

Information pack

Working Families Trustee recruitment 2021



Welcome

Firstly, thank you for your interest in become a Trustee of Working Families.

We are currently looking for two trustees to join our passionate, highly skilled board. We are particularly looking for strategic fundraising expertise and financial expertise, ideally a chartered accountant. We also welcome applications from ethnic minority groups as they are currently under-represented on our Board.

Working Families' mission – to remove the barriers that people with caring responsibilities face in the workplace - has never felt more needed, or more timely. The year we have all lived through has proved it beyond question.

As the pandemic took hold, the demand for our advice services grew sixfold, as parents around the country grappled with the need to juggle work and caring responsibilities and safeguard their workplace rights. At the same time, our employer members leaned on our expertise and advice to understand how to support their staff teams in a fast-changing and unpredictable environment.

Throughout this time, our Board of Trustees have provided the strategic vision and practical advice to help guide the organisation through the pandemic. I'm pleased to say that because of the commitment of the Board and the hard work of our talented and dedicated staff team, we find ourselves in a strong position as we look ahead to post-COVID Britain.

Our new strategy will guide our work over the next three years. Our overarching aims are challenging, but clear and achievable. We want to:

- Support employers to create and sustain successful flexible and family-friendly workplaces
- Empower parents and carers to understand and use their workplace rights
- Drive meaningful policy and legal changes to engender secure and flexible jobs as the norm, and advocate for a baseline of protection that delivers equality in the workplace.

Underpinning all this will be continued focus on building Working Families into the strongest organisation it can be, with sustainable funding streams and a deep commitment to rigour in governance processes. Our trustee board will play a key role in making these ambitions a reality. Do you have the passion, drive, and skills to help us get there? If so, we want to hear from you.



Tim Oliver
Chair of Trustees
Working Families

“Working Families has given me the confidence to stand up for myself when I feel like my rights are being trampled. I have recommended the helpline to many of my colleagues, including those who share the same manager. If I hadn’t spoken to Working Families, I could not have carried on with my job.”

Legal Advice Service User



About Working Families

Our vision

We want to achieve a society in which everyone can fully meet their work and caring responsibilities, where all parents and carers have an equal opportunity to find and progress in secure, paid work.

Our mission

Our mission is to remove the barriers that people with caring responsibilities face in the workplace. We drive positive change by supporting and advocating for working parents and carers, collaborating with employers to build flexible and family-friendly cultures, and influencing government policy.

Our values

At Working Families, we work hard to make sure our values shine through in everything we do. They help guide how we form policy, how we build and improve our services, and how we communicate with our different audiences.

- We are collaborative. We are one team working in a connected and communicative way internally and externally to maximise achievement of our shared goals.
- We are practical. We see the whole picture and use this authoritative perspective to deliver tangible support to families and employers.
- We are inclusive. We nurture an open and safe culture that enables everyone to be themselves at work. We strive to ensure that our work reaches a full range of families and employers.
- We are driven. We leverage our collective knowledge, commitment, and skills to do an expert job for our beneficiaries, supporters, and colleagues.

Our history and where we are now

We have been supporting working parents for over 40 years. From a group of working mothers meeting in Clapham back in 1980 to talk about returning to work after children, to our reach during the pandemic to more than 1.5 million working parents in the UK, it's been an incredible journey.

We are now a team of 22 dedicated professionals, who all work flexibly (including colleagues working part time, job shares and compressed hours). In addition to our paid staff, we benefit from the expertise of our pro bono volunteer solicitors' network, which amounts to 3 full-time-equivalent team members and helps us give high quality legal advice to a growing number of people. We are also building a board of academic advisors and our parent and carer panel is set to provide lived experience that will shape our work, ensuring that the voices of the people we are here to support are meaningfully inputting into all our planning. Our strategic direction is set by our highly committed Board of Trustees.

For detailed financial and impact reporting, you can find [up to date yearly reports on our website](#).

What we do

Legal Advice Service

We run a free legal advice service for parents and carers, who contact us directly over email or phone, as well as access online information and advice 24 hours a day through our website. Many of the parents and carers who contact us are on a low income and the majority are women. A significant proportion are also from an ethnic minority background or single parents. They contact us because they are experiencing problems, poor treatment and injustice at work which threaten their jobs, household income and/or time with their children. Over the pandemic, demand for our advice services went up sixfold, and over 1.5 million people accessed our online information. As we move forward into an uncertain economic future, one of our main priorities is to co-create interactive advice tools on our website, so we can meet that demand in future.

Employer Services

We work closely with our member organisations, spanning industries as varied as construction and banking, all of whom want to support their employees to better manage their working and family lives and improve organisational performance. Our unrivalled expertise enables employers to create flexible, family friendly and high-performing workplace cultures, by changing mindsets, behaviours and providing proven solutions to the challenges employers face.

We provide advice, resources, and benchmarking analysis which, in addition to our webinar and events programme, ensure that employers understand how their organisation can benefit from supporting parents and carers and all who wish to work flexibly.

Policy and Influencing

Working Families advocates on behalf of working parents and carers across the UK, influencing policy through campaigns that are always informed by evidence-based research, such as our 2020 Flexistability [report](#). Our work has been instrumental in achieving major policy wins, including the right to request flexible working and Shared Parental Leave.

We also run a series of high-profile public campaigns that lead national conversations on flexible working. Our campaign #FlexTheUK, launched in 2020 to build on the achievements of 'Go Home on Time Day' for a modern workforce, aims to encourage a wider understanding of what real flexible working looks like, and how it can benefit both individuals and business. And since 2009 we've been running National Work Life Week, now a nationally recognised time for organisations of all shapes and sizes to talk about work-life balance, flexible working, and wellbeing.



"I can't thank you enough for the invaluable help, I really needed independent advice and information at what has been an extremely stressful time, and Working Families was right there for me, with a speedy and accurate reply, which has really helped guide my decisions at the moment. It is an already isolating time with Covid, and having input from your service helped me hugely. It's an amazing service."

Legal Advice Service User

Our reach

Everything we do at Working Families is aimed to make it easier for more people to have a healthy, fulfilling balance between work and their family life. We directly empower parents and carers through our Legal Advice Service, and indirectly by working with politicians of all parties to drive policy change and practice. We also support employers to create more family friendly, flexible workplaces.

Our reach in numbers:

- In 2020/21 there were over 3,000 calls and emails to the legal advice helpline. There were over 1.6m unique visitors to our website advice pages. This is a huge increase of half a million from previous year, showing just how vital our services have been to parents and carers through the pandemic.
- There are 13 million working parents in the UK, making up a third of the total workforce. All our policy work to improve legislation for working parents and carers has the potential to impact millions of people and their families.
- In 2020/21 there were more than 50,000 unique visits to the employer advice and information pages on our website, demonstrating the demand from employers for our support in shaping and improving their policies and practices.

Our work and impact are sorely needed in the UK today. Before coronavirus hit, we knew that there was unequal access to flexible working, maternity discrimination was widespread, and many working parents were struggling to make ends meet. The pandemic has made these existing inequalities worse.

Parents and carers have faced widespread discrimination throughout the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Our own research showed that 1 in 5 – or 2.6 million – working parents in the UK feel they have been treated less fairly at work because of their childcare responsibilities since the onset of COVID-19.¹

COVID-19 has exacerbated gender inequality for working mothers:

- By mid-2020, 16% of mothers had lost their job permanently because of the crisis and 34% of mothers were furloughed (compared to 11% and 30% of fathers). Before the crisis, mothers were in paid work at 80% of the rate that fathers were. By summer 2020, this had dropped to 70%.²
- 46% of mothers who had been made redundant during the pandemic cited lack of adequate childcare provision as the cause of redundancy.³

The number of families living in poverty has risen

¹ Working Families, One in five working parents has faced unfair treatment at work since COVID-19 onset, October 2020

² Women's Budget Group, Crisis of care for women in England as lock down lifts, July 2020

³ Pregnant then Screwed, The True Scale of the Crisis Facing Working Mums, July 2020

- It is estimated that a further 640,000 working-age adults are likely to have been pushed into poverty during the first half year of the pandemic.⁴
- Over 2020, single parents were more likely both to have been furloughed (34% of single parents, compared to 25% of couples with children), and to have lost their jobs (9% of single parents).⁵
- With BAME and disabled people being particularly hard hit by falls in employment during COVID-19, BAME and disabled mothers are in turn likely to be bearing the brunt of parental unemployment.⁶

Homeworking on its own does not amount to high quality flexible work

- At the height of the first COVID-19 lockdown, 49% of UK workers worked from home,⁷ while this gave people greater autonomy, a significant proportion have reported working longer hours (25%) and the blurring of work / life boundaries (26%)⁸

Growing demand for flexible work far outstrips supply:

- While eight in ten people want to work flexibly, and nine in ten working parents we surveyed want their employers to retain aspects of flexible working post the pandemic,⁹ only 22% of jobs were advertised as flexible in 2020.¹⁰

As we look to the post-pandemic recovery, we have a vital role to play. The positive gains for working parents and carers from the mass experience of home working must be secured, while further work is needed to influence policymakers and employers to make sure that all parents and carers have access to genuinely flexible and secure employment.

⁴ Legatum Institute, Poverty During the COVID-19 crisis, November 2020

⁵ Learning and Work Institute, Tackling single parent poverty after coronavirus, December 2020

⁶ Women's Budget Group, Women and Employment during Covid-19, March 2021

⁷ ONS: Parenting in lockdown: Coronavirus and the effects on work-life balance. July 2020

⁸ TechTalks – Currys, What Works When Working From Home? January 2021

⁹ Working Families, Flexistability, October 2020

¹⁰ Timewise, Flexible Jobs Index 2020, December 2020

“Having that third party validation for our policies from Working Families means a lot to us. We’re in a place where we’re proud to talk about how we are really making a difference to the lives of our employees.”

Zurich Insurance, Employer Member



The role of our Trustees

Our Trustees are deeply involved in the work of the charity, set the strategic direction for Working Families, and use their practical skills, experience, and knowledge to support and challenge the staff team.

The main role of our Trustees

Our trustees are volunteers with a specific legal responsibility to:

- Ensure our aims and objectives are being met
- Act in the best interest of the charity
- Manage responsibility what we have (such as our people and our money)
- Act with reasonable care and skill

You can [find more information from the Charity Commission](#).

Trustee Board meetings

Board meetings take place every other month, lasting two hours. There are board papers for each meeting that require reading in advance.

Each trustee is expected to sit on one of our three committees, which meet monthly for an hour.

Location

Working Families does not currently have a physical office, and all our meetings are done through video conferencing. In future, there may be a requirement to come into central London for occasional meetings, for which reasonable expenses (including childcare and travel) will be reimbursed.

What you will gain

- The chance to develop new skills, including charity governance
- The opportunity to shape the direction of a national charity
- The chance to use your own skills, connections, and experience to create new opportunities for Working Families
- Be part of driving a dedicated team to achieve our mission and have a positive impact on millions of families in the UK

Trustee Person Specification

Role description

The duties of a trustee are as follows:

- Ensuring that the organisation pursues its stated objects (purposes), as defined in its governing document, by developing and agreeing a long-term strategy
- Ensuring that the organisation complies with its governing document (i.e., its trust deed, constitution or memorandum and articles of association), charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- Ensuring that the organisation applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its charitable objects (i.e., the charity must not spend money on activities that are not included in its own objects, however worthwhile or charitable those activities are) for the benefit of the public
- Ensuring that the organisation defines its goals and evaluates performance against agreed targets
- Safeguarding the good name and values of the organisation
- Ensuring the effective and efficient administration of the organisation, including having appropriate policies and procedures in place
- Ensuring the financial stability of the organisation
- Protecting and managing the property of the charity and ensuring the proper investment of the charity's funds
- Following proper and formal arrangements for the appointment, supervision, support, appraisal, and remuneration of the chief executive (if the charity employs staff)



In addition to the above statutory duties, each trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they must help the board of trustees reach sound decisions. This may involve scrutinising board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, or other issues in which the trustee has special expertise.

Person specification

- A commitment to the organisation and its values
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
- Strategic vision
- Good, independent judgement
- An ability to think creatively
- A willingness to speak their mind
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities, and liabilities of trusteeship
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team
- A commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership.

Restrictions

- Over 18
- Not bankrupt
- Subject to satisfactory references
- Not excluded by Companies House or Charity Commission
- Conflicts of interest that would be so significant as to undermine the role in general e.g., was a member of a group that discriminated against people based on gender or ethnicity

Interested in finding out more?

For more information on anything in this document, please get in touch with us via recruitment@workingfamilies.org.uk.



“You have been a massive help; I have felt like I was dealing with this on my own and you have taken a weight off my shoulders. Thank you so much!”
Legal Advice Service user

Working Families. Registered Charity No. 1099808 (England & Wales) and SC045339 (Scotland)
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