



Head of Product

Contract	Full-time, 35 hours, flexible working
Salary	£35,745 (NJC pay scale 32, PO3) plus £3,405 Inner London Weighting (if applicable) + 7% non-contribution pension (employee pays 1%)
Location	Home based
Reports to	Director
Functional Links	Development Team and Policy & Profile Team
Start	March 2022 (length of contract to be negotiated)

ROLE PURPOSE

To lead on LCN's ambitious digital transformation project funded by the National Lotteries and ensure the smooth transition to the next phase of delivery. The Head of Product will be working alongside other roles delivering digital transformation for the Network.

The Head of Product will be experienced in working with and through multiple partners in an agile, lean and distributed environment and reporting to a range of stakeholders. They will be collaborative, flexible and creative in their approach.

The role will need to plan, schedule, coordinate and manage the delivery of specific projects within LCN's digital programme, agree the deliverables, deadlines and budget of each project with internal and external stakeholders and confirm contractual agreements with partners and ensure delivery on schedule, budget and to a high quality standard.

Equally important will be experience in change management projects and strong communication skills to get buy-in from Law Centre staff. A commitment to the mission of LCN and Law Centres is vital.

The Head of Product plays a vital role in ensuring that LCN's rapidly expanding digital programme continues to deliver exceptional services to Law Centres in collaboration with a range of delivery partners while remaining on schedule and in budget.

ROLE DESCRIPTION

This role is intended to provide LCN with an exemplary standard of programme and partnership management. You will be responsible for motivating multi-disciplinary project groups to deliver to their best.

Specific Areas of Responsibility

1. Plan, schedule, coordinate and manage the delivery of specific projects within LCN's digital programme
2. Agree the deliverables, deadlines and budget of each project with internal and external stakeholders
3. Scope work packages to be carried out by external agencies as and when required. Manage ongoing relationship with external agency and others regarding product maintenance and development
4. Confirm contractual agreements with partners and ensure delivery on schedule, budget and to a high-quality standard
5. Manage LCN's digital products, gathering and prioritising user requirements, defining the product vision, and working closely with developers.
6. Test and develop ways of working most productively with a range of delivery partners including design and digital agencies, developers, UX experts and sector umbrella bodies
7. Working closely with Law Centres, agree priorities and delivery timescales
8. Monitor the ongoing delivery and associated costs of projects and update shared dashboards accordingly
9. Present progress reports to LCN's Board and funders
10. Assist with fundraising for further digital development

11. Communicate progress to Law Centres and external stakeholders (through blogs, roundtables, meetings, etc)

Other

1. To attend out of hours meetings where necessary.
2. To undertake other tasks as directed appropriate to the post and to assist LCN in achieving its objectives.
3. To carry out the functions of the post with proper regard for LCN's Equal Opportunities Policy and Health & Safety.
4. To always act in an ethical manner that upholds the good reputation of LCN and its member Law Centres.

Goals

1. To be agreed annually
2. Following to Digital Transformation Project Road Map / Plan

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Experience doing digital transformation:

1. Experience of product management and managing competing priorities
2. Experience in staff, contractor and partner management in a distributed working environment
3. Proven ability to motivate and get the best from multi-disciplinary teams
4. Creative, positive approach to problem-solving
5. Proven ability to manage complex issues, respond to changes and work under pressure
6. Good listening skills, empathy, optimism and resilience. Comfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity, and ability to deal with sensitive situations
7. Flexibility in using a range of influencing styles to build strong sustainable relationships
8. Organised, methodical and logical thinker

9. Excellent written and oral communication skills
10. Team player and ability to work to tight deadlines
11. A strong commitment to the aims and objectives of Law Centres

BACKGROUND

The Law Centres Network was established in 1978 as a national collaboration amongst Law Centres to coordinate activity and to be the voice of Law Centres. Over 40 years on, LCN continues to pursue its original purpose and as such, it strives for a just and equal society where everyone's rights are defended by supporting Law Centres across the UK to use their legal skills as a tool for change. We aim to support and sustain Law Centres, to support the continued growth of the network of Law Centres, and we campaign on behalf of Law Centres and their clients for social justice.

We do this by:

- Supporting the 40 Law Centres across the UK with a range of activities. Our role is to plug the gap and help Law Centres stay ahead. These services include: provision of training; helping Law Centres develop user-led design approaches; providing fundraising assistance and consultancy; compliance and development consultancy; crisis support and assistance; and, bringing Law Centres together to share learning, collaborate and support each other.
- Growing the Law Centres network - although Law Centres assist around 125,000 people each year, there are many thousands of people in need of legal assistance who don't have access to a Law Centre. We work to identifying areas where a Law Centre could be established, supporting groups to establish Law Centres, supporting existing organisations to become Law Centres; and, we initiate new Law Centre services for particularly vulnerable groups.
- Campaigning for social justice: we work closely with Law Centres to use our shared experience to advocate for the expansion of access to justice, challenge adverse public policy decisions, influence Legal Aid and other relevant policy, represent Law Centres at all levels of Government.

Our work contributes directly to that of Law Centres. Without Law Centres hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people would have no meaningful access to justice, would be unable to resolve their problems and so would be hindered from taking up opportunities and realising their potential.

Without LCN, Law Centres would each be trying to meet these demands alone rather than pooling resource to find better ways of maintaining and developing services. Law Centres are uniquely positioned as the only not for profit specialist advice organisations giving lawyer-led advice and representation on a myriad of social welfare law issues. LCN as their umbrella body is the only organisation that can support them in this. We particularly focus on learning and extending best practice effectively across the network and we work closely with Law Centres mindful to keep clients and our communities at the heart of what we do.

About the need for the work

Law Centres, like many charities, have been challenged by a significant drop in funds (on average 40% since 2013) at the same time as significant government

programme changes have caused increased demand for our assistance (400% increase in the area of welfare benefits alone). LCN is especially committed to extending access to free legal assistance and considers that access to justice, regardless of ability to pay, is as fundamental to a civil society as is the provision of social welfare and healthcare and we see that failure to address associated legal problems lessens the impact that other interventions can have.

Legal aid is no longer available for challenging wrong decisions or denial of services and entitlements in the areas of welfare benefits, employment, private housing disrepair, exclusion from school, immigration matters including family reunion. The Legal Aid Agency themselves acknowledge that at least 865,000 have been affected by this since 2013. In addition, the digitisation and reform of Courts is underway and support for vulnerable people to access the new online dispute resolution tools and courts will be limited. Overall, there is an erosion of entitlements and routes to redress.

The political climate shows no sign of becoming any less hostile. In 2020, over 14 million people in the UK are in poverty, over 1.5 million are destitute, 320,000 without homes. In 2019, 1.6million people were reliant on food parcels from the Trussell Trust (who run 1200 of the over 2000 food banks in the UK). Brexit is impacting, through the effects of increased uncertainty, the increase in hate crime, and the refashioning of what it is to be British. Austerity is said to be over, but we can't see it.

Consequently, Law Centres are needed more than ever, working together, through LCN to have the maximum impact. It is crucial that the LCN enables Law Centres to sustain themselves and review their service models. LCN's role is to act as a centre of gravity for Law Centres, facilitating collaboration between them, as well as promoting best practice within Law Centres that will allow them to expand and improve provision of services. LCN must therefore support their on-going journey of learning and transformation.
