

January 2025

**Recruitment of a People Manager**

Thank you for your interest in applying for the role of People Manager at the Public Interest Law Centre.

Since becoming a fully independent organisation in 2019, we have made great progress in ensuring the organisation has become established. Our legal team has grown as our ability to challenge the worst excesses of state violence, racism and neglect. As a result, we also benefit from a growing reputation, known for our strategic and creative use of the law in supporting working class and marginalised communities in their fight for social justice.

We are now seeking a People Manager to strengthen the internal management of the organisation, ensuring that we foster a positive and healthy working culture to reflect and feed into PILC's movement lawyering approach.

In this pack you will find:

- Background information
- Role description
- Person specification

If you have any questions after reading the enclosed information, please contact Jean Demars at [jean.demars@pilc.org.uk](mailto:jean.demars@pilc.org.uk).

Please do not send CVs as these are not considered. Your completed application form should be returned by email to [jobs@pilc.org.uk](mailto:jobs@pilc.org.uk). Make sure to address as many of the points listed in the person specification as you are able. If you need more space, please limit your personal statement to no more than two additional pages. We recognise that not all experience will be gained through work and we welcome evidence of experience from non-work settings such as volunteering and personal life. People with lived experience of poverty, from racialised backgrounds, LGBTQIA+ individuals and people with disabilities are strongly encouraged to apply.

The closing date for applications is **9am on Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025** and we anticipate holding interviews in person during the week commencing 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

Best wishes,

Jean Demars  
Director  
Encs.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION



## PUBLIC LAW | HUMAN RIGHTS | LEGAL ACTION

The Public Interest Law Centre (PILC) was initially set up in 2016 as an independent unit within Lambeth Law Centre and became fully independent in 2019. PILC has operated its own Legal Aid Contract since September 2023, enabling the Law Centre to act in Public Law, Claims against Public Authorities and Housing Law. PILC is registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in England and Wales (No.1192355).

### Mission

The Public Interest Law Centre exists to challenge systemic injustice through legal representation, strategic litigation, research and legal education. We specialise in public law, actions against public authorities and housing, holding state agencies to account and bringing cases to court for marginalised individuals and communities who have been treated unfairly. We also use our experience to represent marginalised communities in public inquiries.

We work in collaboration with grassroots groups, campaigners and frontline organisations through a legal hub model building capacity through legal education and advocating through legal action across three overlapping priority areas:

- state accountability,
- housing, land and community assets,
- racial justice and migrants' rights.

Some of the individuals and communities we work with include:

- Social Justice activists subjected to state surveillance
- Survivors of domestic abuse in housing need
- Migrants facing injustice in the immigration system
- Gypsies, Roma and Travellers seeking safe and suitable living conditions
- Council Estate residents at risk of displacement due to regeneration

## **Our Approach**

PILC is a legal organisation located at the grassroots. This is not a market choice: rather, it is where we come from and where we believe social change begins. This commitment forms the basis of our distinct identity as a law centre rooted in communities fighting for social justice. From our inception, we have always existed amongst activists, grassroots groups, campaigners and frontline organisations with whom we have developed meaningful relationships and who share our commitment to radical social change.

Movement Lawyering revolves around prioritising the leadership of grassroots actors and crafting social movement campaigns that integrate various legal and advocacy strategies to force political objectives. Our approach uses the law as a means to empower collective action, utilising litigation strategically to bridge legal efforts with social movements to impact change.

We support working class and marginalised communities through legal education about rights, entitlements and the legal process itself, recognising that process and outcomes are not separate. We build many of our strategic legal challenges from individual cases by showing the issues involved impact a wide range of people. This means we also tend to start from lived experience rather than the law itself. We also act on behalf of campaign groups or frontline organisations where it is difficult to represent individuals.

We are always open about the limitations of the law. We work on the principle that we do not to take agency away from the people we represent. We do this by not platforming the law above other campaigning tactics and by never substituting ourselves for the campaign. In our approach to movement lawyering, we recognise law as a tool that must be strategically employed to assist campaigns and to support political action. This entails integrating various tactics such as direct action, influencing, public campaigning and litigation. Our work aims to build power with and feed into social movements fighting for radical social change.

## **Achievements & Activities**

PILC has achieved significant policy change through its litigation work: we quashed a Home Office policy detaining and removing EU nationals sleeping rough (2017), enabled settled migrants to access student finance (2018), prevented the sale of Southall Town Hall, an iconic building used by community groups (2018), forced the Home Office to provide destitute migrants on immigration bail a way to be supported (2019), ended Lambeth Council's deceitful housing scheme that pushed homeless families out of borough (2020), compelled government to release £76 million ring-fenced funding to the Violence Against Women & Girls sector during C-19 first lockdown (2020), successfully challenged LB Camden's use of mixed-gender accommodation for women escaping domestic abuse (2020) and LB Southwark housing allocations policy (2019 and 2022). In 2020-21, we also represented Ricky Tomlinson, Arthur Murray and Brian Williams (members of the Shrewsbury 24) in their Court of Appeal case, which saw their 47-year-old convictions quashed.

In 2024 we successfully represented campaigners on the Aylesbury Estate against Southwark Council and the developer Notting Hill Genesis. The High Court recognised that developers working with local authorities cannot make 'drop-in' amendments to planning applications that go far beyond the scope of the original plans. We also changed the Home Office's Fee Waiver regulations on behalf of bereaved partners so that they could apply for Indefinite Leave to Remain following the death of their British/settled spouse. Additionally, we secured a number of legal victories on behalf of Gypsies and Travellers with whom we work across England and Wales. We also carry a small caseload of civil claims to secure justice for our clients.

PILC continues to represent a number of individuals and groups in the Undercover Policing Inquiry, including the Stop the War coalition, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and ex-leading members of the Socialist Worker Party. We have also been instructed to act as solicitors to the independent Inquiry into the collusion of Unite the Union officers or officials in the operation of blacklists in the construction industry. Finally, we also represent a large number of organisations in the UK Covid-19 Public Inquiry, including Southall Black Sisters, Solace Women's Aid, IWGB, UVW, Kanlungan, JCWI, Doctors of the World, Medact amongst others.

PILC also delivers its work through funded projects in key priority areas. These projects are not separate from PILC's legal representation and strategic litigation. In fact, they often provide additional resources to develop and maintain relationships with vulnerable individuals, grassroots groups and frontline organisations. They also enable us to deliver on some of the Legal Hub model which complement formal legal work, such as training, capacity-building and second-tier advice.

In July 2024, PILC was awarded the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year award for Legal Aid Firm/Not-For-Profit Agency.

### **Legal Aid and funding**

Most of our legal work is funded by the Legal Aid Agency, though we also receive grant funding to enable our movement lawyering approach and to fill the gap left by a broken public funding system. We were awarded our first contract with the Legal Aid Agency in September 2023, for matters in Public Law, Claims against Public Authorities and Housing Law. Prior to this we operated as an agent of Camden Community Law Centre. We retain a small number of legacy matters under this contract.

### **Quality Standards**

The Law Centre is accredited by the Law Society's Lexcel Quality Mark standard, and certified with the Cyber Essentials scheme, providing PILC with protection against the most common cyber-attacks. A technical assessment for both standards is carried out on an annual basis.

### **Registrations and memberships**

PILC is registered with the Solicitors Regulation Authority and the Law Society. We are also a member of the Law Centres Network, AdviceUK and the Legal Aid Practitioners Group.

### **Our People**

PILC is co-led by Jean Demars (Director) who oversees strategic, operational and financial management and Paul Heron (Legal Director) who oversees legal matters, which includes Inquiries work, casework management and litigation strategy. They both report to the board of trustees on a bi-monthly basis. The Senior Management Team meets every month and also includes:

- Helen Mowatt (Head of Legal Casework), who is responsible for leading the litigation team, ensuring the delivery of high-quality legal services and taking a leading role in the design and delivery of casework plans;
- Dermot Morrow (Operations Manager), who manages the Law Centre's administrative & information systems and ensures compliance with all regulatory, quality and legal requirements and documenting these through the Law Centre's office manual. He is also currently managing some of the HR function.

PILC currently employs twenty staff, including eight solicitors.

## About the role

Ever since PILC became independent in August 2019, we have grown steadily and cautiously. However, most of the growth has focused on the organisation's legal team, going from five to sixteen and likely to be going up to more than twenty staff in the coming months. In addition to the substantial growth of the organisation, we acquired Legal Aid contracts in three areas of law in September 2023, which are essential to our work but also add a new dimension to compliance and organisational management.

The (non-legal) management of the organisation has remained the same since November 2020, made of the Director, the Operations Manager (0.5 FTE) and the Finance Officer (0.4FTE). We have recently recruited a Communications Manager who is due to start in January 2025. However, it has become clear that it is no longer possible to operate in this way.

We carried out a management review, including a consultation exercise with all staff, to identify what additional capacity would make the biggest difference to strengthen PILC's management going forward. The review identified a need for additional capacity but also additional expertise in Human Resources. It is therefore imperative that we strengthen this part of the organisation to ensure staff are properly supported and performance remains high.

In addition to managing all the usual aspects of PILC's HR function, we envisage the post-holder to play a key role in the organisation by bringing our values and work ethic in the internal management of the organisation. Some of the important elements of this will be:

- enhance our EDI policy to strengthen diversity
- develop an organizational approach to learning and development that will reflect and feed into PILC's movement lawyering approach
- develop a staff wellbeing plan
- develop internal communications system to ensure all staff are engaged and able to contribute

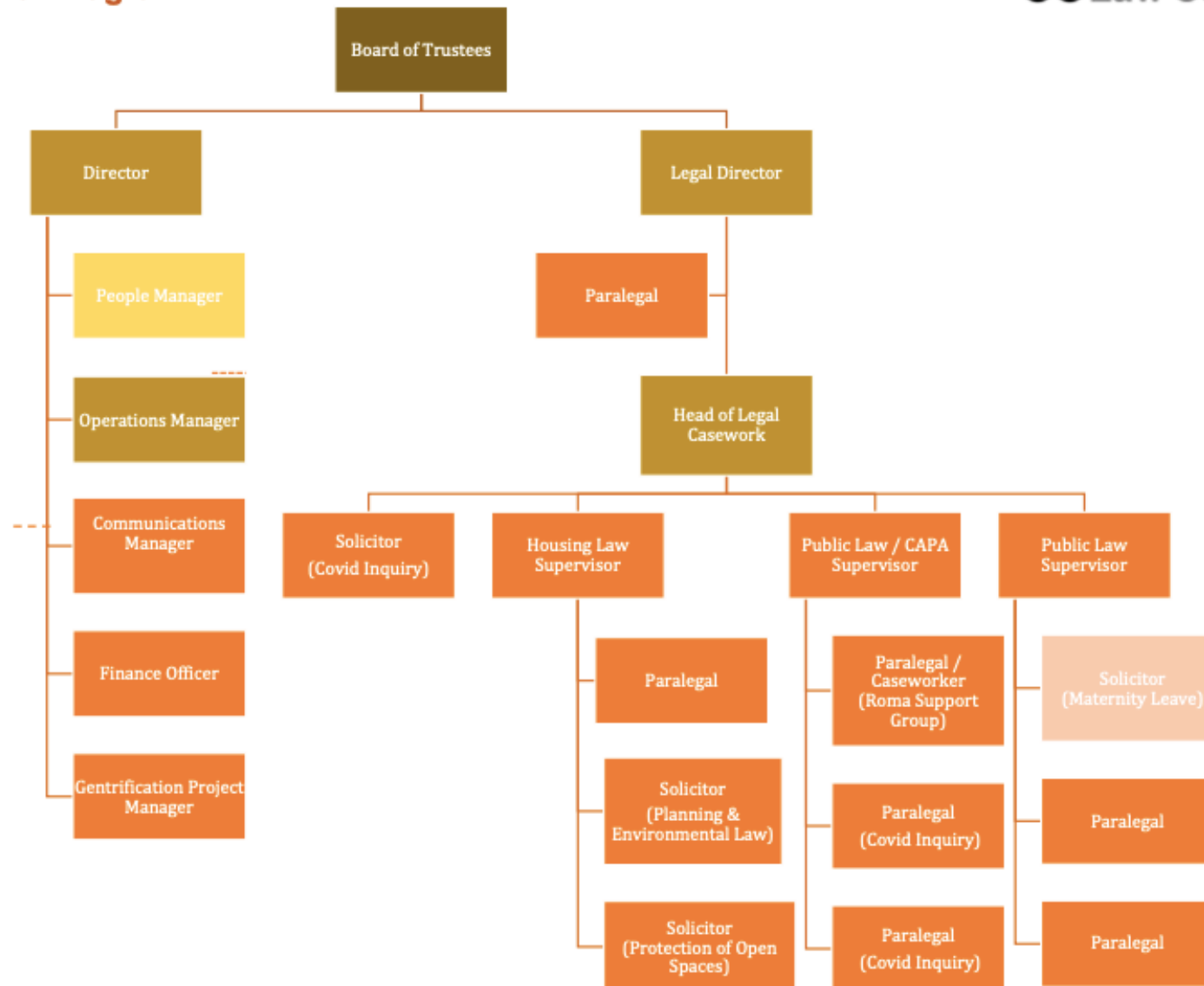
The post holder will be a key member of the Senior Management Team, bringing their expertise to foster a positive and healthy working culture, which reflects and feeds into PILC's movement lawyering approach. It is anticipated that the post holder will be required to be in the office 4 days a week to build and maintain excellent relationships with all staff.

In return, you will benefit from a supportive working environment with colleagues who are passionate and dedicate themselves to supporting working class and marginalised communities fighting for social justice. Whilst PILC has now established itself, it remains a young and dynamic organisation with plenty of opportunities to shape it further and for the right person to grow.

Benefits also include:

- Flexible and hybrid working
- Annual cost-of-living increase
- 25 days' annual leave in addition to Christmas closure
- 7% employer's pension contribution on whole salary
- Salary sacrifice scheme (optional)
- Enhanced pay policies (maternity, sickness, study)
- Employee Assistance Programme

## Organisational Diagram



Doc Ref: 4.4 JOB REFERENCE: PILC/3/2025	
<b>ROLE DESCRIPTION</b>	

<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	People Manager
<b>STARTING SALARY:</b>	£47,385 per annum (pending annual cost-of-living increase)
<b>HOURS</b>	Full Time 35 hours/week
<b>CONTRACT:</b>	Permanent
<b>BENEFITS:</b>	25 days holiday per year with 7% pension contribution
<b>LOCATION:</b>	Cambridge Heath E2 / Hybrid
<b>ACCOUNTABLE TO:</b>	Director
<b>DIRECT REPORTS:</b>	None
<b>PURPOSE:</b>	To Lead on the development and delivery of a People strategy in line with PILC's strategic plan (2024-27) and reflecting PILC's movement lawyering approach.

## Introduction

The Public Interest Law Centre exists to challenge systemic injustice. We do this by holding government and public bodies to account and promoting access to justice for dispossessed and excluded groups. We work through legal representation, strategic litigation, research & advocacy and legal education.

The post holder will work under the supervision of PILC's Director to lead on the development and delivery of a People strategy and to foster a positive and healthy working culture to reflect and feed into PILC's movement lawyering approach.

**Please note:** the nature of PILC's work means that longer hours may be required to be worked in particular weeks or at particular times. PILC has a flexible work hours policy which provides for this, offering time off in lieu of additional hours worked and monitoring the impact of the workload on individual staff members.

## Specific duties include:

### 1. Strategic leadership

- a) Develop a People strategy and plan in line with PILC's strategic plan (2024-27)
- b) Review, update and implement HR policies, procedures and practices
- c) Enhance PILC's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy to strengthen organisational diversity
- d) Develop a plan to foster a positive and healthy working culture to reflect and feed into PILC's movement lawyering approach

## **2. Human Resources**

- a) Support line managers to ensure supervisions and appraisals are most effective in managing performance and supporting staff
- b) Manage employee relations issues such as long-term sickness, grievance and disciplinary cases or restructure changes, providing advice and guidance for line managers.
- c) Manage HR software and personnel files, ensuring that all personnel records and documentation are retained
- d) Plan, manage and deliver recruitment campaigns from start to finish, including contractual arrangements
- e) Ensure all new staff and volunteers receive a full induction to the Law Centre
- f) Lead the annual pay review and periodic review of T&Cs, overseeing benchmarking reviews where relevant

## **3. Learning & Development**

- a) Develop organisational learning and development plan reflecting and feeding into PILC's movement lawyering approach
- b) Coordinate mandatory training in areas such as safeguarding, data protection and health, safety & wellbeing.
- c) Coordinate and schedule annual staff appraisals, ensuring training and development plans fit within organisational strategy

## **4. Staff wellbeing**

- a) Develop and implement a staff wellbeing plan
- b) Coordinate annual staff satisfaction and wellbeing survey and follow-up on key themes arising from the survey
- c) Maintain PILC's leave management system, ensuring staff maintain their leave records and other absences; providing the senior management team with reports on staff leave balances, absences or other information as required.

## **5. Internal Communications**

- a) Develop and manage internal communications systems to ensure day-to-day updates are known by all
- b) Lead on the monitoring and evaluation of staff satisfaction and engagement
- c) Improve the use and purpose of staff meetings, facilitating the delivery of online monthly and in-person quarterly staff meetings
- d) Ensure staff have opportunities to bring up difficult conversations or topics of interest and have dedicated time to reflect on practice
- e) Assist the director with the organisation of the annual Away Day

## **6. General Duties**

- a) Be alive to funding opportunities to support staff wellbeing, learning and development
- b) Work closely with other members of the senior management team to support organisational leadership and oversight.
- c) Support the senior management team to ensure best resourcing of the organisation's various functions
- d) Attend monthly senior management team meetings

## **7. Other duties**

- a) Complete and maintain as necessary any professional documentation or records
- b) Engage in regular managerial supervision



- c) Attend training internally and externally as agreed with the Director and maintain a record of all training undertaken and CPD points
- d) Undertake other duties which may be regarded within the nature of the post, in discussion with the Director.

## **Organisational standards**

The post holder will be expected to meet the following organisational standards in how they undertake their work and conduct themselves in the post.

## **Professional Development**

The post holder will:

- participate in the PILC team review and supervision processes as appropriate
- attend courses on new legislation, specialist skills and the use of information
- technology relevant to the role
- keep up to date with the changes in relevant legislation
- undertake such training as is necessary as to maintain the standards required.

## **Equality and Diversity**

The Law Centre's clients are largely on low incomes and come from a diverse range of minority ethnic groups. The post holder will be expected to show a particular interest in working with this client group and to show an understanding of equality and diversity issues.

The post holder will have regard at all times in the planning and execution of their duties to the Law Centre's Equality & Diversity Policy and will implement that policy faithfully.

## **Information Technology and Data Protection**

The post holder will be expected to use computers on a regular basis. S/he will also be expected to take responsibility for their own word processing, recording keeping, filing and case recording.

The post holder will be expected to follow the Law Centre's data protection policies and ensure the security of client data.

## **Review of this role**

This job description is to provide guidance and direction. It is not an inflexible document, nor is it intended to limit the range of duties which could reasonably be expected of the post holder. The job description will be reviewed at each appraisal.

**PERSON SPECIFICATION**  
**PEOPLE MANAGER**

	Criterion	Essential	Desirable
1.	A relevant professional qualification in human resources or demonstrable knowledge of UK employment law	✓	
2.	Track record of achievement in a senior people or human resources management role, including the management of employee relations and policy development	✓	
3.	Experience of managing change and growth within the context of strategic development of the people function.	✓	
4.	Experience of working successfully as part of a senior leadership team, including preparing papers/reports.	✓	
5.	A commitment to drive the Public Interest Law Centre's Equality & Diversity Policy.	✓	
6.	An understanding of and a commitment to the Public Interest Law Centre's mission and way of working to ensure we have the right skills and culture to enable the organisation and its people to thrive.	✓	
7.	Ability to foster wellbeing in the workplace, including identification and prevention of vicarious trauma and burnout.	✓	
8.	Excellent communication and interpersonal skills with the ability to build trust and respect internally and externally.	✓	
9.	Ability to work at pace and across multiple projects whilst maintaining exemplary accuracy and quality of work.	✓	
10.	Ability to be self-servicing with admin, including competent use of the suite of Microsoft Office 365 apps and command of HR software.	✓	
11.	Experience of line management.		✓
12.	Experience of grassroots campaigning, activism or trade unionism.		✓