

LIBERTY

CANDIDATE BRIEF

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER

MARCH 2024



CONTENTS

SECTION 1

About Liberty – page 3

SECTION 2

Join Liberty as an Executive Committee member – page 7

SECTION 3

Applying to become an Executive Committee member – page 11

SECTION 1: ABOUT LIBERTY

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR, TARA LAI QUINLAN

This is an exciting time for Liberty. And a challenging one. We have recently finalised a new five-year strategy and begun a programme of change, focused on embedding Liberty values and modernising our governance structures.

This is not simply internal work for its own sake. We face unprecedented threats to our human rights, particularly to those of marginalised communities. We are accelerating our work towards our vision of a UK where human rights are protected by robust laws, policies and practices, and respected by the public and people in power.

This is more than just holding the line: this is about imagining a future where equality, dignity and justice are a reality for everyone. I first became involved with Liberty in 2019 based on my passion for human rights and civil liberties issues.

It is an amazing organisation that I'm proud to be associated with. From its work on protecting the right to protest, guarding migrants' rights, stopping wrongful and discriminatory stops and searches, preventing illegal electronic surveillance, and many other important issues, colleagues are skilfully navigating the civil liberties and social justice agenda and making a difference to peoples' lives.

I am excited for this next phase of the development of our Executive Committee and I am eager to engage with the diverse and fresh perspectives that new members will bring.

Readers will note that the official term for Liberty's 'Board' is the Executive Committee – one of the idiosyncrasies of our current governance arrangements. For the avoidance of doubt, the roles we are recruiting for are non-executive – and volunteer – roles.

MESSAGE FROM LIBERTY DIRECTOR, AKIKO HART

Liberty was founded in 1934 in response to brutal police attempts to stop protests during the Hunger Marches and the ‘general and alarming tendency to encroach on the liberty of the citizen’.

For almost a century, Liberty has championed anyone whose rights come under threat, from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, to migrants, protestors, Government whistle-blowers and people under surveillance.

We’ve grown to become one of the UK’s biggest and most impactful civil liberties and human rights groups, with more than 15,000 members and over 200,000 supporters. Every year, Liberty gives 1,000 people free human rights legal advice and 750,000 people access our online advice pages.

One of Liberty’s founders observed in 1934 that the work of a human rights organisation will never be done. With every passing decade this has proved true, and ours is no exception.

We are facing a crisis of rights in the UK. Fundamental freedoms like protest and free expression are under attack. The rights we all need to live dignified lives are being eroded. Marginalised groups are being scapegoated and oppressed. Technology has extended the reach of the state’s coercive power while people in power have made themselves unaccountable. A climate crisis, a cost-of-living crisis, a crisis of democracy.

People who work at Liberty, join Liberty, support Liberty or collaborate with Liberty share something powerful – we are animated by the hope of a different world. Sometimes hope is work and keeping it alive is perhaps the most important strategic goal of all.

Our invitation in this pack is for you to consider joining Liberty as a member of its Executive Committee.

We are looking for people who share our willingness to work with hope, to commit to our values and to help steer us through this challenging time. My colleagues on the Liberty Senior Leadership Team and I are excited about the growth and development of the EC and the opportunity to complement the existing wonderful group of volunteers with new skills and perspectives.



HOW WE WORK AT LIBERTY

We are independent. Our principles are guided by evidence, expertise, and human impact. We are not swayed by political agenda, profit, or popular opinion. We are not afraid to speak uncomfortable truths and challenge intolerance, discrimination, and abuse of power wherever we find it.

Our work strives to recognise and counter the structural and historic oppression that faces our society; we consider the power dynamics of any issue or situation, working to rebalance them in favour of minoritised or disempowered groups. We do not use human rights or civil liberties arguments to support actions that would oppress others or suppress rights.

We listen to the people closest to a problem or issue and recognise that expertise can be gained from lived experience, from research, and from academic learning, all of which we take into account.

We know we are stronger and better when we work collaboratively. We partner with and support a range of voices, from established NGOs and community groups to grassroots collectives and activists. We work in partnership, build coalitions and make space for others, playing our part in sustaining a long-term movement for change.

We are committed to creating a positive, supportive, respectful environment where people are free to be themselves. We welcome respectful challenge and feedback, and we strive to listen, reflect, and learn, responding with respect rather than acting defensively or with hostility.

We know that to succeed in Liberty's mission and deliver this strategy, anti-oppression must run through everything we do.

This means centring our commitment to dignity and equality, challenging the acute impact of abuses of power on marginalised people, and working to dismantle systems of oppression.

We must live Liberty's values of dignity and respect and be courageous in championing Liberty's mission internally and externally.

Liberty is an anti-racist, disability-positive, trans affirming organisation.

We do not tolerate discrimination on any grounds, including class, economic status, religious belief, nationality, immigration status, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, colour, ethnicity, age and disability. We recognise that discrimination can be direct or indirect, does not require intent and harassment is a particularly oppressive form of discrimination.

We take the side of the most marginalised, defend minoritised groups, challenge oppressive practices and fight for substantive equality.

Within the framing of our values, our strategic goals are:

- the UK's human rights framework is valued, protected and expanded
- protest, free expression and privacy are respected
- social issues are met with rights-respecting responses
- a strong and diverse supporter base
- an agile, effective, values driven organisation.

SECTION 2: JOIN LIBERTY AS AN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBER

Liberty is recruiting people to oversee its strategic direction, finances and senior management team, as Executive Committee (EC) members.

WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR

We are looking for people who have undertaken – or who are currently in – senior leadership roles and especially those who have prior Board / governance experience, particularly in mission-driven, non-profit organisations.

Personal qualities should include a commitment to human rights and Liberty’s mission and values, strong interpersonal and relationship building skills, strategic thinking, tact, diplomacy and ability to foster and promote collaborative team development.

We are looking for people who are keen to deploy their skills in a rapidly changing environment and who have a strong commitment to both the idea and practice of good governance as a platform for organisational impact and success.

Successful candidates will anchor their contribution in Liberty’s vision and values, and will be able to grapple with nuanced, complex issues objectively and with a commitment to learning.

We particularly welcome applications from people with personal experience of marginalisation or minoritisation.

MORE ABOUT THE EC

The Executive Committee (EC) is responsible for the overall management, strategic direction and finances of Liberty.

Liberty (The National Council for Civil Liberties) is primarily a membership organisation that employs staff and runs campaigns. The Civil Liberties Trust (CLT) is a Charity for company law purposes which achieves its objectives in the human rights arena principally by funding Liberty to carry out campaigns, case work, fundraising and other relevant activities.

EC members are elected from Liberty's Policy Council (PC) or are recruited direct to the EC (as is the case with this appointment process). EC members are the stewards of Liberty and are Directors of the organisation for company law purposes – and as Directors, the EC members have formal legal responsibilities, such as preparing financial statements in accordance with applicable UK law and accounting standards.

In the course of its stewardship of Liberty, the EC meets six times a year for meetings of 2-3 hours. It also holds an EC induction in September and an annual strategy day.

We also participate in one anti-oppression training session annually. To facilitate the discharge of its legal responsibilities, CLT has established a Board of Directors which is formed, among others, by the Chair or Vice-Chair of the EC and two other EC members. The CLT Board meets three times a year.

Given the relationship between the two companies, it is not surprising that the EC is often referred to, interchangeably, as the 'Executive Committee' or the 'Board'.

However, Liberty and CLT meetings do not overlap, since both companies operate at arm's length, making their own independent decisions.

Appointments are for two years and can be renewed at the Annual General Meeting for a maximum period of eight years. Meetings are hybrid (virtual option available) although the EC is considering its approach and may move to holding 2-3 meetings per year in person at Liberty's offices in London.

EC GUIDING PRINCIPLES

EC members come with a diverse range of skills and social and professional experiences. Liberty is seeking EC members who are able to draw on their wider experiences to fulfil EC roles. EC members are expected to be guided in their work by the pro-human rights and anti-oppression values that are core to Liberty's strategy and culture.

As a result of changes to Liberty's Constitution, which were approved by the membership in May 2022, these guiding principles have Constitutional status and inform the functioning of the EC which is formally committed to a positive, supportive and respectful environment, in order to facilitate good governance and in support of Liberty's anti-oppression values.

Specifically, EC members work with their EC colleagues to:

- ensure effective governance as per company law and Charity Commission requirements
- ensure Liberty uses its resources in the best interests of the organisation's mission
- ensure that required systems are in place to take advantage of opportunities and manage and mitigate risks
- ensure Liberty has all necessary organisational policies and procedures in place to support its strategy and values and that these policies and procedures are reviewed as appropriate
- develop strategy, including goal setting and evaluating performance
- approve annual budgets, audit reports and significant organisation decisions
- remain informed of all legal and fiduciary responsibilities
- foster and maintain constructive relationships with and between other EC members, leveraging everybody's experiences for the benefit of Liberty's mission
- develop knowledge and skills in anti-oppression leadership (including participating in training on a regular basis)
- run or participate in sub-committees of the EC and / or project groups
- establish and build strong and constructive working relationships with the Director of Liberty and its senior leadership team, offering both support and challenge, and hold the senior leadership team to account for their delegated responsibilities
- participate as required in the Director's annual performance development review and in succession planning for both the Director and EC
- act as ambassadors for the organisation and its values.

FUNDING

Liberty receives the majority of its income from Grants, Membership and Donations. Income and expenditure is currently approximately £3.6m per annum, having more than doubled over the past five years. We have a healthy level of reserves.

The CLT is one of Liberty's principal funders. The latest financial statements for both Liberty and CLT can be found on the website.

LOOKING AHEAD

As we move from vision to strategy and action, we are excited about the opportunity for impactful, thoughtful and practice-leading work to evolve structures, systems and behaviours.

New EC members may join other EC colleagues and staff in projects on governance, staff wellbeing, financial resilience or pay and benefits, all through the lens of our development as an anti-oppression organisation.



SECTION 3: HOW TO APPLY

To apply for this role, please send a CV and cover letter of no more than two pages, outlining your relevant skills and experience, as well as your motivation, to: hr@libertyhumanrights.org.uk.

Applicants are also asked to complete an optional equal opportunities monitoring form, which will not be shared with anyone assessing your application.

The Committee overseeing the appointments process will review all applications. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview.

Prior to this, shortlisted candidates will be offered one-to-one time with the Director and/or senior execs to learn more about the organisation.

Please note, that prior to appointment to the EC, successful candidates will need to be members of Liberty. If not already a member, [join Liberty today](#).

For an informal, exploratory conversation, further information can be provided by Akiko via email: akikoh@libertyhumanrights.org.uk.