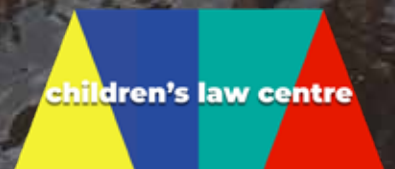


Children's Law Centre

Trustee Recruitment Information Pack



childrenslawcentre.org.uk



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Chairperson's Welcome

As Chairperson of the Children's Law Centre (CLC) and a board member of a number of years I am acutely aware of the important work carried out by the staff team and the impact it has had on children's lives.

Annually CLC works with around 3000 children and young people, their parents, carers and professionals to provide legal advice, advocacy and representation so they can access the services to which they are entitled. We highlight to duty bearers where services are not meeting the assessed needs of children and young people, and we work in partnership with other representative organisations to campaign for better rights and equality of treatment for children and young people, particularly the most disadvantaged.

In recent years, severe gaps in children's rights have turned into a chasm, with delays caused by repeated NI Executive collapses, the impact of Brexit, the Covid pandemic, and the current economic crisis.

Under the direction of Paddy Kelly, CLC has been working diligently for those children and young people to defend their rights and their access to services, and has done so consistently since 1997. The charity continues to punch above its weight having achieved some significant changes in promoting children's rights. This has included enabling those with disability and mental health needs to access services, and supporting those with assessed special educational needs to access the support they need to grow and thrive. We have also dealt with broader issues around the treatment of children and young people in custody, through to a successful complaint around the recent High Street Voucher Scheme.

As with all charities, our Board of Trustees provide vital support to this work – bringing



a range of expertise that has enabled CLC to provide ongoing support to children and young people across Northern Ireland. They bring a range of skills and experience that drives our strategy, supports our staff team, and contributes to the defense of children's rights.

Our Trustees have also benefitted from developing their skills in charitable governance, learning about our areas of work and the impact of disadvantage and poor decision making on children's lives. They can grow their knowledge and work collegiately with others within a growing network of people who support societal change and want to see how their contribution can make a difference.

As we continue to grow and develop our work, we have identified the need for additional Trustees to supplement our current skill levels and assist the Centre in continuing its vital work.

If you feel you want to be part of an organisation that drives change to improve children's lives and helps build better futures, we would love to hear from you.

Alicia Toal
Chairperson

CLC's Strategic Plan 2022-25 can be downloaded [here](#)

Vision Mission Values

Vision

Children's rights are guaranteed without discrimination.

Mission

Ensuring children's rights are respected, realised and vindicated through participation, partnership and representation.

Values

- We are child centred
- We have integrity
- We are accountable
- We are rights based
- We are independent
- We promote equality



Children's Rights
Change Children's Lives

Who We Are



At CLC we have always believed that children's rights change children's lives.

Founded upon the principles laid down in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), we were established in 1997 to provide legal advice for children and young people. We have since developed into the leading children's rights charity in this jurisdiction, helping thousands of children vindicate their rights each year, ensuring their access to services and equality of treatment.

In recent years we have overseen rapid growth in CLC, rising to meet the increasing pressures on children and young people and demand for rights protections.

As a leading charity at the forefront of progressing and implementing children's rights, CLC has worked on some of the key issues emerging both locally and internationally.

Our freephone advice line for children and young people, 'CHALKY', was launched in 2000 and has provided help and assistance ever since.

For over twenty five years, we have worked to protect the rights of all children living in this jurisdiction, particularly those who are the most disadvantaged, including children with disabilities, special educational needs, mental ill health and homelessness issues.

As a leading organisation at the forefront of progressing and implementing children's rights, CLC has worked on some of the key issues emerging both locally and internationally. We were instrumental in the implementation of key aspects of the UNCRC, such as the introduction of the NI Commissioner for Children and Young People in 2003. We have also been at the heart of key domestic achievements around children's rights, including the Children's Services Co-operation Act (Northern Ireland) 2015. More recently, CLC has led the way in protecting children and young people's rights during COVID-19, securing a vulnerable child action plan to ensure decisions do not adversely impact vulnerable children and young people. CLC also leads the voluntary

Who We Are (continued)

sector through the UNCRC reporting process, having submitted the NGO stakeholder report again in 2022.

Through the years, CLC has had a positive impact on the lives of children through strategic litigation. Successes have included a declaration to ensure health trusts carry out assessments of needs for the carers of disabled children, and a judgment that ensured a duty to provide accommodation to homeless 16 and 17 year old children. Recently CLC secured a favourable judgment in a judicial review case against the decision to re-purpose a temporary respite care facility during COVID-19. The strategic litigation work of CLC has rapidly grown in recent years, with significant ongoing litigation in the areas of mental health and education.

The work of CLC has been guided by our youth panel, Youth@CLC. Our panel of young people have led the way in campaigning on young people's rights. Their work has covered issues as broad as youth justice, racism, votes at 16 and the ending of physical

Our belief that children's rights change children's lives continues to be the force that drives our work forward.

punishment. Youth@CLC has led delegations to meetings at the UN and have met with a wide range of decision makers ensuring the voices of children and young people in this jurisdiction are heard.

The Children's Law Centre continues to grow as a leading children's rights organisation, with work continuing on a broad range of children's rights issues. Our belief that children's rights change children's lives continues to be the force that drives our work forward.



What We Do

The Children's Law Centre is a unique charitable organisation in this jurisdiction. Guided by our youth panel, we work to create a society where all children and young people can access services and opportunities to enjoy their childhood and realise their full potential.

We give a voice to children and young people, including the most disadvantaged, and provide legal advice and representation. We develop policy to inform decision makers, and host training and events on children's rights issues, including a prestigious annual lecture, attended by senior members of the judiciary, high level government officials and a diverse range of NGOs.

Youth Advocacy

Our youth advisory panel, Youth@CLC, is a group of young people aged between 14 – 18 years old. Youth@CLC campaigns on key issues affecting children and young people, seeks to influence decision makers, raises awareness of children's rights and guides the work of the Centre.

Youth@CLC collaborates with a range of organisations and in 2020 were runner's

up in the Pearson World Changer Awards for their work developing REE Rights Responder, a digital chatbot offering advice and information on children's rights.

Legal Services

We provide a free legal advice service and legal representation for children and young people. Our legal services are child focused and the child is always our client. We work to ensure that public authorities, tribunals and courts recognise children as rights holders with the right to express their views and have those views considered.

We strive to ensure that when decisions are being made:

- The decision is UNCRC and children's rights compliant.
- The voice of the child is always heard.
- The child's best interests are at the heart of decision making.
- All children have equality of access to their legal rights, regardless of their age, background or circumstances.

We run a freephone legal advice line called CHALKY, providing advice for thousands



What We Do (continued)

of young people each year, and a digital information and advice tool called REE Rights Responder. We also provide free legal representation, particularly at SENDIST and Mental Health Review Tribunals, and undertake strategic litigation following the criteria contained within our casework policy.

Policy

Our policy research and advocacy work informs and influences decision makers. We ensure that government is reminded of their international obligations including under the UNCRC when drafting policy and legislation. CLC also leads the NI NGO stakeholder engagement through the UK reporting process. Through our casework we identify key issues impacting on children and propose evidence based solutions, underpinned by the children's rights framework. Supported by our team of legal experts, we provide analysis of law and policy practice.

of their rights. We also provide a range of tailored programmes to professionals in the children's sector and to the wider voluntary and community sector, to duty bearers in government departments and to the legal profession. Topics include mental health capacity, special educational needs, Article 21 – Children's (NI) Order 1995 and the UNCRC. These can be tailored to suit each audience.

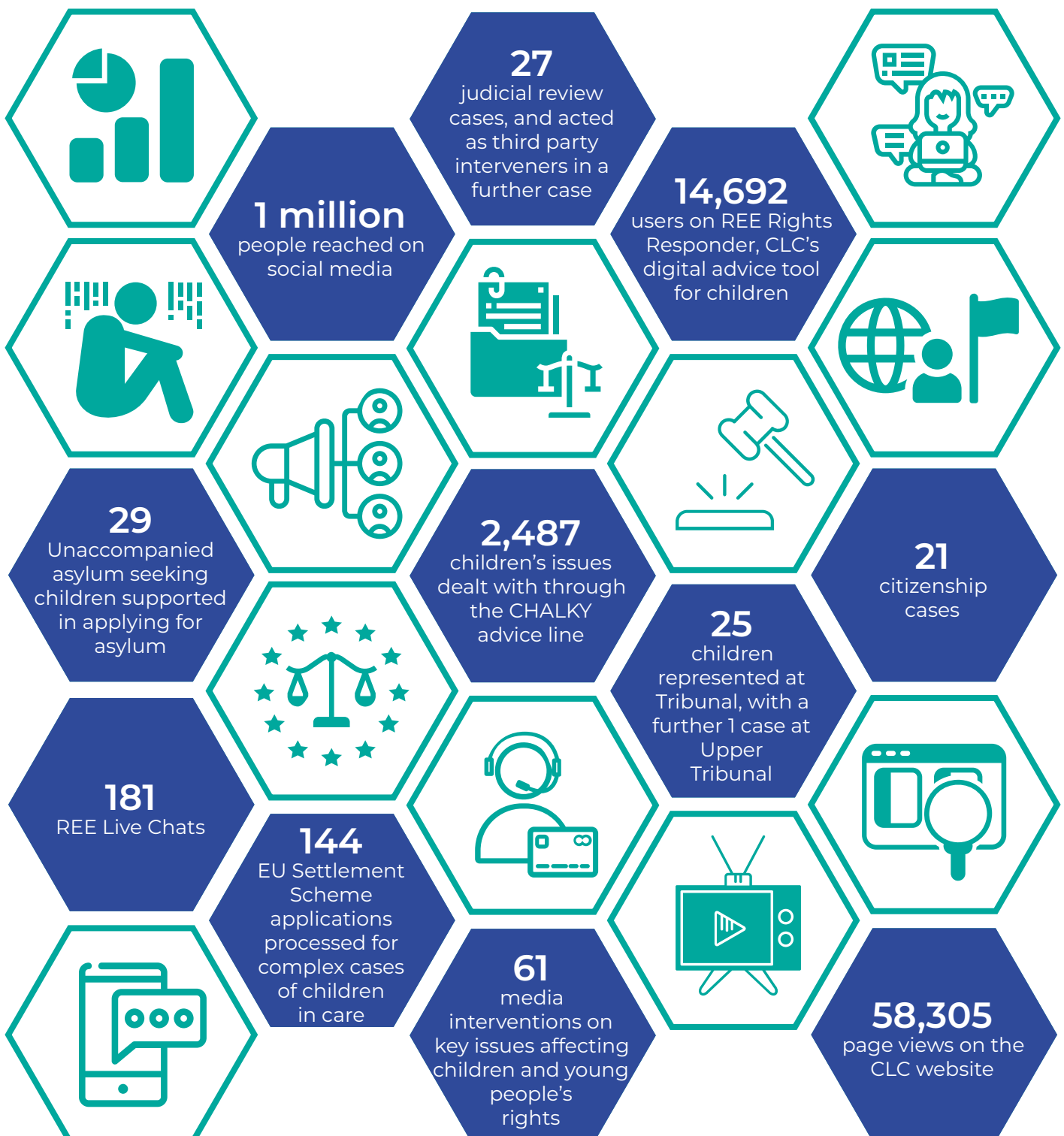
The Children's Law Centre has a small membership of mainly individuals and organisations working in the children's services and human rights field. As part of our current strategic plan we will be looking at how we can grow our engagement with current and new audiences and how, through this, we can develop new methods of support and service to children and young people, parents, carers, educators, employers, sector colleagues and others who advocate for children's rights and access to services.

Training and Engagement

Providing training and learning is one of the best ways in which we can inform children and young people, their parents and carers



Year in Numbers



You can download our most recent annual report by visiting:
<https://childrenslawcentre.org.uk/annual-reports/>

Impact at a Glance



Successful Respite Decision

Successful legal challenge on the decision to repurpose a temporary respite care facility. Continue to challenge systemic failures.



Led Against Discrimination

Led the public campaign against the exclusion of children from the High Street Voucher Scheme, supporting complaints by children.



Gave Children a Voice

Gathered survey responses on matters affecting over 1,000 children, alongside workshops of over 130 harder to reach children.



Influenced Restraint Report

Brought legal expertise to support the campaign against unlawful restraint. Influenced key recommendations in a final report.



Delivered Prestigious Lecture

The 2021 annual lecture was successfully delivered to a range of esteemed guests, senior members of the judiciary and streamed online.



Leading Voice on SEND

Recognised as a leading voice of expertise on systemic and emerging issues facing children with special education needs and disabilities.



Defended Human Rights

Worked with organisations across the UK and Ireland to protect rights under attack. Presented to the Ad Hoc Committee on a Bill of Rights.



Set the standard on EUSS

Identified 144 complex cases of children in care and successfully assisted in their applications, setting the UK standard for similar cases.

We Increased Our Impact

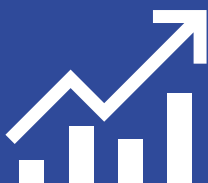
In the year 2021-22 CLC increased the impact of the work being carried out on behalf of children and young people. We reached more people than ever before, dealt with more issues through the advice service, and took on an unprecedented level of litigation.

+146

more issues dealt with through CHALKY

+11,464

more users on REE Rights Responder



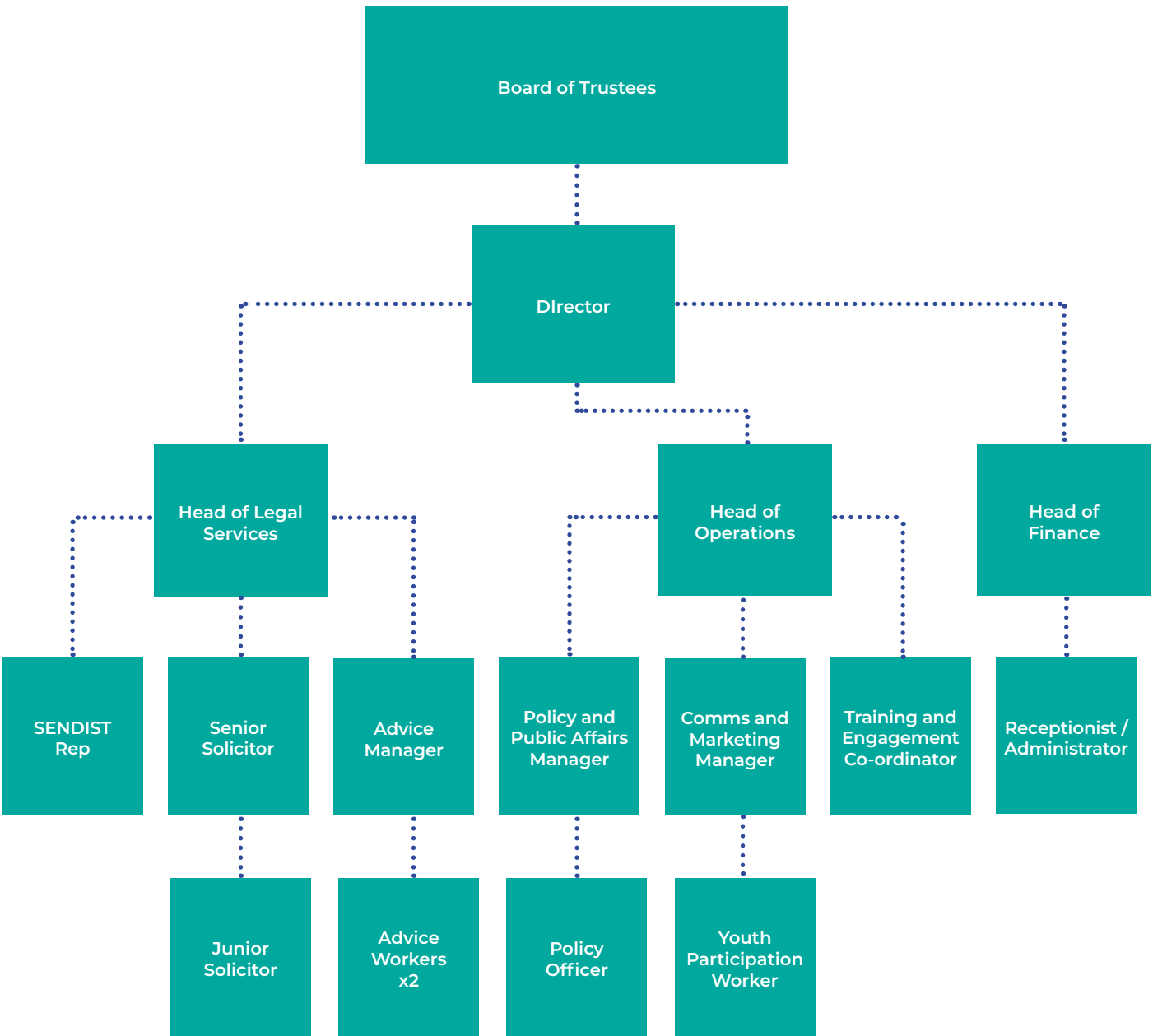
+33,257

more page views on the CLC website

Highest

number of judicial review cases ever taken

How We Are Organised



Accounts Overview

	Unrestricted funds 2022 £	Restricted funds 2022 £	Total 2022 £	Unrestricted funds 2021 £	Restricted funds 2021 £	Total 2021 £
<u>Income and endowments from:</u>						
Donations and legacies	384	-	384	506	-	506
Charitable activities	54,154	853,081	907,235	35,698	962,786	998,484
Investments	36,178	-	36,178	38,191	-	38,191
Movement in pension provision	829	-	829	61,138	-	61,138
Total income	91,545	853,081	944,626	135,533	962,786	1,098,319
<u>Expenditure on:</u>						
Charitable activities	43,016	755,210	798,226	37,582	653,189	690,771
Net incoming resources before transfers	48,529	97,871	146,400	97,951	309,597	407,548
Gross transfers between funds	(9,381)	9,381	-	141,431	(141,431)	-
Net income for the year/ Net movement in funds	39,148	107,252	146,400	239,382	168,166	407,548
Fund balances at 1 April 2021	277,469	526,081	803,550	38,087	357,915	396,002
Fund balances at 31 March 2022	316,617	633,333	949,950	277,469	526,081	803,550

Full Accounts Available

A full copy of the CLC accounts for the year 2021-22 can be made available on request

Accounts Overview (continued)

	2022		2021	
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets				
Intangible assets		31,848		52,613
Tangible assets		249,596		259,137
Investment properties		214,000		214,000
		<u>495,444</u>		<u>525,750</u>
Current assets				
Debtors	145,298		78,119	
Cash at bank and in hand	553,881		510,071	
	<u>699,179</u>		<u>588,190</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	<u>(63,429)</u>		<u>(109,334)</u>	
Net current assets		<u>635,750</u>		<u>478,856</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>1,131,194</u>		<u>1,004,606</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year		<u>(156,352)</u>		<u>(170,810)</u>
Provisions for liabilities				
Defined benefit pension liability	24,892		30,246	
	<u>(24,892)</u>		<u>(30,246)</u>	
Net assets		<u><u>949,950</u></u>		<u><u>803,550</u></u>

	2022		2021	
	£	£	£	£
Income funds				
Restricted funds		633,333		526,081
<u>Unrestricted funds</u>				
Designated funds	10,165		10,165	
General unrestricted funds	331,344		297,550	
Pension reserve	<u>(24,892)</u>		<u>(30,246)</u>	
		<u>316,617</u>		<u>277,469</u>
		<u><u>949,950</u></u>		<u><u>803,550</u></u>

Meet the Board of Trustees



Alicia Toal
Chairperson

Alicia is the Chief Executive of Voice of Young People In Care (VOYPIC) a children's charity that promotes the rights and voice of children in care, aiming to ensure that every child has a safe, stable, and positive experience of care and is involved in decisions about their life.

with Barnardos Northern Ireland. Barnardos work with children, young people and families across Northern Ireland to promote better outcomes and build better futures. They deliver a wide range of services, from providing family support and early intervention to working directly with children and families who have experienced adversity and need our support.



Jerome Finnegan
Trustee

Jerome is the Senior Policy and Advocacy Adviser at Save the Children. He has worked on a wide range of issues, from early education to climate change and poverty, and experience of working with children and families to campaign for change. Jerome is committed to human rights and working collaboratively with others to achieve positive social change.



Duane Farrell
Trustee

Duane Farrell has been working in the Community and Voluntary sector in Northern Ireland for over 20 years. During that time, he has worked within the LGB&TQ+ community, as well as with older people and children & young people. In these roles, he has developed services, led campaigns and worked to influence legislation and policy.

Currently, Duane is the Chief Executive of Relate NI, and a Trustee of Grow NI.



Amanda Stewart
Trustee

Amanda is the Participation Development Worker with the Northern Ireland Youth Forum and has worked with children and young people for a number of years. Her current role focus is on housing, homelessness and mental health issues.



Trása Canavan
Trustee

Trása is the Senior Policy & Public Affairs Lead

Meet the Board of Trustees (continued)



Shirelle Stewart
Trustee

Shirelle is the Northern Ireland Director for the National Autistic Society. There are an estimated 700,000 people with autism in the UK and the society provides a range of services and supports to help them and their families.



Brian Moss
Trustee

Brian is a Solicitor with Worthington's Solicitors where he specialises in judicial review litigation and disputes involving public law and human rights issues in a wide range of areas, with a particular interest in educational law, and in immigration.



Articles of Association

The CLC Articles of Association can be downloaded [here](#).

Trustee Role Description

Trustees are expected to act only in the best interests of the CLC. This means putting the charity's interests before any other personal or professional interests.

Roles and Responsibilities:

To govern - strategically directing and controlling the organisation through collective strategic decision making. This is a mandatory requirement of everyone on the Board.

To bring their expertise and advice - making advice and expertise available to the Board, staff and volunteers.

The Governance Role

Together the Trustees must fulfil the five core governance functions:

- **Determine mission and strategy** – setting the organisation's strategic direction and determining how it will achieve this.
- **Accountability** – being held to account for the actions of the organisation and holding those who carry out the work (staff and/or volunteers) to account.
- **Maintain the Board and its processes** – ensuring Board renewal (recruitment, induction and retirement), effective decision making and information sharing processes, positive group dynamics, and reflection, learning and development for the Board as necessary.
- **Safeguard assets** – acting as custodian of the assets, tangible (money, property etc) and intangible (organisation's reputation and name), ensuring that assets are used appropriately and constitutionally. Ensuring that there are sufficient assets for the organisation's survival.
- **Act as an ambassador for the organisation** – linking the organisation

to its stakeholders, such as members, the community, funders etc.

- **Manage and support the Director** and their work.

Conduct (Legal)

Trustees must:

- **Be active** – you cannot be a dormant or 'sleeping' Board member. You are still liable for the decisions the others make in your absence.
- **Act jointly** – an individual has no powers on their own unless they have been specifically given them by the Board (minuted at a quorate meeting).
- **Act constitutionally (and within the law)** – make sure that you act within the powers and objects (remit) set out in our constitution. Including following the constitution on how meetings are run and how the Board is recruited.
- **Act in the interests of the beneficiaries** – consider the best interests of the beneficiaries and make decisions that are best for them.
- **Act reasonably and honestly** – remembering to minute discussions and

Trustee Role Description (continued)

debates so that your reasonableness can be demonstrated.

- **Have a duty of care** – act prudently and reasonably in relation to the organisation and its resources.
- **Delegate appropriately** - remembering that the Board remains responsible and accountable.
- **Not benefit personally** – unless allowed specifically to do so in the constitution or by law.
- **Avoid and declare any conflicts of interest** – manage actual conflicts of interest through a written process/policy and elsewhere avoid the appearance of conflicts of interest.

Ethos

A commitment to children's rights.

A commitment to the principle of equal opportunities.

A commitment to children's participation.

Time Commitment

Board meetings frequency and duration:

The Board meet five times a year (four Board meetings and the AGM). Board meetings last approximately two hours.

Sub-committee meetings frequency and duration:

Two sub- committees – Finance, Audit and Risk (FAR), and Human Resources and Governance (HRG) – meet quarterly, via zoom prior to each Board meeting. Time commitment 1.5hrs approximately.

Board term:

Trustees are elected to the Board for a three year term and can serve up to three consecutive terms.

How to Apply

Please complete the Trustee application form and return by post or email to:

Paddy Kelly
Rights House
127-131 Ormeau Road
Belfast, BT7 1SH

Email: reception@childrenslawcentre.org

Closing date for applications is 11.59pm on Sunday 15th October 2023

Children's Law Centre

Rights House
2nd Floor
127 - 131 Ormeau Road
Belfast, BT7 1SH

Tel: 028 9024 5704
Fax: 028 9024 5679
Email: info@childrenslawcentre.org

CHALKY Freephone Advice Line:
0808 808 5678
chalky@childrenslawcentre.org

REE Rights Responder
#Ask REE at reerights.com

The Children's Law Centre is a charity and can accept donations to support our work.

If you are a UK taxpayer, Gift Aid your donation and we can claim back an extra 25p from your taxes for every £1 you donate. Donate securely online at www.cafonline.org by selecting Children's Law Centre under 'find a charity' or send your donation directly to Children's Law Centre.

Children's Law Centre is a company limited by guarantee.

Charity Registration No. NIC101148
Company Registration No. NI033998 (Northern Ireland)

