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| **DIRECTOR – APPLICATION PACK** |

The Legal Aid Practitioners Group (‘LAPG’) is a membership organisation with promotion of access to justice as its focus.

Members include high street legal aid private firms of solicitors, Law Centres, Not for Profit advice agencies, Costs Lawyers, barristers and chambers.

The legal aid system in England and Wales is complex, with detailed criteria for access to publicly funded legal advice and representation in different categories of law and legal problem. In recent years it has been seriously damaged by the implementation of the Legal Aid Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 and by successive governmental cuts to legal aid and the justice system.

LAPG represents the interests of its members who work in legal aid because of their firm belief that excellent quality legal advice and representation should be provided and access to justice ensured, regardless of ability to pay.

Broadly speaking our work focus is three fold;

* Influencing, for which we seek to improve access to justice at a political level
* Operational, where we work together to secure coalface improvement to the various working practices and
* Community based where we help and support legal aid practitioners to build a positive and sustainable career path.

We campaign and lobby on issues of concern, and influence policy relevant to justice issues. We are often the first port of call for MPs and Lords who see LAPG as being an expert specialist organisation with unsurpassed knowledge of the detailed operation and history of the legal aid system and how it works on the ground for clients. We have a proud reputation for delivering accurate and reliable information about a range of issues affecting the public’s right to justice.

Being a small and responsive organisation LAPG can move swiftly and address quickly the changing landscape of justice and legal aid.

LAPG supports its members by a range of initiatives, including providing regular updates across all areas of practice affecting the legal aid sector, operational issues and policy development. We also support members by responding to individual queries and raising problem areas with senior representatives of the Legal Aid Agency and Ministry of Justice. We attend a range of meetings with stakeholders on all aspects of the operation of legal aid in order to raise issues of concern and to suggest solutions.

We work closely with other organisations including the Young Legal Aid Lawyers, and groups concerned with access to justice issues to achieve our aims.

We also organize the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year Awards (LALYS) each summer celebrating the work of legal aid lawyers and raising the profile of the need for justice for clients. We hold a day long annual conference in October each year which is attended by practitioners, managers, and students. We publish an Annual Report showcasing the work we have done across a range of initiatives.

We have published two editions of the Manifesto for Legal Aid, which set out in detail the changes we think need to be made to make the justice and legal aid system fit for the future, and to ensure that the legal aid profession is sustainable in future years. These have been particularly useful for campaigning and influencing policy makers.

In conjunction with experienced consultants we arrange courses for practitioners including the Certificate in Practice Management for legal aid organisations, and courses on particular requirements of the legal aid contract. We are in the process of devising an Introduction to Legal Aid course to assist busy practitioners. Course provision generates income for the organisation in addition to membership fees, sponsorship and grants.

We have widened our membership reach by introducing ‘friends of LAPG’ to enable and encourage interested organisations and individuals other than legal aid practitioners to join us. We have run a number of events with and for our ‘friends’ who help support both financially and by way of the additional influence they bring.

The staff team comprises the Director and Operations/Deputy Director who work closely together on all aspects of the Group’s projects. Our third staff member is dedicated to supporting the work of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Legal Aid, which meets regularly and also provides training to MPs on aspects of legal aid work in order to raise awareness of justice issues.

The strategic direction of the staff team derives from the LAPG Committee. There are two co-Chairs and two vice-Chairs. All members of the Committee are volunteers and are legal aid practitioners across a range of areas of practice including crime, family, child care, housing, mental capacity, mental health, immigration, public law etc.

The role is multifaceted and days are never the same. It will carry a high level of responsibility and will include time sensitive tasks. As the legal aid and justice landscape is rapidly changing, there will be a need for work on short term projects as and when the need arises in addition to programmed work tasks.

We are open to candidates from a variety of backgrounds. You may be a legally qualified professional, or you may have a background in running an organisation with similar values and objectives. You may work in a different sector and believe that your skills can be applied to support LAPG in its work to achieve its goals. What is most important is your attitude, skillset and personality fit, and your dedication to the aims of LAPG.

The salary range for the post is £48K to £58K according to skills and experience.

**Closing date for applications is 5pm Monday 1 October 2018.**

**First interviews will take place on 9 and 10 October 2018.**

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| **JOB DESCRIPTION: DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AID PRACTITIONERS GROUP** |

**Job purpose**

Under the supervision and strategic direction of the Committee:

1. To provide vision and direction to the Legal Aid Practitioners Group (LAPG) in accordance with the values, aims and objectives of the organisation.
2. To ensure that LAPG maintains its place at the forefront of legal aid policy development and networks and provides support and community to legal aid practitioners including by:
3. liaison with and lobbying of government
4. working with other statutory bodies, third party interest groups, NGOs, representative bodies and practitioners
5. managing and liaising with the media and
6. generally increasing the public profile of the organisation to develop a reputation and public presence for LAPG which both
	1. strengthens the core mission of promoting equal access to justice for all members of society and
	2. promotes members’ interests in furthering this core mission.
7. To have overall responsibility for the leadership personnel and financial management of LAPG.
8. To develop membership services and explore and develop other sources of financial support including, but not limited to grant funding and promotion of training and sponsorship opportunities.
9. To plan for and manage LAPG’s continuing financial sustainability.
10. To be responsible for LAPG’s public relations.
11. To be proactive in liaising and communicating with the Committee and ensuring that LAPG’s structure is able to deliver its aims and objectives efficiently and effectively.

**The Director will have the following specific duties and responsibilities, reporting to and liaising with the Committee.**

1. **VISION AND LEADERSHIP**
* To keep under review proposals for the development of LAPG’s strategic aims and objectives
* To be alert to developments in the legal field especially with regard to legal aid and justice policy changes and the impact on the provision of legal services and legal aid providers. To ensure that LAPG has an input into major public policy initiatives in this area and that every opportunity is maximised to develop and expand the reputation and profile of LAPG
* To develop and foster strategic links with legal, professional, campaigning and other relevant organisations
* To represent the organisation at external events presentations and meetings promoting its aims and objectives.
1. **IMPLEMENTATION**
* To be responsible for implementing approved changes to the structures, systems policies and processes which will support the implementation of the vision and aims of LAPG to ensure the smooth day to day running of the organisation
* To have responsibility for the development and implementation of a short, medium and long-term strategy to allow LAPG to achieve its aims and objectives.
1. **OPERATION**
* To ensure that LAPG has the human, material and financial resources to pursue its aims and objectives and to ensure that quality standards are maintained
* To oversee the planning process including the preparation of a detailed business plan together with the implications for human and financial resources. The Director will oversee the annual budget and will actively monitor the financial position of LAPG, reporting on a regular basis
* To manage and support the decision-making process through the timely preparation of agendas and reports to the Committee, , staff members and where appropriate members, in respect of the running of the Group, and ensuring that communication and the structure of decision making is effective to achieve the Group’s aims
* To ensure that plans are implemented, monitored and regularly reviewed to maximise the impact of new initiatives
* To be responsible for the induction and support of new Committee Members and to ensure that they are familiar with both the aims and objectives of the organisation and its structures and procedures in order to maximise their contribution to the strategic development process and work of the Group.

**Staff (Recruitment, Induction and Welfare)**

* To recruit and carry out induction in accordance with the diversity policy
* To manage the staff team implementing all aspects of LAPG’s employment policies
* To manage volunteers in an appropriate manner
* To ensure that the staff team operates from premises which meets their needs
* To ensure compliance with all legal requirements including employment obligations, health and safety legislation and diversity policies.
1. **FINANCIAL**

To provide for LAPG’s continued financial sustainability by:

* Developing and monitoring LAPG’s fund generation strategy to support its development and business plans and ensure its implementation
* Retaining members and by running an active membership campaign
* Being innovative about other new funding sources
* Making funding/ grant applications and submitting tenders
* Finding and fostering appropriate sponsors
* Maintaining good working relationships with funders and ensuring compliance with their reporting requirements
* Taking overall responsibility for and working to improve the content and form of LAPG’s information services and in particular mailings and website use, and training courses for members and others
* Overseeing plans for the sustained promotion of LAPG’s existing and new products and services
* Preparing an annual budget, and monthly or quarterly management accounts as required, to ensure financial propriety. To implement appropriate financial systems for proper budgetary and cash flow control, including authorisation for payments
* Monitoring the Group’s financial position on an ongoing basis, to liaise with LAPG’s accountants/bookkeeper/auditor on all financial matters and to report on a regular basis including raising any issues which require action in a timely manner.
1. **Public Relations**
* To represent LAPG at external meetings, receptions, lectures, and other professional engagements as appropriate
* To prepare news releases, articles and/or comment on matters of importance relating to the provision of legal aid services and access to justice issues
* To review updated editions of the Manifesto for Legal Aid and ensure effective publication and dissemination
* To foster and develop the success of the Legal Aid Lawyer of the Year Awards
* To ensure the continuation of the Annual Review of the Group and the annual conference
* To develop LAPG’s public profile, make regular contact with legal aid solicitors, campaigning organisations and associated bodies to promote good relations and develop joint initiatives.

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| **PERSON SPECIFICATION** |

**The following requirements are considered to be essential for this post. However, if you do not have a particular skill, we may still consider you for the post if you show exceptional skills in other areas.**

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|  | **Necessary** | **Advantageous** |
| Experience & Education | Experience of:* Leadership and management in a relevant field
* Legal aid work and practice (including practice management)
* Developing social or legal policy and enabling its implementation
* Financial management
* Campaigning and lobbying
* Working with other organisations to achieve and implement goals
 | Detailed knowledge of the legal basis for and operation of the legal aid and justice system across a number of areasExperience of fund raising, grant and tender applicationsExperience of organising conferences, publications, courses |
| Personal and professional skills and qualities | Ability to:* Demonstrate leadership
* Think strategically
* Engage positively with stakeholders at top levels on social and legal policy and practice issues
* Lead and develop strategy
* Analyse business and financial information
* Analyse policy and understand research
* Give highly effective speeches and presentations
* Write clearly and persuasively
* Develop teams and networks
* Fundraise
* Manage competing priorities
* Manage projects such as conferences and other events

Excellent skills in: * Inspiring colleagues
* Setting vision
* Influencing stakeholders
* Building consensus
* Team working
* Working to tight deadlines
* Diplomacy

Commitment to LAPG’s policies and values Commitment to equality and diversity | Knowledge of the organisation and practice of the legal and/or advice sectorsExperience of the media |
| General/ Knowledge | An ability to work hard to tight deadlines and also to work flexibly. | General understanding of company law and good practice on governance |
| Technical skills | IT skills including:* Word or equivalent
* Excel
* Outlook
* Accounts management software (e.g. Xero, Sage, Quickbooks etc)
* Use of social media

Ability to learn how to use other tools e.g. Eventbrite and Mailchimp |  |

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| **LEGAL AID PRACTITIONERS GROUP** |
| **APPLICATION FORM** |

**Personal details**

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| Full Name & Title : |
| Address: |  |
|  | Tel (home): |
|  | Tel (work/mobile): |
|  | Email: |

**Education & Training**

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|  **Education from 16** | **Dates** | **Examinations passed, qualifications obtained** |
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| **Professional or other training** | **Dates** | **Further comments** |
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(Please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

**Employment History**

Please start with your most recent employment and work backwards (please continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

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| **Dates****from to** | **Employer name, contact number and nature of business** | **Position held &** **main duties** | **Reason** **for leaving** | **Current or leaving salary** |
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**The two questions directly below are optional and whether they are completed or not will not disadvantage any applicant during the selection process:**

We are an equal opportunities employer and applications from disabled candidates are welcomed and we will make every effort to ensure a fair selection process.

Please describe below any reasonable adjustments which you feel could be made to the recruitment process to assist you in your application or which could be made to ensure equal opportunity in your application.

Please describe below any reasonable adjustments which you feel could be made to the job itself which would enable you to carry out the job duties.

**Personal and professional qualities, skills and abilities**

Please provide here information to support your application including skills and experience you have acquired and why you believe yourself suitable for this post with reference to the information provided in this application and the person specification and job description. (Please type into this form or attach a separate sheet/s)

Maximum word count 250

Can you highlight an occasion when you made a real difference in influencing a decision which impacted positively on other people. What role did you play and how did you influence?

Maximum word count 250

Can you highlight an example of how you have worked together as part of a team to accomplish a task against a deadline. What happened?

**Are you eligible for employment in the UK?**  Yes / No

**Are you lawfully resident in the UK?**  Yes / No

**Are you subject to immigration control?** Yes / No

**Are there any restrictions on your continued residence or employment in the UK?**

Yes / No

**Please indicate the documentation you can provide in order to demonstrate this:**

British passport / European Economic Area identity card / full birth certificate /

passport, visa or travel document showing an authorisation to reside and work in the UK

**Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence?** Yes / No

If yes please provide details below

(Declarations are subject to the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act)

**Have you ever been investigated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority, Legal Ombudsman, Law Society, Bar Standards Board or other regulatory body (whether or not any such complaint has been upheld)?** Yes/No

If yes please provide details and dates.

**Has any restriction or sanction been made by the SRA or any other organisation that would affect or prevent you from working in a law firm?**

Yes / No

**Have you been the subject of any disciplinary process in the last five years?**

Yes/No

If yes please provide details and the outcome.

**Have any complaints been made about your work (not work undertaken by others) in the last three years?**  Yes/No

If yes please provide details and the outcome.

**Please provide some information as to your level of computer literacy and ability to ‘self-service’ (i.e. typing, time recording etc.) – please specify any relevant software you have used**

**What is your current salary?**

**If appointed, when could you start work?**

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| **REFERENCES** |

Please give the names and addresses of at least three persons as referees, other than relatives, who we can approach for references. Please include your current employer however no approach will be made to your present employer before an offer of employment is made, unless you wish us to do so. We will require a reference from your current employer if an offer is made to you.

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| Name |  | Name |
| Position |  | Position |
| Relationship to you |  | Relationship to you |
| Address |  | Address |
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| Contact tel no. |  | Contact tel no. |
| Email |  | Email |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Name |  | Name |
| Position |  | Position |
| Relationship to you |  | Relationship to you |
| Address |  | Address |
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| Contact tel no. |  | Contact tel no. |
| Email |  | Email |

**Declaration**

I declare to the best of my knowledge and belief, all particulars I have given are complete and true.

I understand that any false declaration or misleading statement or significant omission may disqualify me from employment and render me liable to instant dismissal.

I understand that any job offer is subject to references and all of which must be deemed satisfactory by LAPG and any subcommittee responsible for the recruitment process.

I consent to the use and retention of my data for a period of up to 2 years from the date of the commencement of the recruitment exercise.\*

Signed: ………………………………………………………………………………………Date:…………………………….

**Closing date for applications is 5pm Monday 1 October 2018.**

Please send your completed application by email to applications@lapgdirector.co.uk

If you would prefer to send by post or hand deliver please use the address below:

LAPG

c/o Nicola Mackintosh QC (Hon) (Co-Chair LAPG)

Mackintosh Law

103 Borough High St

London SE1 1NL

If there are any questions in relation to the application process they should be directed to applications@lapgdirector.co.uk

\* Privacy Notice: Any personal data provided as part of this recruitment process will be used only for purposes associated directly with this recruitment process and will be kept confidential and securely stored in accordance with LAPG’s Privacy Policy, which is available on the LAPG website at <https://www.lapg.co.uk/privacy-policy/>

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| **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**  |

LAPG is fully committed to ensuring that all staff are treated fairly and with dignity and respect. Our approach to Equality and Diversity applies to our recruitment of prospective employees. We aim to ensure that we receive applications from people of all backgrounds and that we do not discriminate against any individuals, directly or indirectly, in respect of their sex, age, race, marital status, disability, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief. The information you provide will be separated from your application and remain anonymised.

**You are not obliged to provide this information and it will not affect, enhance or detract from your application in any way however if you do decide to give this information it will help us to enhance our Equal Opportunities monitoring.**

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| **Ethnic origin & Nationality** |
| Asian or Asian British | Bangladeshi |[ ]  If other, please comment |
|  | Indian | [ ]  |  |
|  | Pakistani | [ ]  |  |
|  | Chinese | [ ]  |  |
|  | Any other Asian background | [ ]  |  |
| Black or Black British | African | [ ]  |  |
|  | Caribbean | [ ]  |  |
|  | Any other Black background | [ ]  |  |
| Mixed | White and Asian |[ ]   |
|  | White and Black  |[ ]   |
|  | White and Oriental |[ ]   |
|  | Any other Mixed background |[ ]   |
| White | British |[ ]   |
|  | Irish |[ ]   |
|  | Any other White background |[ ]   |
| Other | Arab |[ ]   |
|  | Any other ethnic group |[ ]   |
| Prefer not to say |  |[ ]   |
| Nationality |  |
| **Religion or belief** |
| Buddhist |[ ]  If other, please comment |
| Christian |[ ]   |
| Hindu |[ ]   |
| Jewish |[ ]   |
| Muslim |[ ]   |
| Sikh |[ ]   |
| Other |[ ]   |
| None |[ ]   |
| Prefer not to say |[ ]   |
| **Gender** |
| Female |[ ]  Prefer to self-describe: |
| Male |[ ]   |
| Transgender |[ ]   |
| Prefer not to say |[ ]   |
| **Sexual orientation** |
| Gay Woman/Lesbian |[ ]  Prefer to self-describe: |
| Gay Man |[ ]   |
| Bisexual |[ ]   |
| Heterosexual/Straight  |[ ]   |
| Other |[ ]   |
| Prefer not to say |[ ]   |
| **Age** |
| 16-24 |[ ]   |
| 25-34 |[ ]   |
| 35-44 |[ ]   |
| 45-54 |[ ]   |
| 55-64 |[ ]   |
| 65+ |[ ]   |
| 70+ |  |  |
| Prefer not to say |[ ]   |
| **Disability** |
| The Equality Act 2010 defines disability as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term (i.e., more than 12 months) adverse effect on a person’s ability to do normal daily activities. Do you consider yourself to be disabled within the definition of the Equality Act 2010?  | [ ]  YES  | [ ]  No  | [ ]  Prefer not to say |
|  |  |
| **Socio-economic Background** |
| School attended | UK State School |[ ]  If other, please comment |
|  | UK Independent/Fee-paying School | [ ]  |  |
|  | Free school | [ ]  |  |
|  | Academy | [ ]  |  |
|  | Attended school outside the UK | [ ]  |  |
|  | Other | [ ]  |  |
|  | Prefer not to say | [ ]  |  |
| *Please select the category that applies to the school you attended in the last two years of your school education.* |
| Are you part of the first generation of your family to attend university? | [ ]  YES  | [ ]  No  | [ ]  Prefer not to say |
| **Caring responsibilities** |
| Are you a primary carer for a child or children under 18? | [ ]  YES  | [ ]  No  | [ ]  Prefer not to say |
| Do you look after, or give any help or support to family members, friends, neighbours or others because of either long-term physical or mental ill-health/disability or problem related to old age? | [ ]  YES  | [ ]  No  | [ ]  Prefer not to say |
| If yes, you do it | 1 - 19 hours a week |[ ]
|  | 20 - 49 hours a week |[ ]
|  | 50 or more hours a week |[ ]
|  | Prefer not to say |[ ]
| *Do not count anything you do as part of a paid employment* |