



Office for Legal Complaints

Board Member

Candidate Information Pack

LEGAL
OMBUDSMAN



LEGAL SERVICES
BOARD

Welcome from the Chairs of the Legal Services Board and Office for Legal Complaints

Dear Candidate,

We are delighted that you want to know more about becoming a member of the Office for Legal Complaints (OLC) – the body responsible for ensuring there is an independent ombudsman service to consider complaints about legal services in England and Wales.

As in any sector, consumer confidence is profoundly affected by how we respond when something goes wrong, our ability to put things right, and our systems to learn from mistakes. The shared priority of both the LSB and the OLC is to get the Legal Ombudsman into the right long-term shape to discharge its statutory responsibilities to the highest possible standards of quality and timeliness. Joining the OLC Board offers a real opportunity to contribute to rebuilding and maintaining the confidence of consumers and others.

This is a critically important time to be joining the OLC. We have faced some complex challenges over recent years and urgently need to reduce significant backlogs, increase timeliness of dealing with complaints, and improve our service. The Covid-19 pandemic has also hampered operational efforts when consumer demand for legal services is rising in some areas.

However, our journey towards excellence has already started: the Legal Ombudsman's leadership team has been restructured, revised delivery plans have been agreed upon, and the LSB Board has approved a significant increase in the OLCs budget for 2021/22. The LSB Board considered that the investment was necessary to allow the OLC to address performance issues, but it has made it clear that it expects to see results. The LSB, OLC and the Ministry of Justice have a shared ambition to significantly improve customers' experience.

We are now looking for two new lay members and a practicing legal professional or legally qualified professional. It is essential that the OLC reflects the diverse range of individuals and groups whose lives the Ombudsman service touches. To maintain our success in this area, we constantly seek to introduce a cross-section of experience and expertise to our work and are actively seeking applications from all sectors and sections of the community.

This is an important time to be involved in the work of the OLC, and we very much hope you will consider applying to become a member.



Dr Helen Phillips

Chair, Legal Services Board



Elisabeth Davies

Chair, Office for Legal Complaints

About The Office For Legal Complaints

Those who use legal services do so at some of life's most significant milestones, whether embarking on a fresh domestic chapter in a newly purchased home, ending relationships, or seeking redress for a personal injury. The Office for Legal Complaints (OLC), an arm's length body of the Ministry of Justice (MoJ), administers an independent ombudsman scheme to resolve complaints by consumers about legal services - the scheme is known as the Legal Ombudsman (LeO). Something somewhere has gone wrong when people contact the Legal Ombudsman. The people who use the scheme have experienced disappointment and possibly distress when accessing legal services and attempts to resolve the matter locally have failed. It is incumbent on the Legal Ombudsman to apply effort, energy, and focus to deliver the highest-quality service, in reasonable timeframes, professionally and with transparency.

The Legal Ombudsman is independent and impartial. When it receives complaints the service is free to consumers and costs are recovered from legal service providers.

The Legal Ombudsman's Vision, Mission and Values

Mission -

To be an independent and impartial ombudsman service providing reassurance and redress while constructively challenging the legal sector to improve.

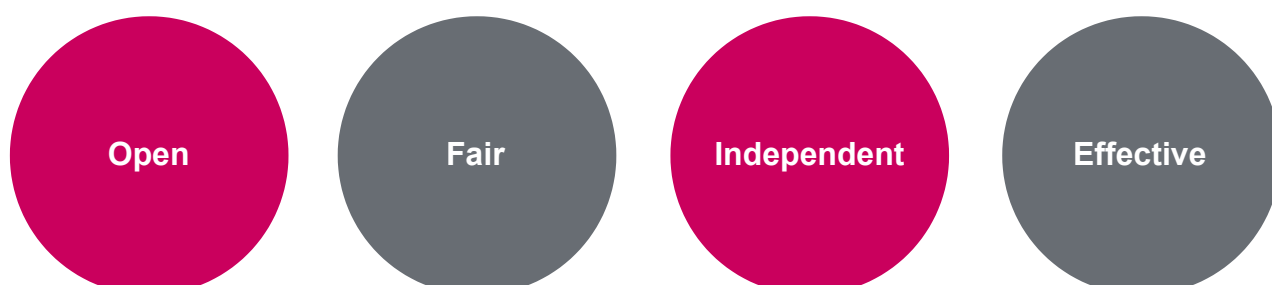
Vision -

Our work builds genuine trust and public confidence in legal services in England & Wales.

Values -

The Legal Ombudsman is committed to delivering high quality customer service in a timely and flexible way that meets the needs of individuals and ensures a fair investigation and resolution of disputes.

Our customer service principles reflect our core values. They apply to our work with complainants and service providers and our work in the wider legal sector, as well as how staff work together.



Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

The Legal Ombudsman is committed to increasing diversity and inclusion within the organisation as well as using its voice and platform to help make legal services more inclusive. This means reflecting critically on issues of diversity and inclusion within all that LeO does, identifying and taking appropriate actions to reduce inequality.

The LSB and the OLC welcome applications from anyone regardless of disability, ethnicity, heritage, gender, sexuality, religion, socio-economic background and other differences. Some of the actions to support inclusive working practices that will be applied to support diversity and inclusion during the application process include:

- Making any reasonable adjustments - for example ensuring we have sign language interpreters organised in advance if you'd like them.
- Providing this document in a Word document format readily available to download.

If there is anything else you're concerned about or think we could provide, please let us know.

Size and Structure of the OLC

The Legal Service Board (LSB) was required to establish OLC by the Legal Services Act 2007. The relationship between OLC, LSB and MoJ is a complex one in public sector governance terms. The Board of the OLC is appointed by and accountable to the LSB, which can set performance targets, and which approves its annual budget. There are further accountabilities to the MoJ.

The OLC currently comprises four lay and two non-lay members and a lay Chair. In 2021/22 this will increase to five lay members. The Legal Ombudsman service has over 250 staff and a budget of £14.471m for 2021/22. The OLC's costs are met by a combination of a levy paid by approved regulators and case fees charged to legal services providers.

The LSB was also established under the Legal Services Act 2007. The LSB appoints the OLC's Chair and Members and approves its budget. Working with the approved regulators - and with the OLC - the LSB is responsible for ensuring that the highest standards of competence, conduct and service in the legal profession are maintained for the benefit of individual consumers and the public generally.



Responsibilities of the OLC

- Administering the Legal Ombudsman scheme, which considers complaints about lawyers. This includes developing Scheme Rules, which set out the detailed jurisdiction of the scheme, how complaints should be made, what will be considered in determining the complaint and when respondents will be charged a case fee, amongst many other things. Scheme Rules must be approved by the LSB and, for case fees, the Lord Chancellor also.
- Ensuring that the performance of the scheme meets statutory and other performance related objectives.
- Establishing any sub-committees deemed necessary to assist with the effective discharge of its functions.
- Entering into appropriate arrangements with the LSB and MoJ to ensure co-operation between the three organisations.
- Reporting to the LSB on the performance of the scheme, including against any performance measures set by the LSB.
- Submitting a projected budget at the start of each financial year to the LSB for approval.
- Establishing reciprocal relationships with approved regulators with regard to information sharing.
- Appointing Ombudsmen - the OLC appoints the Chief Ombudsman, and other Ombudsmen, with the consent of the Chief Ombudsman; there is currently a team of 15 Ombudsmen (including the Chief Ombudsman). The OLC determines the terms of appointment and remuneration of Ombudsmen and staff of the service.
- Employing other staff necessary to carry out the functions of the scheme.

The Legal Ombudsman carries out its responsibilities by:

- Investigating complaints about the service consumers have received from their service provider and working to resolve the situation.
- Sharing learning from investigations so that providers understand good service and how to resolve complaints themselves.

Role of an OLC Board Member

As a member reporting to the Chair of the OLC Board, you will work with the Chair and other members of the OLC Board to set the strategic direction of the Legal Ombudsman scheme and drive performance, to provide strong governance, and to safeguard the independence of the scheme in relation to decisions on complaints about legal services.

You will help the Legal Ombudsman scheme improve performance and provide the valuable information it holds to regulators, consumers and legal services providers in ways they find most helpful. This reflects the important role that the Legal Ombudsman scheme plays in underpinning consumer confidence.

You will also need to be aware of the opportunities and challenges of the changing market for legal services – and the implications of the changing nature of regulation.

As a member of the OLC Board you will have individual and collective responsibility to:

- Ensure high performance and an excellent level of service in the administration of the Legal Ombudsman scheme, having regard to the generally accepted principles of good practice in the administration of such schemes;
- Ensure high performance and an excellent level of service in the handling of complaints;
- Support the OLC Chair in providing strategic direction to the Legal Ombudsman scheme;
- Ensure that the OLC and the Legal Ombudsman scheme are organised and managed in a way that is as far as practicable compatible with the regulatory objectives set out in the Legal Services Act 2007;
- Work effectively with the Chief Ombudsman to ensure adherence to the principles of good governance and that proper accounts are kept; and,
- Ensure compliance with relevant general guidelines laid down by the government relating to all non-departmental government bodies.

Person Specification

The OLC is looking to recruit two lay Board Members to support the diversity of skills on its Board. The OLC is particularly keen to hear from individuals with expertise in at least ONE of the following areas:

- Operations, in particular from a customer service perspective and/or managing complex business transformation and growth.
- Broad financial expertise, potentially including procurement negotiations and contract management.
- Information technology strategy and systems and/or Information handling and GDPR.

The OLC is also looking to recruit one non-lay Board Member – this means a legal professional or legally qualified professional.

For these purposes, to be a non-lay member you must be, or have been an authorised person in relation to an activity which is a reserved legal activity under the Legal Services Act 2007.

Typically, this would mean a: barrister; solicitor; public notary; licensed conveyancer; chartered legal executive; registered patent attorney; registered trade mark attorney; costs lawyer; or, someone granted a right of audience or right to conduct litigation¹. A non-lay member can be non-practicing.

If you want to confirm your eligibility, please contact OLC@inclusiveboards.co.uk

1 By virtue of section 27(2) or section 28(2)(a) of the Courts and Legal Services Act 1990 (c.41) (rights of audience and rights to conduct litigation)

Essential Criteria for all Roles:

- A sound understanding of and exposure to corporate governance at a senior level, particularly during periods of significant change, and gained through participation on Boards, committees or similar structures.
- A strong and demonstrable commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- A supportive team-player with an approachable style, excellent communication, influencing and relationship management skills.
- Ability to constructively challenge and show independence of view, whilst having the ability to establish collaborative relationships.
- Strong intellect and sound judgement, and a high level of probity and integrity.
- An ability to develop and sustain constructive relationships with senior-level stakeholders.
- A solid commitment to high ethical standards of integrity and honesty and the Seven Principles of Public Life.

Desirable Criteria:

- Previous experience of sitting as a non-executive on a Board in the public sector.



Additional Information

Term of office: OLC Board members are appointed for periods of between two and five years. There is the possibility of reappointment for one further term only. In considering reappointment, the LSB will take the OLC Chair's regular appraisals into account.

Time Commitment: The time commitment for an OLC Board member is estimated at a minimum of 2 days a month across the period of appointment.

Location: The Legal Ombudsman is based in central Birmingham, where the OLC holds its meetings. During the Covid-19 pandemic, all Board business is being conducted remotely via video-conferencing. Whilst hoping to return to face-to-face meetings when possible, the OLC will look to continue to offer flexible meeting options.

Remuneration: The annual remuneration is £10,000. The appointee will be eligible for travel and subsistence costs necessarily incurred on OLC business at rates set centrally by the LSB. As the LSB employs and pays OLC Members its expenses policy applies to claims by the OLC Chair and members.

Conflicts of Interest: All candidates will be asked to disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest, and these will be discussed with the candidate to establish whether and what action is needed to avoid a conflict or the perception of a conflict.

Standards in public life: Each Board member must ensure that during the period of their tenure they are committed to and conduct themselves in accordance with the seven principles of public life.

How to Apply

The recruitment process is being undertaken by Inclusive Boards on behalf of The Legal Services Board and Office for Legal Complaints. If you wish to apply for this position, please supply the following:

- A detailed CV setting out your career history, with responsibilities and achievements.
- A covering letter (maximum two sides) highlighting your suitability for the role and how you meet the person specification. Please note that the covering letter is an essential and important part of your application.
- Details of two professional referees together with a brief statement of their relationship to you and over what period of time they have known you, referees will not be contacted without your prior consent.
- Diversity monitoring form - your data will be stored separately from your application and will at no time be connected to you or your application.

If you have any questions or would like to arrange a call to discuss the role please email OLC@inclusiveboards.co.uk or call 0207 267 8369

Please send your CV and cover letter to OLC@inclusiveboards.co.uk by 23.59 16/05/2021.

- First stage interviews ongoing with Inclusive Boards up to and including w/c 31/05/2021
- Interviews with Office for Legal Complaints held 21/06/2021 and 22/06/2021

The selection panel will consist of four members:

- Chair of Recruiting Panel, LSB Board Member
- Chair of the Office for Legal Complaints
- LSB Board Member
- Independent member