



Every smile
tells a story

Legal Trustee Recruitment Pack

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Registered Charity in England and Wales (1108160) and Scotland (SC041034)

CLAPA is **committed to safeguarding** and ensuring the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk, and expects all employees and volunteers to share this commitment. **The suitability of all prospective employees or volunteers will be assessed during the recruitment process in line with this commitment.**

CLAPA is committed to creating a diverse and inclusive environment, and **we welcome applicants from all backgrounds and walks of life.** If you share our values and are passionate about supporting the UK cleft community, we want to hear from you. Please don't hesitate to let us know if there is anything we can do to make your application experience more accessible and inclusive.

Introduction from the Chief Executive

Hello, I'm Claire. I'm the Chief Executive of the Cleft Lip and Palate Association (CLAPA), and I want to tell you about this unique opportunity to join an incredible charity that has supported, connected and empowered people affected by cleft in the UK for 45 years. I'd like to thank you for your interest in joining our Board of Trustees.

We are currently looking for a new Legal Trustee who can use their skills to support our growing charity. We need someone with relevant legal experience who thrives as part of a dynamic group of Trustees, who is willing to champion the charity and who values seeing the impact that our work can make. If you think you have the experience, knowledge and passion to help support us to continue to meet the needs of the community we serve, we would love to hear from you.

Please read on to find the Role Description and Person Specification along with more information about our organisation and details of how to apply. We look forward to receiving your application.

Claire Cunniffe
Chief Executive

A word from our outgoing Legal Trustee

It has been a privilege to be part of the trustee board for the Cleft Lip and Palate Association. When my daughter was born with a cleft lip and palate, I was searching for reliable information about how this would impact her quality of life. CLAPA's resources and connections to the Cleft community provided immediate reassurance that everything will be ok, and my daughter will thrive, whatever the challenges.

I am so glad that I then had the opportunity to give back to CLAPA through volunteering my time and joining the Board as a legal trustee in 2021. In doing so, I have developed so many new skills, and have seen first-hand how a small but well organised charity can do a great amount with a tight budget, to support and champion the cleft community.

The board of trustees is packed with talent and expertise, but most of all passion for supporting CLAPA, and it has been a pleasure to be part of this team.

Louise Hughes
Legal Trustee

Legal Trustee

Role Description

Role Description

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of the charity, developing the CLAPA's aims, objectives and goals in accordance with the governing document, legal and regulatory guidelines.

You would be joining our board at an exciting time, as we create and implement our new 5 year strategy for 2025-2030.

The Legal Trustee will participate in all areas of the charity's governance with a special interest in the legal implications of the strategy, governance and support with the Board's understanding and interpretation.

We are particularly interested in applicants who have experience or knowledge of Health & Safety to join our Health and Safety Committee.

Key Tasks

The Legal Trustee will be expected to:

- Offer legal expertise to fellow Trustees and the Senior Management Team (SMT) particularly in relation to external contracts and agreements
- Be an integral part of the Trustee board, working alongside other Trustees and the charity's SMT, formulating and regularly reviewing the charity's strategic aims and objectives, evaluating performance and impact, ensuring the organisation complies with statutory and regulatory requirements from a legal perspective
- Join our Health and Safety Committee

The duties of a Trustee are to:

- Ensure that CLAPA complies with its constitution/memorandum and articles of association, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- Ensure that CLAPA pursues its objects as defined in its governing document
- Ensure CLAPA applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects, i.e. it must not spend money on activities which are not included in its own objects, no matter how worthwhile or charitable those organisations are
- Contribute actively to the board in giving firm strategic direction to CLAPA, setting overall policy, defining goals, setting targets and evaluating performance
- Attend Board meetings, adequately prepared to contribute to discussions and adhere to the Trustee Code of Conduct. Use independent judgment, acting legally and in good faith to promote and protect
- Occasionally attend CLAPA-led events to ensure an understanding of our services and represent the organisation externally (usually online but sometimes in-person)

- Respond to occasional queries from the wider CLAPA team (with authorisation from the SMT) seeking to use your knowledge to help inform service delivery and decision making
- Devote necessary time and effort to your duties as a Trustee and be available and responsive to trustees and others for contact between meetings
- Ensure CLAPA complies with relevant Safeguarding and Health & Safety legislation by working with the Board to ensure correct procedures and reporting channels are in place and to participate in internal committee meetings as required
- Complete a relevant level DBS check in line with CLAPA policy and join the DBS update service
- Safeguard the good name and values of CLAPA
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of CLAPA
- Protect and manage the property of CLAPA and ensure the proper investment of CLAPA's funds
- Contribute to the broader promotion of CLAPA's objects, aims and reputation by applying your skills, expertise, knowledge and contacts
- Appoint the Chief Executive and monitor their performance
- Willingness and ability to understand and accept their responsibilities and liabilities as Trustees and to act in the best interests of the organisation.
- Ability to think creatively and strategically, exercise good, independent judgement and work effectively as a board member
- Effective communication skills and willingness to participate actively in discussion.
- A strong personal commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion
- Personal empathy for our vision and mission.

Person Specification

Essential

- Qualified Barrister or Solicitor or a person with equivalent legal qualifications and experience
- Strong communication skills and excellent leadership skills along with a willingness to challenge the status quo
- Broad based legal knowledge and experience gained in private practice or as an in-house lawyer
- Ability to work effectively as a member of a team as well as independently
- Integrity, good independent judgment and analytical/ evaluation skills
- A commitment to CLAPA and willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to the charity, and to act as the charity's ambassador to external bodies, charities and companies
- Competent use of IT skills
- Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship

Desirable

- An understanding of probate to assist CLAPA in processing received legacies
- A generalist lawyer with a solid understanding of commercial, marketing, data protection and employment law and ability to apply this in a practical, risk assessed manner
- Experience of Health & Safety and willingness to join the internal Health & Safety Committee
- Commercial and business expertise
- Previous experience of influencing and developing an organisational strategy
- General knowledge and understanding of UK Employment law
- Knowledge and understanding of cleft lip and palate and its impact on people born with a cleft and their families
- Experience and knowledge of voluntary sector organisations

Terms of Office

1. Trustees will normally hold office for two three year terms.
2. Usually a maximum of two terms can be served.
3. This is a voluntary position.

About Cleft Lip and Palate

Early in pregnancy, different parts of the face form and come together just above the top lip. If this doesn't happen quite as it should, the result is a gap or 'cleft' in the upper lip, the palate (roof of the mouth), or both. It's usually caused by a mix of genetic and environmental factors interacting in a way that can't be predicted or prevented. A cleft can affect feeding, hearing, speech, teeth placement and more. The treatment pathway can last 20+ years, including several surgeries.

Around one in 700 people are born with a cleft – that's 1,200 each year in the UK alone.

About CLAPA

The Cleft Lip and Palate Association (CLAPA) is a charity supporting people born with a cleft and their families in the UK. We bring together people affected by cleft to help them connect with others who share their experiences, welcoming them into a supportive community for life.

CLAPA's Services

- Vibrant **social media channels** which promote positivity, bust myths and celebrate differences.
- **Online support groups** moderated by trained volunteers provide an instant connection for those looking for an informal support network.
- **Regular online events** give people the chance to talk about their experiences and worries and hear from others at all stages of the cleft journey.
- Confidential **one-to-one support** provided by trained volunteer patients and parents who reassure those most in need that they can cope with whatever lies ahead.
- **Information** on cleft led by our community, reflecting their experiences and emotional needs as well as medical facts.

- **Counselling** to enable those feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or depressed to work on any issues in their lives.
- **Support and signposting** for those with those with complex enquiries.
- A **Children and Young People’s Council** and several targeted focus groups who meet to share their thoughts and experiences, helping to improve our support services as well as cleft research and NHS care.
- **Mentoring** to help young people address cleft-related challenges and develop coping and communication skills.
- **Camp CLAPA adventure weekends**, a **Penpals project** and other opportunities for children and young people to connect and improve mental health and wellbeing.
- A consultancy service for **researchers** and **health professionals** which connects their work with our community and enables Patient and Public Involvement (PPI).
- A **feeding service** that supplies 15,000 subsidised items of specialist equipment for babies born with a cleft each year, including free of charge items for new and vulnerable families.



When my Sonographer told me about my baby's cleft I was devastated. Soon after, I found CLAPA who introduced me to a whole new community of smiles and support. The experience has been amazing."

– Parent of young child

CLAPA’s Values

- **Inclusive.** Everyone affected by cleft in the UK, regardless of background, identity or socioeconomic status, should be able to find a warm and welcoming community with CLAPA. We value all voices and want everyone to see themselves reflected in our work.
- **Trusted.** We passionately believe in doing what is best for the UK cleft community. Their needs and voices are at the front and centre of everything we do. We take responsibility for our mistakes and use them as chances to learn.
- **Adaptable.** We seek authentic feedback to help us raise the bar in everything we do. We don’t stay stuck in our ways. We follow the evidence, try new things, and change with the times.
- **Collaborative.** We work best when we work together, whether this is as a staff team, as a community, or in partnership with others.

CLAPA's Strategy

Like many organisations, 2020-21 saw CLAPA revolutionise its service delivery to better serve communities wishing to access support online. Our 2022-25 strategy has us building on this work to provide a suite of high-quality, community-led, online services which will be able to keep pace with whatever challenges the future may bring.

We are now in the process of developing our 2025-2030 Strategy and Theory of Change. Having survived a very challenging financial period of real uncertainty, we are now in a stable financial position and fortunate to be able to look at growth and sustainability of the organisation.

This Post

The Board is looking for a new Trustee who is aligned to the ethos of the charity and would enjoy the opportunity to contribute their expertise to provide robust and dynamic governance to ensure we achieve our ambitions and remain financially solvent. We would like to enhance our Trustee Board with legal expertise from either a barrister or a solicitor.

In the role of Trustee, you will help inspire, set and maintain the charity's vision, mission and values, as well as develop the strategy, and ensure compliance and accountability for finances, legal and governmental obligations. Previous experience in a Trustee role is not essential as a full induction will be provided.

Taking on the role of a Trustee is a significant undertaking. An appropriate time commitment will be required for the preparatory work required in between meetings as well as attendance at the meetings as detailed below.

The role of a Trustee

CLAPA is structured around a small Senior Management Team and CEO who report to the Board of Trustees, but with a constructive, collaborative culture where all voices and contributions are valued. CLAPA encourages cross-team working to give staff a chance to test their skills and learn about every area of how a modern charity operates.

The role of a Trustee is to provide overall strategic direction. Involvement in the detail of service delivery is not required. Trustees are responsible for the financial and legal operation of the organisation but your financial liability is limited to £1 because CLAPA is a company limited by guarantee as well as a registered charity. Trustees are unpaid, but travel expenses can be reimbursed.

The Board currently meets 8 times per year with all meetings being held via Zoom on a weekday evening, the exception being the Trustees Awayday which is a daytime meeting every autumn held at the CLAPA office in London.

There is more information on the role of a Trustee on the Charity Commission website www.charity-commission.gov.uk.

CLAPA is committed to supporting new Trustees and will provide a thorough induction once appointed, and access to ongoing training as required.

How to Apply

Please complete the online Application Form:

https://CLAPA.formstack.com/forms/clapa_trustee_application_form

You may request an application form in another format by emailing info@clapa.com with 'Legal Trustees Recruitment Pack Request' in the subject.

All applications are subject to our shortlisting process. If you're shortlisted, we will contact you and invite you to attend an interview. We'll also tell you if there will be any skills tasks to complete as part of the recruitment process. If you are shortlisted, we will ask you to complete a criminal records disclosure. Check [NACRO guidance](#) for more information on what should be disclosed and your rights.

If you have not heard from us by 28th February 2025, please assume your application has been unsuccessful.

Applications close: Friday 14th February 2025

Interviews: To be arranged before Friday 28th February 2025

Start date: As soon as possible – to be agreed

Criminal Record Background Checks

All Trustee roles are subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. You will be required to complete a relevant level DBS check in line with CLAPA policy and join the DBS update service.

If you are invited for an interview, you will be sent a **Criminal Record Declaration form**. You will need to complete this form prior to the interview, but it will be stored securely and will only be looked at if your application is successful.

If you have declared that you have a criminal record on this form, we will complete a risk assessment process in line with our Safeguarding Policies.

Contact

Contact Claire Cunniffe, Chief Executive at claire.cunniffe@clapa.com, or call the CLAPA office on 020 7833 4883 if you have any questions about the role or the application process.

Due to most of our staff being part-time and flexible working, there is usually limited cover, but if you leave a message on the answerphone, we will call you back as soon as possible. Please leave your full name and phone number when leaving a message.

