



CANDIDATE PACK FOR THE CHAIR

WELCOME

Dear Colleague,

Thank you for your interest in becoming Chair Elect of The Solicitors' Charity*.

You will be joining a Charity that has been supporting solicitors at times of need since 1858.

Our vision is to be here for all solicitors and their dependants, to help and support their wellbeing in times of need and beyond, so that they can thrive. Our mission is to provide personalised support for emotional, physical, professional and financial wellbeing.

Now is an exciting time to lead the Board of Trustees and the Charity, working closely with the CEO, Nick Gallagher. We agreed a new three-year strategy in early 2024 which focuses on six aims:

- To strengthen and diversify funding sources.
- To build awareness of the Charity.
- To ensure greater transparency.
- To broaden our range of support (including for mental health).
- To promote greater resilience and independence (but where this is not possible, continue to offer long term support).
- To optimise staffing levels and support for our people.

In the first year of the new strategy, we doubled the number of new people helped; and increased the number of partner organisations who we commission to provide expert advice, assessment, and therapy. We saw a 178% rise in the number of referrals for mental health assessment and therapy, a doubling in the number of people referred for career coaching, and a 75% increase in referrals for money management, debt and benefits advice.

We made awards and grants totalling £1.2m and our partners helped our clients to make formal and informal solutions for £800,000 of debt and to write off a further £900,000 with creditors.

At the end of 2024 the total value of the Charity was £25.9million including £21.7 million in investments.

We are making great progress with this new strategy and, starting in late 2025, we will be reviewing our successes and beginning to think about our future direction with important decisions being taken in late 2026.

Alongside our delivery strategy we have begun work on our new fundraising strategy to help us meet the financial demands of increased need and to ensure our viability in the long term.

We now wish to appoint a Chair Elect, to become a trustee in September 2025 and to take over from our current Chair, Shams Rahman, in March 2026 who comes to the end of his term of office.

We are looking for a current or former member of the Roll of Solicitors of England and Wales who brings significant strategic leadership experience and a naturally collaborative approach to developing organisational strategy and outcomes. You will be experienced at engaging with a wide range of stakeholders and building co-operation and shared commitment across competing perspectives.

We are looking for a naturally inclusive leader with a strong ambassadorial approach who has considerable experience of engaging externally with a wide range of stakeholders and a willingness to leverage their contacts and networks to help build a wider supporter base from the legal sector.

You will have some experience of working as part of a board as a non-executive director or trustee and will understand what constitutes good governance in the charity sector.

We actively seek to broaden the diversity of our Board in all aspects to enrich our collective decision-making and governance and welcome applications from candidates who share our values and demonstrate strategic thinking.

These attributes should be combined with outstanding communication skills with a wide variety of audiences, so as to be able to build awareness of the Charity and support, and the ability to probe and appropriately challenge both the Executive and Board colleagues, deploying a collaborative approach and sound judgement.

If this sounds like an opportunity you would like to explore further, we very much look forward to hearing from you.

Ginny Cannon
Chair of the Governance Oversight Committee

*The Solicitors' Charity is the operating name of The Solicitors' Benevolent Association Ltd. We may have been known by a few different names in our history (The Solicitors' Benevolent Association and SBA being the most recent) but our purpose, since 1858, has never changed.



ABOUT US

Our vision is to be here for all solicitors and their dependants, to help and support their wellbeing in times of need and beyond, so that they can thrive. We work with individuals to provide personalised support to help them overcome difficulty, and become self-sustaining through emotional, physical, professional, and financial support. The Solicitors' Charity provides comprehensive wellbeing support, helping solicitors overcome life's challenges.

OUR CORE VALUES

Non-judgemental. Trustworthy. Engaged. Collaborative. Understanding. Professional.

To **find out more** about how we help please visit: <https://thesolicitorscharity.org/how-we-help/>

LEADERSHIP

Our Board of Trustees is made up of solicitors from across the profession, and other experts, who oversee and provide direction for the work of our brilliant team of 10. Together we work to ensure every solicitor, from any background, can access help and support when they need it most. We work with our clients in a highly personalised, non-judgemental way, taking time to understand each situation before agreeing packages of support designed to help people return to being self-supporting and independent, as well as providing life-long support for essentials where this is the right approach.

<https://thesolicitorscharity.org/about-us/our-trustees/>

The Board of Trustees oversees The Solicitors' Charity governance. The Board is responsible for agreeing the organisation's strategy and delegates responsibility for the execution of that strategy to the CEO.

The Board Officers are the Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer.

The Vice-Chair, who works closely with the Chair, is chosen for a three-year term separately from the Chair, from amongst existing trustees. Your first Vice-Chair will be Eugene Farrell, a leader in workplace mental wellbeing, counselling and psychological therapy. Eugene's term of office as Vice-Chair runs until September 2027.

Our Honorary Treasurer will be, for three years from June 2025, Andrew Wauchope, who is an investment expert with very wide governance experience, particularly on investment and finance committees.

The Board has four sub-committees: Investment, Finance & Audit; People & Development; Governance Oversight; and the Awards Committee, each with a highly capable trustee chair.

Trustees serve on one or more sub-committee of the main Board and Board Officers are ex officio members of them all. The Chair and Vice-Chair agree how they engage with the various Committees.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Solicitors' Charity is committed to principles of Equality and Diversity.

We are committed to being a fair provider of relief and assistance to both enrolled and former solicitors and to their dependents who are in need.

Our commitment to being a fair provider means ensuring all applicants and beneficiaries will be treated fairly and no one will be subject to discrimination on the ground of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity status, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

Our commitment means recognising, respecting and valuing the differences between individuals, acting inclusively and treating everyone fairly. We seek to provide and promote a culture which delivers the best outcomes for our applicants and beneficiaries, and which reflects the diverse profession and society we serve.



THE ROLE

SUMMARY

The Chair:

- will provide exemplary leadership to The Solicitors' Charity Board of Trustees, ensuring that the Board functions effectively to achieve the Charity's purpose and strategic objectives.
- will act as an ambassador and one of the public faces of the Charity, working in partnership with the Chief Executive and other staff to raise the profile of the Charity and to ensure availability of resources for the Charity's work.
- will manage the relationship with the Chief Executive on behalf of the Board.
- will focus on the Charity's governance and regulatory compliance, supported by the work of the Board's sub-committees.

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

- Provide leadership to the Board of Trustees.
- Ensure that the Charity's governance structure, and the associated delegated authority, allows the Board to fulfil its duties concerning the sound financial health and governance of the Charity, with systems in place to help ensure accountability.
- Lead the Board to:
 - Provide clear strategic direction for the Charity.
 - Ensure that the Charity operates within its charitable objects, providing appropriate impactful support for its clients.
 - Monitor the Charity's progress against agreed targets, providing appropriate scrutiny, support and challenge.
 - Review major risks and opportunities and ensure that systems are in place respectively to manage and mitigate the risks and to take advantage of the opportunities.
- Manage conflicts of interest.

SPECIFIC DUTIES

Governance

- As a trustee of the Charity, observe the legal obligations of a charity trustee.
- Ensure that provisions are made to develop the knowledge and capability of the Board of Trustees, both collectively and individually.
- Work with the Vice Chair to identify clear respective areas of responsibility.
- Play a leading role in appraising the effectiveness and performance of the individual trustees and of the Board and its sub-committees on a regular basis.
- Through the Charity's governance structure, ensure board succession planning delivers a Board of Trustees that is regularly refreshed and incorporates the right balance of skills, knowledge, experience and diversity needed to govern and lead the Charity effectively.
- Foster, maintain and ensure that constructive relationships exist with and between the trustees, and with and between trustees and the executive.
- Address and resolve any conflicts within the Board, and between the Board and the executive.
- Ensure that the Charity has appropriate policies in place and mechanisms for monitoring compliance with such policies.
- Work in partnership with the Chief Executive to ensure strong, cohesive and collaborative organisational leadership.

External relations

- Working closely with the Chief Executive ensure a co-ordinated approach to external relations, represent the Charity to, and further build relationships with, gatekeepers of the sector (such as The Law Society and the SRA) and VIPs (like the Charity's Patron and President) to continue to raise awareness of the Charity's work.
- Work with the Board and executive team to build a support network for the Charity that helps raise the profile of the Charity and ensures availability of resources for the Charity's work.
- Role model being an ambassador for the Charity, leveraging contacts and networks to help build a wider supporter base from the legal sector.
- In alignment with the Chief Executive, represent the organisation externally and act as a spokesperson, ambassador and advocate on a variety of public platforms (in person and online).

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND THE WIDER STAFF TEAM

- Support and manage the Chief Executive, establishing and building a strong and effective working relationship.
- Liaise with the Chief Executive and, where agreed and appropriate the wider staff team, to maintain an overview of the Charity's affairs, providing support and challenge as necessary.
- Ensure that the Chief Executive has the opportunity for professional development and has appropriate external professional support.
- Set with the Chief Executive their annual objectives, and, with a second trustee, conduct an appropriate annual performance review.

MEETINGS

- Chair meetings of the Board of Trustees effectively and efficiently, encouraging contributions from in person and online participants.
- Work closely with the Chief Executive and governance team to ensure that board meetings are well planned, meaningful, items are well presented to support effective decision-making and reflect the responsibilities of trustees.
- Monitor that the decisions taken at meetings are well recorded and are implemented.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

In your application, please tell us what you can bring to the role against the knowledge and experience below. The skills and qualities will be discussed later on with selected candidates.

KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

- A current or former member of the Roll of Solicitors of England & Wales. A broad understanding of the challenges that affect the wellbeing of solicitors and former solicitors and their dependants.
- Experience of leading at a senior strategic level and of working collaboratively to develop organisational strategy and outcomes.
- Personal experience of engaging with a wide range of stakeholders and of building co-operation and shared commitment across competing perspectives.
- Experience of working as part of a board as a non-executive director or trustee.
- Knowledge and understanding of the not-for-profit sector including of the legal responsibilities and strategic role of charity trustees.
- Experience of ensuring that financial and risk matters are appropriately scrutinised and monitored.

SKILLS AND ABILITIES

- Strong leadership skills and ability to motivate people.
- Ability to think and lead strategically; able to understand and relate to the specific challenges for solicitors and strategic opportunities to develop support for them.
- Strong chairing skills with the ability to ensure all views are heard and that consensus and clarity of outcomes are achieved in line with principles of good governance.
- Excellent communication skills – a confident communicator to a wide variety of audiences.
- Ability to foster a collaborative team environment, and to address conflict and to have difficult conversations to achieve positive outcomes.
- Ability to support, encourage, and constructively challenge the Charity's Chief Executive.

PERSONAL STYLE AND BEHAVIOURS

- A trusted presence, with low ego and high personal credibility; you will bring an engaging and collaborative style that inspires confidence.
- We are looking for someone with undisputed personal integrity and a fair, inclusive and open leadership style.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT

TIME COMMITMENT

- Around three days per month.
- There are four board meetings per year, two of which have an expectation of in person attendance and two of which are hybrid in-person/online. Most in person meetings are held at The Law Society, London, and other venues in and around London
- In addition, there is a strategy awayday with an expectation of in person attendance.
- The Chair is, ex officio, a member of all four of the Board's sub-committees (Awards; Investment, Finance and Audit; Governance Oversight; and People & Development). These sub-committees meet quarterly, and (in discussions with the Vice Chair) the Chair decides what attendance is required to fulfil the requirements of the role.

TERM OF OFFICE

- Trustees are appointed for a maximum of 10 years across three successive terms of 2, 4, and 4 years.
- The Chair is appointed for three years (formally, under the Charity's articles, for three successive one-year terms).
- The current Chair ends his term of office in March 2026, and we are looking to appoint a Chair Elect to become a trustee in September 2025 and to take over as Chair in March 2026.

BOARD MEETINGS

Meetings are held between 1.45 pm and 4pm, with in person meetings usually being held in Central London.

Meetings currently alternate between in person attendance preferred and hybrid (in person and online) arrangements

Future Board Meeting dates are:

- 25th June 2025
- 10th September 2025 (expected first meeting for Chair Elect, as a trustee)
- 8th October (tbc) – an in-person only strategy away day
- 10th December 2025 (followed by a Christmas celebration)
- c. 11th March 2026 (first meeting with new Chair in place)



HOW TO APPLY

We hope you will consider making an application. If you have questions about the appointment and would find it helpful to have an informal conversation, please contact rebecca.oconnor@starfishsearch.com to arrange a call. To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/the-sol-chair/> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- Your CV (no more than three sides).
- A supporting statement (no more than two sides) that sets out why you think this role is the right move for you and how you meet the knowledge and experience criteria.

We would also be grateful if you would also complete the Equality and Diversity monitoring form on the online application process. This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

Closing date: Friday 13th June 2025

Preliminary interviews: w/c 7th July 2025

Final Panel interviews: w/c 14th July 2025

