

Our ref: PM  
Your ref:  
Date: June 2026

Dear Applicant

**Re: Recruitment of the Chair of the Board of Trustees**

Thank you for your interest in becoming the Chair of the Board of Trustees of South West London Law Centres (“SWLLC”).

As one of the larger law centres in England and Wales we provide free legal advice, representation and access to social and economic justice services across five boroughs across South West London through legal aid, grant-funded services, Court duty schemes, community-based projects and a large pro-bono clinic programme delivered in partnership with volunteer lawyers and City law firms. Our reach is wider than the five boroughs and includes for example project work with domestic violence refuges in Surrey.

At SWLLC we operate within an increasingly challenging environment for legal aid and charitable organisations, with growing demand for our services and ongoing financial and other pressures across the sector.

Strong governance, strategic leadership and long-term sustainability are therefore central to the future direction of our organisation and to ensure we can continue to assist the most vulnerable in our society.

Our current Chair is standing down after helping to lead us through a period of structural change to bring about greater stability and review our practices and procedures so that our organisation is more resilient to the challenges we face and to enable us to continue to meet the demand for our services.

We are now looking for someone who can support us to build on that work. We need someone who has experience in governance, preferably within the charitable sector, and who has a passion for access to justice and the vision and commitment to help us improve our visibility and the impact we can make in the communities we serve.

Further details may be found on our website [www.swllc.org](http://www.swllc.org)

To apply for the position of Chair, please send your CV with a covering letter to [recruitment@swllc.org](mailto:recruitment@swllc.org). The applications will be considered on a rolling basis, and we encourage you to submit your application as soon as possible.

A panel comprising of Trustees and Members of our Senior Leadership Team will review your application in the first instance and applicants who are successful at that stage

will receive an invitation to have an informal discussion with the panel, following which a recommendation will be made to the Board of Trustees.

For further information on making an application or any queries relating to this vacancy or applications submitted please message us through [recruitment@swllc.org](mailto:recruitment@swllc.org).

I look forward to receiving your application.

Yours sincerely,

**Patrick Marples**  
**Chief Executive**  
South West London Law Centres

## **About South West London Law Centres & What We Are Looking for in Our Chair**

### **Who are we?**

South West London Law Centres (SWLLC) is one of the larger law centres in England and Wales, with over 50 years history, providing free legal advice, representation and access to justice services across South West London. Our reach is wider than the five boroughs and includes for example project work with domestic violence refugees in Surrey.

Today, SWLLC operates across three offices in Croydon, Wandsworth and Merton and supports thousands of people each year through legal aid, grant-funded services, Court duty schemes, community-based projects and a large pro-bono clinic programme delivered in partnership with volunteer lawyers and City law firms.

Our work focuses primarily on social and economic welfare law, including housing, debt, immigration and welfare rights. Alongside our legal casework, we also work with community partners, volunteers and local organisations to improve access to justice, strengthen awareness of legal rights and support community-led responses to local issues.

We operate within an increasingly challenging environment for legal aid and charitable organisations, with growing demand for services and ongoing pressures across the sector. Strong governance, strategic leadership and long-term sustainability are therefore central to the future direction of the organisation.

Please review our website for details of the breadth of services that SWLLC offers and the impact they have had - [www.swllc.org](http://www.swllc.org)

### **Chair – Role Summary**

#### **Purpose**

The Chair leads the Board of Trustees, ensuring strong governance, clear strategy, and effective oversight. They support and hold the Chief Executive to account, foster a collaborative board, and act as an ambassador for the charity.

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#### **Key Responsibilities**

##### **Leadership & Strategy**

- Provide clear strategic direction aligned to the charity's mission and values.
- Ensure robust governance, financial oversight, and risk management.
- Contribute to strategic planning, including fundraising and growth opportunities.

##### **Governance & Board Development**

- Ensure the Board is effective, skilled, and diverse.
- Support Trustee development, performance, and succession planning.
- Promote a positive, inclusive culture and manage conflicts constructively.

##### **Board Effectiveness**

- Chair meetings efficiently and enable collective decision-making.
- Ensure follow-through on actions and encourage strong Trustee engagement.

- Work with the Chief Executive to plan and deliver effective Board activity.

#### **Chief Executive Relationship**

- Build a supportive, accountable relationship with the Chief Executive.
- Lead the appraisal of the Chief Executive and support their development.
- Maintain regular and open communication.

#### **External Relations**

- Act as an ambassador for the charity and promote its work.
- Build and maintain key stakeholder relationships.

#### **What do we Look for in our Chair?**

##### **Personal Qualities**

- Credible, collaborative, and diplomatic leader.
- Strong communicator and ambassador.
- Ability to develop key relationships with Senior Leadership Team, the Board and our legal and community supporters.

##### **Experience**

- Senior leadership track record.
- Experience chairing meetings and engaging stakeholders.

##### **Knowledge & Skills**

- Understanding of charity governance and finance.
- Strong strategic thinking, leadership, and team-building skills.
- Knowledge or experience of the legal or charitable sector in which we work.

##### **Term**

The Chair and all other Trustees can serve up to a four-year term and are eligible for re-appointment for one additional term thereafter.

##### **Time commitment:** Approx. 2-3 days per month which will include: -

- Fortnightly meeting with the CEO (in-person or virtually at a mutually convenient time).
- Preparation for and chairing 6 Board meetings per year (in-person at our Croydon office or virtually and usually mid-week between 6-7.30pm).
- Reviewing and signing of documents including grants, contracts, leases.
- Oversight of our Sub-Committees and working parties including the Finance, Human Resources and Fundraising Sub-Committees who meet in between Board meetings (the Finance Sub-Committee meets monthly and others less frequently with meetings held mid-week at mutually convenient times).
- Attendance at other ad-hoc meetings including with Members of Senior Leadership Team or Staff Representatives as necessary.