



Public Law Project

Recruitment of new Chair of Trustees

Public Law Project (PLP) is seeking an exceptional candidate to be our new Chair of Trustees. This is an outstanding opportunity to oversee a dynamic, growing and highly respected UK charity.

PLP's work results in the successful enforcement of individual rights as well as wider improvements in access to justice for disadvantaged or marginalised individuals and groups in the UK. The new Chair will be highly experienced, skilled and motivated and share our commitment to the individuals and communities we serve.

Who we are and what we do

Public Law Project (PLP) is a national, award winning, legal charity based in Central London. Founded in 1990 we seek to improve public decision-making and facilitate access to justice. PLP undertakes casework, research, policy initiatives and training across public law areas. Our work is carried out by a committed team of staff and volunteers, supported by our Board of Trustees.

Our impact is wide and felt by thousands of people who have benefited from robust defence of the rule of law. We have successfully led legal challenges to Government restrictions on legal aid and interventions on other issues including migrants' rights benefits reform, and disability discrimination.

PLP's remit is more relevant than ever in the current period of unprecedented challenges facing the UK. Our strategic priorities for the five-year period 2017 to 2022 are to:

1. Promote and safeguard the Rule of Law during a period of significant constitutional change.
2. Work to ensure fair and proper systems for the exercise of public powers and duties, whether by state or private actors.
3. Improve practical access to public law remedies
4. Continue to strengthen PLP's infrastructure and capacity to improve our effectiveness.

These priorities translate into work in five interrelated areas of specific focus: Access to Judicial Review, Benefits Sanctions, Brexit, Legal Aid and Online Courts.

PLP has seen significant growth over the last two years; its profile and impact are increasing at pace. There is an increased need for our work, and this is an exciting time for us.

Role description

Our existing Chair is stepping down in September 2019 following 3 very successful years in the role. As a result, PLP is recruiting a new Chair to work with the Board and SMT. S/he will play an important role in further strengthening the organisation and increasing PLP's impact.

The PLP Trustee Board consists of the chair, vice-chair, treasurer and 8 other members. Board members act both as charitable trustees and directors of PLP, which is a company limited by guarantee as well as a registered charity. Board members are responsible for overall governance of the organisation, including oversight of its strategic direction and financial management.

The new Chair will lead the work of the trustees and work closely in partnership with the Director of the organisation. Key responsibilities will include:

- Ensuring that the Board operates within its charitable objectives and complies with its legal responsibilities
- Providing leadership and a clear strategic direction for the Charity
- Building a strong, effective and a constructive working relationship with the Director of PLP
- Line managing the Director of PLP and ensuring that PLP is achieving agreed strategic objectives (this will include regular face to face and/or telephone meetings and an annual appraisal)
- Ensuring the Board fulfils its duties to ensure sound financial health of the charity, with systems in place to assess risk and ensure financial accountability
- Actively chairing PLP's quarterly Board meetings and delivering preparatory and follow-up work linked to these sessions
- Responding promptly to any urgent Board level matters that arise between the quarterly meetings, taking occasional urgent decisions under devolved powers and reporting back to the Board
- Ensuring and monitoring an effective Board, supporting and bringing out the best in our trustees and challenging when necessary
- Representing PLP at events and in meetings with senior external stakeholders (including Funders and partner organisations)

Time requirement, term and expenses

The Chair will need to commit to 2-3 days per month to this role. S/he will serve a three-year term to be eligible for re-appointment for one additional term.

Please note that this is an unpaid role, but reasonable travel costs will be reimbursed. We expect most if not all work associated with the role to be London based.

Person specification – skills and experience

Essential

- Strong passion for and commitment to PLP's mission and strategic objectives
- Strong understanding of the legal responsibilities of trusteeship and charity governance
- Significant Board level exposure and service
- Experience in a leadership role and of line managing senior staff
- Experience of providing strategic vision and sound judgement on complex issues
- Strong understanding of NGOs and issues affecting this sector
- Strong financial acumen, financial management expertise and a broad understanding of charity and/or company finance issues
- Proven ability to chair effectively
- Highly developed interpersonal and communication skills
- Proven ability to collaborate, support and build relationships with internal and external stakeholders
- Ability to dedicate at least 2-3 days to the role of Chair (including some availability during normal office hours)
- Ability to respond quickly on high priority issues)
- Commitment to equal opportunities

Desirable

- Good working knowledge of public law
- Previous experience of chairing at Board level
- Experience of leading a senior team through a period of organisational change

Application process

PLP is an equal opportunities employer. We welcome applications from individuals regardless of age, disability, gender, marital status, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion and belief, sex or sexual orientation.

To apply, please send a CV and covering letter to hr@publiclawproject.org.uk. Your covering letter should explain your interest in becoming the Chair of PLP and the skills and experience that you bring to the role. Please ensure that it addresses the criteria in the person specification above. Applications should be no longer than 4 pages, in total.

If you would like an informal conversation with one of our trustees or Director before making an application, please contact Chris Igoe, Practice Manager, to arrange: hr@publiclawproject.org.uk

Closing date for applications: 3rd June 2019

Interviews: 24th June in central London.

We are committed to ensuring that PLP's staff and Board reflect the wider communities we represent. We encourage applicants from all backgrounds.

Equality statement of intent

As an employer, PLP will treat all employees and job applicants equally and fairly and will not unlawfully discriminate against them. This also applies to volunteers, interns and anyone undertaking work experience with PLP. Our commitment to equal treatment extends to arrangements for recruitment and selection, terms and conditions of employment, access to training opportunities, access to promotion and transfers, grievance and disciplinary procedures, demotions, selection for redundancies, dress code, references, work allocation and any other employment related activities. Specifically, PLP will endeavour to ensure that:

I. Whenever practical, we will recruit and maintain a workforce which broadly reflects the diversity of the community in which we operate and serve. We will ensure that the style and content of our job adverts and recruitment materials convey this commitment, and always includes the statement that "The Public Law Project is an equal opportunity employer".

II. Subject to cost, we will ensure that job opportunities are advertised widely and to diverse audiences. Where appropriate, PLP will take positive action measures to attract applications from all sections of society and especially from those groups which are under-represented in our workforce.

III. We treat all job applicants equally and fairly and do not unlawfully discriminate against them. We do this by ensuring that we operate an open and fair recruitment process, and making decisions using selection criteria which do not discriminate.

IV. We will take every possible step to ensure that employees and volunteers are treated fairly, with the aim of creating a culture that respects and values each others' differences, that is free of discrimination and promotes dignity, equality and diversity, and that encourages individuals to develop and maximise their true potential.

V. We recognise our continuing responsibility to develop the potential of all employees, removing any barriers, bias or discrimination that prevents progression or full contribution to the organisation's performance. We will ensure that selection for promotion, training or other benefit is free from discrimination of any kind and is based on the employee's experience and abilities and the needs of the job.

VI. We will make clear to all employees, volunteers and trustees that anyone who works for PLP in any capacity is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect, and that unlawful discrimination, intimidation, harassment and victimisation are disciplinary offences which will not be tolerated by the organisation and may lead to disciplinary action. We will provide clear and accessible procedures allowing allegations of such conduct to be promptly and sensitively investigated.

VII. We will provide flexibility to employees in relation to work requirements that may significantly impact on their personal needs and responsibilities and we will seek, as far as possible, to foster a culture that ensures an appropriate

work – life balance. We also aim to be aware of days of cultural or religious significance that employees may wish to observe in an appropriate manner.

Privacy notice

When you apply for a job with PLP we will need to collect information about you including your employment history and contact details so that we can assess your suitability for the role and inform you about the progress of your application.

Your records will be kept securely whilst we consider your application. If your application is unsuccessful, we will keep your data until 6 months after the decision was made. If successful, your recruitment information will be kept for 6 years after your last day working with us.

If you opt to provide equal opportunity data to PLP this will be anonymised and retained only as long as is necessary to record the recruitment decision against the anonymised data and no longer than six months.

We do not share recruitment information with third parties.