

advocate



CEO

Application Pack

April 2026

A welcome note from our Chair

I am delighted to introduce you to Advocate.

We are the barristers' national charity. We match people who need legal help but cannot obtain legal aid or afford to pay with barristers who are willing to donate their time and expertise for free. We operate in every area of law and in all courts and tribunals across the country. We believe that fair and equal access to justice is the foundation of our society.

For nearly 30 years, we have provided access to justice for thousands of people. Recent years have brought extraordinary pressure on our society, from COVID to the cost of living crisis. At every stage, Advocate has been there to provide legal assistance to those who need it most. We are proud of our achievements in recent years, building a national team to expand the scope of our reach, digitising core processes, growing our duty schemes, handling more complex cases and securing record funding.

As we enter our fourth decade, we are excited about the challenges and opportunities ahead. The justice and advice sector are shifting quickly, with technology, funding pressures, and rising demand reshaping the landscape.

As CEO, you will lead our capable national team to deliver high quality services and evidence-based advocacy work. You will collaborate closely with our Chair, Board and external partners across the Bar, government and wider advice sector, ensuring that Advocate develops the partnerships and resilience needed to accelerate access to justice.

We are looking for an ambitious leader with proven experience of leadership, engagement, strategy development and delivery. You will combine experience leveraging technology for organisational impact and leading high performing teams with clarity, empathy, integrity and collaboration.

Please consider joining us in building a better future for our society.

Kind regards,

Sharif Shivji KC - Chair of Board

About Advocate

Overview

Advocate is the barristers' pro bono charity. For the last 30 years, we have made pro bono happen by connecting volunteer barristers with people in need. We represent the Bar and its best traditions in providing legal assistance to the most vulnerable members of society.

Our history

We were founded in 1996 and began with a part-time administrator working from a small room in Gray's Inn. We have grown to become the only pro bono charity to provide access to legal assistance in all areas of law, in all courts and tribunals across England and Wales. We received 250 applications for legal help in our first year; we now receive circa 6,000 applications per year.

In 2024, we relocated to the Justice Hub in the landmark International Dispute Resolution Centre near St Paul's. The Justice Hub is a collaborative co-working space consisting of legal charities who are together dedicated to access to justice, human rights, and the rule of law. Today, Advocate works with over 5,000 volunteer barristers through our casework team and also various 'on the day' duty schemes across the country. We have a physical presence in each circuit across England and Wales. There is a huge and growing demand for our services, with increased demand year on year.



How we work

Applicants seeking assistance can apply to us directly. We conduct a merits and means test to decide whether to take on their case; that allow us to target our resources (including the time and effort of our volunteer barristers) to those who need it most.

We are ambitious about (a) ensuring that our resources are deployed to those in greatest need (i.e. where the involvement of a barrister will make the greatest difference to a client who is otherwise unable to afford legal help), (b) helping more vulnerable people, (c) ensuring that we are truly national charity, noting that there is serious deprivation in parts of the country in terms of access to justice, (d) using education and technology to expand our reach.

You can view some of our [applicants' stories here](#).

Strategy

Our new three-year strategy, launching in 2026, is about building an organisation for the future. We intend to develop faster and more efficient processes for our barristers and clients, using new technology effectively to help more clients, while growing our voice as an evidence-backed leader in the wider conversation around access to justice. Collectively this will grow our organisational impact, resilience and profile.

Communications

We are recognised as an expert in the pro bono space and regularly engage with the judiciary, the government and the legal profession on access to justice matters. By communicating clearly and positively with our supporters, partners and the wider profession, we shape conversations without straying into politics.

Fundraising

As a charity, we are entirely funded by donations.

- We are funded almost entirely by the Bar.
- We do not accept Government funding.
- We currently only approach Trusts and Foundations with a legal link.

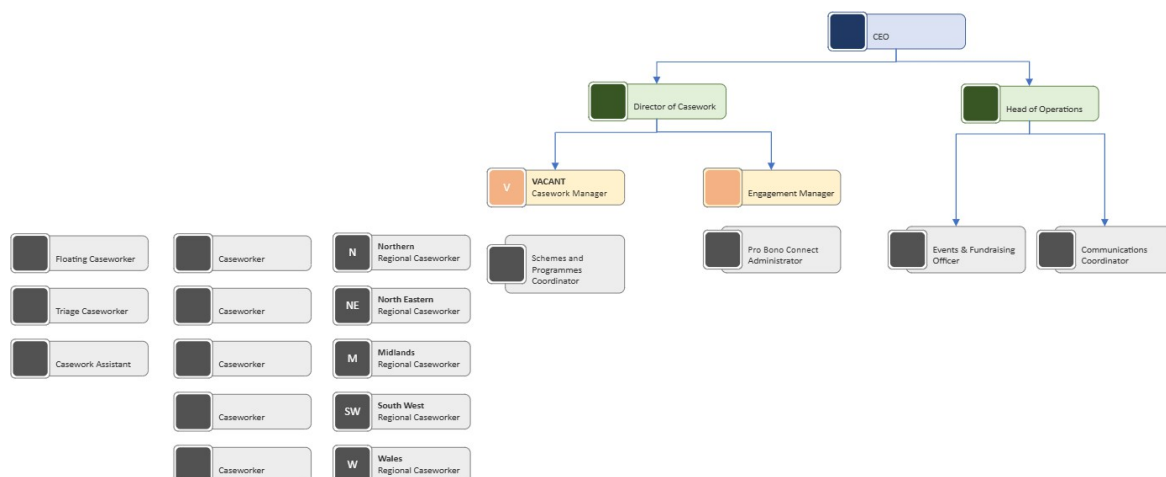
Our budgeted income for 2025/26 is £1.2 million and equivalent expenditure.

- Largest sources of income
 - 40%– authorisation to practise process (40%)
 - 20% – corporate funding (largely Chambers)
 - 13% – Bar Council and Inns of Court
- Largest areas of expenditure
 - 76% – salaries
 - 11% – accommodation

Team

We have 23 staff and operate a hybrid model of working. The level of attendance at the office is dependent on distance from the London office. Some roles require more frequent attendance (e.g. our Senior Management Team are all required to be in the office three days per week).

Our casework staff are generally drawn from law graduates who are looking to pursue careers in the legal profession. They are usually with us for approximately two years.



The Role

Contract:	Permanent, full-time, with occasional weekend / evening work
Location:	Hybrid; three days or more per week in our London office
Reporting to:	Board of Trustees
Line reports:	Director of Casework and Head of Operations
Remuneration:	Competitive salary and benefits, including 25+ days' annual leave, pension, employee assistance programme

Job Description

Strategy and leadership

- Work with the Board to develop and promote Advocate's vision and its role across the justice, legal and wider not-for-profit sectors.
- Lead strategic, business, people, technology and financial planning.
- Lead Advocate's evidence-led work to improve access to justice in response to user needs, reforms and wider sector change.
- Act as Advocate's ambassador, confidently presenting its work, and safeguarding and building its reputation.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with key Bar stakeholders, the access to justice sector, and funders and donors.
- Promote pro bono at senior levels across the Bar, using influence, relationships and public communications to increase pro bono engagement and visibility.
- Oversee Advocate's major annual fundraising campaign and maintain strong relationships with Patrons to support income generation and Advocate's profile.

Management

- Provide leadership and line-management to senior staff, ensuring the Director of Casework and Head of Operations are supported, equipped and responsible for leading their areas.
- Lead Advocate's people and culture, fostering a positive, inclusive and supportive working environment where staff can thrive.
- Oversee Advocate's organisational performance and operations at a strategic level, ensuring high-quality service delivery, strong employment and EDI

practices, effective delegated management of premises, IT and staff, and continuous improvement.

- Develop, oversee and monitor an effective programme of income generation that secures the organisation.
- Leverage current and future technology investments to ensure services and advocacy work remains efficient and effective.
- Ensure Advocate's financial health and sustainability through strategic oversight of budgeting, cashflow, financial management and robust controls.
- Support the Board and ensure full statutory, regulatory and contractual compliance, including Charity Commission and Companies House requirements.

Generally

- Undertake any other responsibilities as reasonably requested by the Chairman or Board of Trustees.



Person Specification

Beliefs, values and qualities

- Passion for access to justice.
- Commitment to continuous development for those around you and the organisation you lead.
- Collaborative leader who enjoys developing and getting the best out of teams and individuals.

Experience

Senior leadership:

- Demonstrable experience of leadership at CEO or senior director level at an organisation of comparable scale and complexity.
- Experience of operating at Board level and capable of working with and alongside the Board.

Strategic development and delivery:

- Proven experience of developing and implementing wide-reaching strategies that successfully deliver objectives.

Senior level relationship management and partnership working:

- Experience of acting as ambassador, engaging with external stakeholders to achieve impact and change.
- Proven track record of developing and maintaining strategic senior relationships and successful partnerships with other organisations.

Senior level team management:

- A successful record of engaging, supporting and motivating staff to perform to the best of their abilities.
- Proven experience of creating and sustaining high performance culture with a track record of success in driving impact.

Senior level organisational management:

- Proven track record of increasing achievement, income and scope within the charity, private or public sector.
- Experience of managing service delivery in a technology-enabled, customer-focused way.
- Strong financial experience, including the ability to plan resources appropriately and understand financial reports.

Skills, knowledge and abilities

Business development:

- Excellent knowledge of business development, with a successful personal track record of identifying and securing income growth.

Communication and external leadership skills:

- Engaging communication, presentation and interpersonal skills.
- A proven ability as an organisational spokesperson with senior level negotiation and influencing skills.

Sector knowledge:

- Sound understanding of the legal environment and its importance for Advocate, or willingness to develop this understanding.
- Strong understanding of the advice and/or charity sector, or willingness to develop this understanding.

Management:

- Ability to switch effectively between strategic and operational tasks and perspectives as required, prioritising between the two effectively.
- Highly developed proactive, analytical and problem-solving skills.



How to Apply

To discuss the opportunity in more detail, please contact Tanya Stevens at All Leaders on tanya.stevens@allleaders.co.uk.

To apply, email your CV and a supporting statement (maximum two pages) outlining your suitability in line with the person specification to tanya.stevens@allleaders.co.uk.

The closing date for applications is midday on Friday, 15 May.

Longlisted candidates will be invited to a first interview online with All Leaders w/c 25 May or w/c 1 June.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview with Advocate on Thursday, 18 June in Central London. This will include a candidate-led fact-finding session with a staff panel and a formal interview with the board search committee.

All offers will be subject to clean reference checks.

Equal Opportunities

We are committed to building a diverse and inclusive workforce and actively encourage applications from underrepresented groups. If you require any reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process, please let tanya.stevens@allleaders.co.uk know and we will be happy to support you.

We encourage and promote the equality, diversity and inclusion of all our staff, job applicants, volunteers and all those using our service to ensure that everyone is treated with dignity and respect at all times. We want to create an environment where everyone can make best use of their skills, free from unlawful discrimination or harassment, and where all decisions are based on merit.