



Trustee Recruitment Pack

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Advertisement

Are you ready for a new challenge, helping to make a difference for a charity that helps thousands of Norfolk people every year?

If so, we would love to hear from you as we launch our drive to find up to four new trustees for our board.

About Norfolk Community Law Service (NCLS) and its Trustees

We are a legal advice charity and have been working in Norfolk for 40 years. We run a range of free, accredited, independent specialist legal services to meet local need. Our work enables people to challenge decisions that affect them. We help keep people in jobs, in their homes; in this country; safe and out of poverty and destitution.

While people from all walks of life access us, we target our services at people who are the most vulnerable. This includes people on low incomes, people with physical and/or learning disabilities or mental health issues, ex-offenders and people who are from ethnic minority communities. We helped around 4,600 people in 2024/25, making a tremendous difference to so many people's lives.

Following the recent retirement of some trustees, now is the perfect chance to get involved and help make a real difference to people in Norfolk.

We are looking for individuals who can bring diversity of thought and/or lived experience and who are able to demonstrate a genuine commitment to our clients and to the promotion of access to justice. These are exceptional opportunities to share your talents and expertise to make a positive difference to the lives of people served by NCLS. We are particularly looking for those with a strong involvement in the broader Norfolk community, and/or those with financial, digital, marketing or fundraising experience.

We are open to applications from any background and are looking for high performing individuals who can add real value to the Board. Being an integral part of the effective governance and strategic development of NCLS requires commitment and enthusiasm, but is a rewarding and fulfilling role. As a Trustee and Board member you will act as custodian of NCLS for current and future clients.

Please contact the office 01603 496623, option 5, to arrange an informal discussion with David Powles, NCLS Chief Executive, or Laurence Harris, NCLS Chair-elect to learn more about the role and our organisation. Alternatively please email davidpowles@ncls.co.uk or laurence.harris@ncls.co.uk.

How to Apply

Please complete the application form in the Application Pack which is available on our website www.ncls.co.uk. The deadline for applications is **4pm on Tuesday 9th September 2025**.

What NCLS Does

Vision

To satisfy unmet legal need, contributing to a just and fair society.

Mission

To empower the people of Norfolk to assert their legal rights, through education, advice and representation.

What We Do

Norfolk Community Law Service (NCLS) is Norfolk's leading social welfare law charity dedicated to addressing unmet legal need across Norfolk. We are a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. Our Board comprises up to twelve Trustees, from a range of backgrounds, who are also Directors of the company. The Chief Executive reports through the Chair to the Board of Trustees.

We provide specialist accredited legal services across Norfolk including debt, discrimination, domestic abuse, employment, family, immigration and welfare rights.

We target our services at the most vulnerable members of society. This includes, for example, people from ethnic minority backgrounds, people on low incomes, those with long term physical and/or mental ill-health, physical and sensory disabilities and/or learning difficulties, offenders, ex-offenders, migrant workers and others who are disadvantaged. The advice we offer is free, non-discriminatory, and confidential.

We have 37 staff, many of whom work part-time. This includes a Chief Executive, Director of Operations and Development, Finance Manager, four solicitors, highly qualified casework and service managers, and two Mobile Legal Advisers.

We offer telephone/video and face-to-face appointments across Norfolk. Volunteers are embedded in our service delivery, and we have 65 local solicitors who provide our Free Legal Advice service, around 50 UEA student volunteers and around 20 community volunteers.

We are also the lead agency for the Norfolk Community Advice Network (NCAN). This network is underpinned by an electronic referral system ensuring a 'no wrong door' approach for clients. They can get to the right agency first time. The key Norfolk advice agencies are on the NCAN steering group, working collaboratively to improve access to advice.

NCLS is funded by grants, commissioned contracts, and charitable donations. In 2023 when our current Chief Executive, David Powles, was appointed, the turnover of NCLS was £950,000. By 2025, this had increased to £1.4m.

In 2024/25 we dealt with 4,600 cases.

Our latest impact report is available on our website www.ncls.co.uk

Background to the Role

Our Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for NCLS. It acts collectively and effectively in the charity's interests by giving strategic direction and determining its mission and vision.

It makes strategic decisions required for best practice, control and management. It ensures compliance, good governance, adequate financial resources for NCLS's services and protects its assets. It also ensures the organisation manages risks carefully, acts as a responsible employer and upholds the principles of diversity and equality.

The Board currently meets six times per year as a full board. Meetings usually last for approximately two hours; the Board also holds an away day once a year. The Board has set up a series of Committees – finance, operations, HR/people - which meet regularly as and when needed to deal with much of the day-to-day trustee governance and oversight, reporting back to the full Board.

Full Board meetings are hybrid with a preference for joining in person if possible and take place in central Norwich, usually towards the end of the day so as to avoid most of the working day. Committee meetings are usually virtual and at times to suit the committee members.

The Board of Trustees comprises around twelve members. At present we have eight members following recent retirements. The Board has recently appointed a new chair, Laurence Harris, who will succeed Sarah Blunden in October when she steps down from the Board. The Board currently has a high skill base in team working, chairing, communication and listening skills, strategic and creative thinking, negotiation, company law and charity law among others.

The Board is now actively seeking new candidates to elect as Trustees and would particularly welcome those with skills in:

- Finance
- Fundraising
- Marketing
- Lived experience of inequality/injustice
- Communications
- Digital/data systems

We are particularly welcome applications from those who are embedded in the broader Norfolk community.

New Trustees will join a Board with energy and expertise in many areas, that works with and supports the Chief Executive to achieve the sustainability and growth needed to ensure services are relevant and accessible.

Job Description

- Provide leadership and direction for NCLS.
- Ensure NCLS has a clear mission, vision, and strategic direction.
- Be responsible for the effective performance and management of NCLS.
- Provide appropriate challenge, holding management to account ensuring good governance and transparency.
- Attend full trustee meetings and join and attend at least one Board committee
- Ensure NCLS complies with all legal and regulatory requirements, the objects and the governing documents.

- Secure and act as custodian of NCLS's assets.
- Ensure NCLS governance is of the highest possible standard.
- Promote NCLS at every opportunity.

Governance

Trustees are representative of the communities we serve, so that the direction and development of NCLS is responsive to local need. Trustees provide:

- Stewardship, taking a balanced measure of risk
- Accountability, through monitoring progress and supporting staff on delegated authorities
- Strategic direction, in consultation with staff, partner agencies and other stakeholders
- Two-way communication with staff, who need to feel involved and confident that NCLS is effectively governed and to feel valued and supported.

Person Specification

You must be over 18.

Knowledge and Experience

- A clear understanding of the role of a Trustee and Company Director or willingness to learn
- Broad knowledge of management and governance issues
- An understanding of the work of the voluntary and community sector (helpful)

Skills

- A strategic thinker
- Active listening skills
- An effective communicator
- Ability to provide constructive challenge
- A team player who respects different views
- An ability to build strong relationships and champion NCLS
- Involvement in the broader Norfolk community and/or financial, digital, marketing or fundraising experience (helpful)

Personal Qualities

- Drive and determination
- Commitment to devote sufficient time to meet the responsibilities of being a Trustee
- Integrity, honesty, and flexibility
- Receptive to the views of others
- Possible lived experience of injustice and/or the areas of law that NCLS provides (helpful)
- Commitment to inclusion and diversity

Time Commitment

As well as Board meetings six times a year for all Trustees, we ask all our trustees to join at least one Board committee, which will likely meet 4 – 6 times a year. In addition to this we have ad hoc working groups to support the Chief Executive on specific matters; Trustees with relevant skills sets are invited

to join. There are regular events organised by NCLS and we encourage trustees to attend these where they are able to do so.

Location

NCLS has recently moved into new offices at 4 Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 3AJ. Board meetings are normally held in central Norwich either in person and/or remotely.

Remuneration

The role of the Trustee is voluntary. However, reasonable and agreed out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed.

Term

Trustees are required to retire by rotation after a period of 3 years but may be re-appointed.

How to Apply

Please complete the application form and provide details of two referees. The deadline for applications is 4pm on **Tuesday 9th September 2025**.

We encourage prospective Trustees to arrange to meet or telephone the Chief Executive or Chair-elect. We can arrange for you to visit NCLS's offices if you would like to before making your application. We will give you as much information as we can so you can get a clear picture of whether you can make a commitment for at least the following three years and understand how to highlight the skills and experience you will bring.

You should refer to this document when filling out the application form, particularly the person specification and the skills that the Board is actively seeking.

Send Your Application.

Please send your completed application form to Sarah Clack by email sarah@ncls.co.uk or post to Norfolk Community Law Service, 4 Duke Street, Norwich, NR3 3AJ.

Application Form

Personal Details			
Name			
Address			
	Postcode		
Email			
Daytime telephone		Evening telephone	

Employment Details – please give brief details of your previous employment (up to 5)			
From	To	Title	Employer

Interest and Motivation: please tell us why you are interested in being a Trustee of Norfolk Community Law Service (up to 250 words)

Knowledge and Experience: roles, qualifications and/or other relevant experience as per Person Specification (up to 250 words)

Referees – please provide contact details of two referees

Name	Position	Organisation/ personal and email address

Please provide any relevant disclosure which you think we should be aware of when considering your application (for example any past criminal proceedings or convictions, regulatory proceedings or findings, Court proceedings or rulings or other decisions of any relevant body or person, for example an employer) or alternatively confirm that there is nothing relevant to your application which should be disclosed to us which is not mentioned above

I confirm that I am not disqualified from being a company director

Signature

I confirm that the information on this form is correct to the best of my knowledge

Signature