



The
Wildlife
Trusts

Associate Director of Legal Services

RECRUITMENT PACK

Salary: Up to £65,000

Location: Home based with occasional travel to Newark office/other places of work across the UK

Full time: 35 hours per week (Mon-Fri)

Permanent contract



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About Us

The Wildlife Trusts are a grassroots movement of people from a wide range of backgrounds and all walks of life, who believe that we need nature and nature needs us. We have more than 944,000 members, over 38,000 volunteers, 3,600 staff and 600 trustees. There are 46 individual Wildlife Trusts, each of which is a place-based independent charity with its own legal identity, formed by groups of people getting together and working with others to make a positive difference to wildlife and future generations, starting where they live and work.

Every Wildlife Trust is part of The Wildlife Trusts federation and a corporate member of the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts, a registered charity in its own right [founded in 1912](#) and one of the founding members of IUCN – the International Union for the Conservation of Nature. Taken together this federation of 47 charities is known as The Wildlife Trusts.

The next few years will be critical in determining what kind of world we all live in. We need to urgently reverse the loss of wildlife and put nature into recovery at scale if we are to prevent climate and ecological disaster. We recognise that this will require big, bold changes in the way The Wildlife Trusts work, not least in how we mobilise others and support them to organise within their own communities.

About You

If you are a highly experienced and self-motivated lawyer ready to take on a pivotal leadership role, this is your opportunity to create and shape the future of legal services at one of the UK's best-loved conservation charities. As our Associate Director of Legal Services, you will lead our Legal Services function, working with Trustees, senior leaders and colleagues across RSWT and the wider federation. You will build a commercially led Legal function which will be at the heart of our work enabling bold and confident action in pursuit of our mission to bring nature back.

We are seeking an exceptional individual with outstanding legal and strategic leadership skills, able to inspire confidence and embed a strong commercial culture across a diverse and dynamic organisation. You will have the experience and judgement to navigate the unique landscape of a federation of 46 independent Wildlife Trusts.

You will bring proven experience of delivering high-impact outcomes through your legal expertise whether delivering complex commercial contracts, managing environmental issues, supporting campaigning work, or working within the charity sector.

You will share our values of passion, respect, trust, integrity, pragmatic activism and strength in diversity. We are passionate about our mission, but never judgmental – and we are committed to inclusivity. We particularly welcome applications from people who are underrepresented within our sector, including people from minority backgrounds and people with disabilities. We are determined to build a movement that recognises, values and celebrates individual differences and identities.



About You

RSWT take our safeguarding responsibilities extremely seriously. Please click [here](#) to read our commitment statement.

The Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults at risk. For applicable roles, applicants must be willing to undergo checks with past employers and Disclosure and Barring Service checks at the eligible level.

As a Disability Confident employer, we are committed to offering an interview to anyone with a disability that meets all the essential criteria for the post. Please let us know if you require any adjustments to make our recruitment process more accessible.

RSWT are committed to increasing the diversity of its staff through its Levelling the Field recruitment pledge and will put any ethnic minority applicants that meet all the essential criteria for the post through to the next stage of recruitment.

Please do not use artificial intelligence tools to assist you to complete the application form. We may not accept applications that have been completed utilising AI tools. If you would usually use tools such as these to assist you in filling in a form, please contact tash.stewart@iris.co.uk to discuss this further and understand other options.

Job Description – Overall Purpose

You will be our in-house legal consultant, providing pragmatic legal advice and creating our Legal Services function from scratch, pooling together our existing resources and exploring new models and ways of working to ensure our legal foundations are firmly in order and enable innovation, creativity and maximum collective impact. You will:

- **1. Act as our 'Legal Consultant' providing pragmatic and practical legal advice, support and guidance** to our Board of Trustees, Senior Leadership Team, subject matter experts and staff on various aspects of law, ensuring clarity, consistency and confidence in our legal position.
- **2. Oversee and lead on legal case management, contractual and commercial arrangements and managing legal risk** representing RSWT in legal matters, ensuring the organisation's interests are protected through negotiation, development of commercial contracting strategies and championing a commercial mindset.
- **3. Lead the strategic direction of legal services across RSWT and the Federation**, coordinating our existing legal resources to maximum effect whilst building and improving on the model to shape the Legal Services function to one which supports innovation, collaboration and bold action across the Federation.

Job Description – Main Responsibilities

- **Act as our 'Legal Consultant' providing pragmatic and practical legal advice, support and guidance:**
 - Act as the principal legal adviser to the Board of Trustees, Senior Leadership Team, managers and staff across RSWT.
 - Provide clear, accessible advice on environmental, public, charity, contract, employment and human rights law, supporting effective governance where required.
 - Play an active role as a member of the Wider Leadership Team and strategic groups, helping to shape, review and deliver organisational objectives and outcomes.



Job Description – Main Responsibilities

- **Oversee and lead on legal case management, contractual and commercial arrangements and managing legal risk:**
 - Represent RSWT in legal matters, ensuring the organisation's interests are protected while upholding our values of integrity, transparency and trust.
 - Lead the development of robust commercial contracting strategies that support our mission, ensures best value, and mitigates risk. This includes negotiating high-value, multi-party, and complex commercial arrangements with funders, suppliers, and delivery partners.
 - Oversee the full contract lifecycle, including drafting, negotiation, execution, renewal, and termination of contracts, grant agreements, and partnership arrangements.
 - Collaborate with internal teams (e.g., fundraising, service delivery, procurement) to ensure contracts support the charity's mission and comply with legal and regulatory requirements.
 - Champion a commercial mindset across RSWT and the federation, ensuring contracts and legal frameworks enable innovation, efficiency, and sustainability.
- **Lead the strategic direction of Legal Services across RSWT and the Federation:**
 - Coordinate and marshal all legal resources available to RSWT – including, pro bono support, retained advisors, and external legal partners – ensuring they are deployed efficiently and strategically to meet organisational priorities.
 - Create and present business cases for new models and ways of working as necessary to shape and expand the Legal Services function as organisational needs evolve.
 - Review and continuously improve policies, practices and processes to ensure legal compliance, efficiency and cost-effectiveness.
 - Lead on the development of common frameworks and approaches, supporting consistency across the federation and contributing to “getting our own house in order”.
 - Ensure that legal frameworks are not only compliant and resilient but also enabling – supporting innovation, collaboration and bold action across the federation.



Job Description – Main Responsibilities

- For the organisation to work effectively you may be required to assist with other areas of work and therefore, you should be prepared to undertake other duties appropriate to the post, and any other reasonable duties required.
- **All staff are ambassadors for the organisation both internally and externally and are always expected to act in a professional manner. They are required to abide by organisational rules, policies and procedures as laid down in the staff handbook, adopt environmentally friendly working practices, set and maintain high personal standards of efficiency and customer care and foster a 'can do' culture based on ownership, initiative, teamwork and exchange of information.**



Person Specification

Assessment Method Key: Application (**A**), Interview (**I**), Presentation (**P**)

Essential

- Personal Qualities:
 - **Passionate about leadership:** A values-led leader who demonstrates commitment to organisational excellence, continuous improvement, and embedding compliance and integrity across all areas of work (P, I)
 - **Inspires confidence and trust:** with the presence and authority to influence at Board, senior leadership, and external stakeholder levels (P, I)
- Key Competencies:
 - **Strategic leadership and collaboration:** Able to set direction, think beyond immediate issues, and foster collective ownership. Builds positive, respectful relationships across a diverse federation, with trustees, staff, volunteers, and external partners (A, P, I)
 - **Demonstrated ability to lead, coordinate, and optimise** internal and external legal resources to deliver high-quality, cost-effective outcomes (A, I)
 - **Planning and delivery:** Demonstrates effectiveness in demanding environments; able to prioritise strategically, manage multiple priorities, and deliver impact at pace without losing sight of long-term objectives (I)
 - **Communication and influencing:** Exceptional communicator, able to convey complex legal and governance issues with clarity and confidence to varied audiences. Builds credibility and influence to shape decision-making and embed compliance culture-wide (A, P)
 - **Adaptability and resilience:** Operates effectively in fast-changing contexts, responding constructively to challenge, setbacks or shifting priorities, while maintaining focus on outcomes (A, I)
 - **Innovation and problem solving:** Seeks creative, practical, and legally sound solutions that strengthen governance and enable bold action in pursuit of the Trusts' mission (P, I)



Person Specification

Essential continued

- Experience:
 - **Legal practice:** Proven experience of legal practice with an up-to-date UK Practising Certificate (A)
 - **Relevant sector experience:** Demonstrable track record of delivering high-impact outcomes through managing environmental issues, campaigning, or within the charity sector (A, I)
 - **Analytical and problem-solving skills:** Proficiency in assessing service and organisational needs, analysing data insights, and evaluating the effectiveness and costs of our current legal provision (A, P)
- Knowledge and skills:
 - **Professional knowledge & expertise:** Up-to-date knowledge of legislative changes and their implications for governance, compliance, policies, practices and strategic priorities (A, I)
 - **Contract skills and knowledge:** Expert knowledge of contract law, and commercial agreements. Extensive experience in drafting, negotiating, and managing complex contracts and grant agreements (A, I)
 - **Solid commercial acumen** with the ability to balance mission delivery and sound business practice in contracting and partnership arrangements (I)
 - **Litigation skills & knowledge:** Proven ability to manage and advise on litigation and complex case management where required (I)
 - **Specialist knowledge:** In-depth understanding of environmental, public, charity, employment and human rights law, partnership agreements and contracts (A, I)
 - **Digital capability:** Proficiency in using digital tools and platforms to strengthen legal practice, case management and knowledge-sharing (A)



Person Specification

Desirable

- Personal Qualities:
 - **An interest in nature** and a passion for supporting important causes (I)
 - **Brings personal credibility and networks** that can strengthen the organisation's voice and influence (P, I)
- Key Competencies:
 - **Building capability:** Evidence of building capability and embedding legal awareness across large or federated organisations (P, I)
- Knowledge and Skills:
 - **Project management:** Experienced in leading projects and programs at scale, ensuring delivery on time, to budget, and aligned with strategic objectives (I)
 - **Expert financial knowledge:** Innovative financing or partnership models relevant to the charity and environmental sectors (I)



Additional benefits of working for The Wildlife Trusts

- Private medical insurance
- Electric vehicle salary sacrifice scheme
- 26 days holiday per year plus 8 bank holidays
- 4 Concessionary Days
- Non-contributory Life Assurance Scheme
- Generous pension contribution
- Charity worker discount
- Employee Assistance Programme

Closing date for applications: 16th November 2025

First interview: 24th November 2025

Second interview: 25th November 2025

