

St James Legal Advice Centre CIO (SJLAC)

Haringey, North London

Trustee – job description

Background to St James Legal Advice Centre

St James Legal Advice Centre (SJLAC) (www.stjameslegaladvice.org) provides free legal advice and assistance in Haringey. We are part of the LawWorks (www.lawworks.org.uk) national network of pro bono law clinics. We work through our three walk-in clinics, which operate on Tuesday morning (Colney Hatch), Wednesday afternoon (Wood Green) and Saturday morning (Muswell Hill). The service has been operating informally for over 20 years. Three years ago, we formalised operations as a small charity, and we are now registered with the Charity Commission as a charitable incorporated association (CIO). Last year we assisted 440 clients with issues including housing, benefits, consumer and employment.

Day to day management is undertaken by our part-time (paid) manager and volunteer lawyer coordinators for each clinic (together our 'management team'). Advice is provided by about 12 volunteer legal advisers (solicitors and barristers) operating across the three clinics on a rota basis. They are supported about 25 law students, mainly from Middlesex University. Apart from our part-time self-employed manager, we are run entirely by volunteers. Our running expenses are under £10,000 a year. The clinics operate from church premises, provided free of charge. Our main expenses are our manager's fee and our professional indemnity insurance. We are funded by grants, fund raising events, and a few ad hoc donations.

We currently have four (founder) trustees, and are in the process of appointing a new board comprising a total of about 8 trustees (lawyers and non-lawyers) including a treasurer. Having recently secured CIO status, we are looking to consolidate and further strengthen our procedures and governance to ensure that we are on a firm and sustainable footing for the future. This is an exciting opportunity to work with our management team to take forward the continued development of a small, local charity and support its impact in the community.

Terms of appointment

Trustees are appointed for a 3-year term of office, with expectation of a renewal for a further term, and possibility of a further renewal to a maximum of 9 years.

The time commitment is to attend trustee meetings (usually 4 a year in person or on line in the evening) having undertaken background work / reading / preparation, and with flexibility to respond to the occasional ad hoc issue.

Trustee responsibilities and role

- Support and provide advice on SJLAC's purpose, vision, goals and activities.
- Approve operational strategies and policies, and monitor and evaluate their implementation.
- Oversee SJLAC's financial plans and budgets and monitor and evaluate progress.
- Review and approve SJLAC's financial statements.
- Ensure SJLAC's effective and efficient administration.
- Ensure that key risks are being identified, monitored and controlled effectively.
- Support SJLAC's management team including keeping abreast of changes in SJLAC's operating environment.
- Contribute to regular reviews of SJLAC's governance.
- Attend board meetings, adequately prepared to contribute to discussions.
- Use independent judgment, acting legally and in good faith to promote and protect SJLAC's interests, to the exclusion of their own personal and/or any third-party interests.
- Contribute to the broader promotion of SJLAC's objects, aims and reputation by applying your skills, expertise, knowledge and contacts.

What we are looking for

- Willingness and ability to understand and accept their responsibilities and liabilities as trustees and to act in the best interests of SJLAC.
- Ability to think creatively and strategically, exercise good, independent judgement and work effectively as a board member.
- Effective communication skills and willingness to participate actively in discussion.
- Enthusiasm for our vision, mission and values including our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.

Application process

Please apply with CV by 9am Tuesday 27 August 2024 to Ann Jenkins manager@stjameslegaladvice.org. Shortlisted candidates will be invited for an interview with the current board.