



Office for Legal Complaints

Board Member

Candidate Information Pack

LEGAL
OMBUDSMAN



LEGAL SERVICES
BOARD

INCLUSIVE BOARDS

Welcome from the Chair of the Legal Services Board

Thank you for your interest in becoming a member of the Office for Legal Complaints (OLC).

The OLC is responsible for administering the independent ombudsman service – the Legal Ombudsman. Independent and impartial, its role is to resolve complaints from consumers of legal services while at the same time driving improvements in the legal sector by providing feedback to the profession.

The OLC is the Board of the Legal Ombudsman, and the Legal Services Board (LSB) is responsible for appointing its Chair and Members. The LSB also holds the OLC to account for its performance.

As we set out in Reshaping Legal Services, our strategy for the legal services sector, the ability of consumers to complain to a single, fully independent ombudsman scheme, is crucial to delivering public confidence in legal services. The OLC has faced some complex challenges over recent years, but it is focused on ensuring it has a clear plan for improving its performance and promoting public trust and confidence. There are positive signs of progress, but there is still a long way to go. So, this is an opportunity for you to help ensure the OLC plays its full part in shaping consumer redress fit for the future.

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

We are looking for a new lay member with either experience of providing services to users; or solid strategic business experience and acumen. A lay member is someone who is not a legal professional or legally qualified. Alongside this we are looking for a new non-lay member.

The OLC must reflect 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. We 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 I very much hope you will consider applying to become a member.



Dr Helen Phillips

Chair, Legal Services Board

Welcome from the Chair of the Office for Legal Complaints

When I became Chair of the Office for Legal Complaints (OLC) in April 2020, I set myself three priorities centred on rebuilding confidence in the Legal Ombudsman (LeO). Just over two years later, the outlook for the Legal Ombudsman has now fundamentally shifted as has the role of the OLC Board.

LeO has taken significant steps forward. The front-line initiatives that have been put into practice, together with the many innovations and improvements generated by LeO's people, are having a tangible impact on the experience of those using the scheme. By taking a different approach to resourcing, realising the benefits of national recruitment and flexible working, LeO has unlocked the resourcing challenge that had for so long limited its ability to make headway toward providing an acceptable level of service to its customers.

Throughout LeO's recovery journey, it's been essential to strike the difficult balance between being ambitious about what LeO can achieve and setting plans that are credible and realistic. The OLC Board is critical to this, providing constructive challenge and scrutiny alongside support to the leadership.

As OLC Chair, I have seen a marked difference in tone between the conversations we were having a year ago with stakeholders about their confidence in the Legal Ombudsman. LeO's willingness to change, the progress it has made, and the openness with which it has worked, have made a profound difference. As we move through this second recovery year, there are challenges ahead, not least ensuring LeO delivers on its commitments to customers in the face of significant inflationary pressures. As a Board it is beholden on us to avoid complacency whilst appreciating LeO is on the path to a sustainable level of good performance and one which meets the needs and expectations of both users and providers of legal services. This really matters. Legal services occupy a uniquely important part in our lives: accessed at the point of significant transitions or transactions with potentially lifechanging consequences.

While there is still a long way to go, this is such a significant and positive time to be joining the OLC Board and I'm grateful for your interest. If you feel you have the skills required, alongside the right values match and motivation, then I do hope you will apply.

Best wishes,



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 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), overseen by the Legal Services Board (LSB), 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 with the legal services provider have failed. It is incumbent on the Legal Ombudsman to apply effort, energy, and focus to deliver the highest-quality service, in reasonable time frames, professionally and with transparency.

The Legal Ombudsman is independent and impartial. 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.

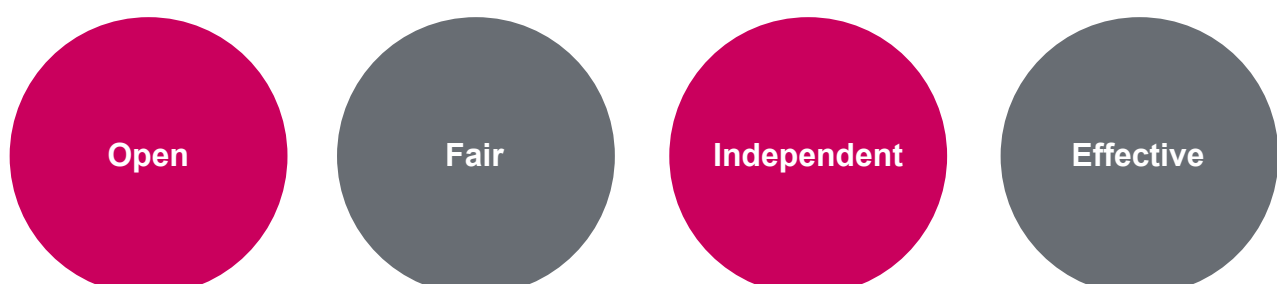
Vision:

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 Equality, 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, geographic diversity 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.

We welcome applications from candidates from across England and Wales.

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

Size, Structure and Relationships of the OLC

The Legal Service Board (LSB) and the OLC were established under 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 (Chair and Members) 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 five lay and two non-lay members and a lay Chair. The Legal Ombudsman service has over 250 staff and a budget of £15.317m for 2022/23. The OLC's costs are met by a combination of a levy paid by approved regulators and case fees charged to legal services providers.

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 Board 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;
- Ensure compliance with relevant general guidelines laid down by the government relating to all non-departmental government bodies; and,
- Ensure positive relationships are maintained with OLC's stakeholders.

Person Specification

THE OLC IS LOOKING TO RECRUIT TWO NEW BOARD MEMBERS TO SUPPORT THE DIVERSITY OF SKILLS ON ITS BOARD.

One Board member will be lay, that is a member who is not a legal professional or legally qualified. The OLC is particularly keen to hear from individuals with either of the following sets of experiences:

- Experience of interacting with or providing services to service users; understanding of real or perceived barriers to accessing public services; awareness of different accessibility needs.
- Business knowledge, acumen, and leadership in a comparable organisation including an understanding of customer services operations; understanding of operational delivery and demand management. Expertise and awareness in communications and marketing gained through this experience would also be of interest.

One Board member will be non-lay– this means a legal professional or legally qualified professional.

For these purposes, to be a non-lay member you must be, or have been at any time 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 litigation. 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 Both Roles:

- A sound understanding of and exposure to corporate governance at a senior level, gained through participation on Boards, committees or similar structures – either as an executive or as a non-executive.
- 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 and complex relationships with senior-level stakeholders.
- Financial and economic awareness gained from familiarity of operating in a complex environment.
- A solid commitment to high ethical standards of integrity and honesty and the Seven Principles of Public Life.



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 has offices in Birmingham and Cardiff. Board meetings are held mostly in person at the Birmingham office, but the OLC does 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, including political activity, 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 Nolan's 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 essential criteria in the person specification alongside either the lay or non-lay requirements. Please note that the covering letter is an 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 02/10/2022.

- First stage interviews ongoing with Inclusive Boards up to and including w/c 24/10/2022
- Interviews with the selection panel to be held on 1 or 2 December 2022.

The selection panel will consist of four members:

- Gary Kildare (Chair of Recruiting Panel, LSB Board Member)
- Elisabeth Davies (Chair of the Office for Legal Complaints)
- Stephen Gowland (LSB Board Member)
- Paula McDonald (Independent Member)

INCLUSIVE BOARDS

About Us

Inclusive Boards is the UK's leading board diversity practice. We have worked alongside over 300 organisations to provide support with Board recruitment, development and governance reviews. We strive to be at the forefront of equity and diversity, and believe that everyone should be represented at Board level. Additionally, we also provide bespoke training sessions on a variety of subjects including personal branding, inclusive recruitment practices and board structures and governance.

Why Not Get in Touch?

If you think we can help to improve diversity on your Board, please don't hesitate to contact us via hello@inclusiveboards.co.uk.

If you aspire to work on a Board, you can sign up to become a candidate and be eligible for the latest opportunities as and when they become available.

