trustee Monitoring Form

When we advertise for Trustees, we like to be able to monitor and check that we are attracting a wide variety of applicants. It is helpful to us if you can complete and return this form, together with your application.

This monitoring form is detached from your application as soon as we receive it, and none of the information contained in it is used for any selection or election purposes.

Are you: Female  Male  Prefer not to say 

1. How do you describe your ethnic origins:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| White British  |   | Mixed  – White/Black Caribbean  |   | Asian  - Indian  |   |
| White Irish  |   |  - White/Black African  |   |  - Pakistani  |   |
| White Other  |   |  - White/Asian  |   |  - Bangladeshi  |   |
| Black Caribbean  |   |  - mixed other  |   |  - Asian Other  |   |
| Black African  |   | Chinese  |   |   |   |
| Black Other  |   | Other  |   | Prefer not to say  |   |

1. Are you aged under 25  25 – 40  40 – 60  over 60 

1. Do you have a disability?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Not considered disabled  |   | Cognitive impairment  |   |
| Physical impairment  |   | Long-standing illness or condition  |   |
| Sensory impairment  |   | Other  |   |
| Mental Health Condition  |   | Prefer not to say  |   |
| Learning disability/difficulty  |   |   |   |