

## Environmental Rights Centre for Scotland (ERCS) Advert

**Job title:** Solicitor

**Salary:** £41,280 - £45,000 per annum depending on experience (pro rata)

**Hours:** 21 to 35 hours per week agreed on appointment

**Annual leave:** 35 days annual leave inclusive of public holidays (plus additional 1 day of leave per year of service up to a maximum 5 days (pro rata)

**Contract type:** Permanent

**Location:** Hybrid working arrangements with office space in Edinburgh

**Reports to:** Principal Solicitor / Legal Director

**Start date:** Immediate

The [Environmental Rights Centre for Scotland](#) (ERCS) is looking for an enthusiastic and highly motivated environmental lawyer to help us establish Scotland's only law centre for environmental justice.

A key objective in the first year is to establish ERCS Law Practice as a not-for-profit law firm. Together with the Principal Solicitor / Legal Director, you will provide clients with comprehensive legal advice and representation, in all aspects of environmental law.

You will have passion, integrity and commitment to deliver legal services in a way which is practical, meaningful and easily understood; and identify opportunities to undertake strategic litigation.

We encourage applications from people who are Black or from minority ethnic communities, disabled people and people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. ERCS is a [Disability Confident Committed employer](#) to demonstrate our commitment to welcoming disabled applicants for all roles. We commit to making reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process so disabled job applicants have the best opportunity to demonstrate that they can do the job.

For informal enquiries contact Dr Ben Christman, Principal Solicitor / Legal Director at [bchristman@ercs.scot](mailto:bchristman@ercs.scot).

**Closing date:** 10am Monday 4 November 2024

**Interviews** Early November in person at Royal Society for The Protection of Birds Office, 2 Lochside View, Edinburgh, Midlothian, EH12 9DH.



# Environmental Rights Centre for Scotland (ERCS)

## Job description: Solicitor

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## Background on ERCS

The [Environmental Rights Centre for Scotland](https://www.ercs.scot) (ERCS) was registered as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SC050257) in 2020.

***Our vision is of a Scotland where every person's right to a healthy environment is respected, protected and fulfilled.***

Our mission is to assist everyone, especially people who face the biggest barriers, to exercise their rights in environmental law and to protect the environment. We do this through:

- **Awareness-raising of legal rights and remedies** and supporting equitable participation in environmental decision-making
- **Advice, assistance and representation** to increase access to justice and holding public authorities and polluters to account on the environment
- **Advocacy in policy and law reform** to improve environmental law
- **Strategic public interest litigation** to tackle systemic environmental problems.

Our operating values and principles are to be:

- open, accessible and approachable in how we offer our services
- respectful, collaborative and enabling in how we deliver our services
- evidence-based and assertive in how we advocate for policy and law reform
- trusted and authoritative in how we pursue environmental rights and litigation
- transparent in how we evaluate our impacts and improve our overall effectiveness.





## Job purpose

As the Solicitor of ERCS, your role will be to deliver legal services to protect and develop environmental rights and responsibilities in Scotland.

Working with the Chief Officer and the Principal Solicitor / Legal Director, a key objective in the first year is to assist ERCS to establish a not-for-profit law firm.

The aim of the law firm is to deliver high-quality legal services that further our vision and values and respond to priority areas of unmet legal need.

You will provide clients with comprehensive legal advice and representation, in all aspects of environmental law, in a way which is practical, meaningful and easily understood. You will be sensitive to the nature of the enquiries we receive; and be friendly, approachable and professional.

You will assist ERCS to identify opportunities to undertake strategic litigation. You will play a critical role in the development of ERCS's publications, guides, training and research work; and our advocacy to improve environmental law and access to justice on the environment.

A collaborative approach is essential with a strong focus on creating and maintaining effective working relationships and representing the organisation to key funders, stakeholders and partners.



## Key responsibilities

### Provide legal services

- Provide a full range of legal advice on environmental law including related planning law.
- Provide professional, timeous and impartial legal advice face-to-face (virtually or in person), via telephone and email on issues affecting individuals, community groups and environmental NGOs.
- Ensure the effective prioritisation and timely management of an assigned workload.
- Ensure efficient administration and record keeping in compliance with relevant legislation.
- With the Principal Solicitor, support and guide the work of ERCS's legal team to ensure a high-quality level of service to our clients.
- Identify common issues and trends for awareness raising and ERCS's advocacy work.



## Advocacy and rights awareness – strengthen environmental law and increase understanding

- Maintain a thorough grasp of current relevant environmental and related planning legislation and case law developments, and an overview of political developments in relation to the environment and environmental law in Scotland and internationally.
- Identify and support opportunities to advocate for policy and law reform, particularly in relation to compliance with the Aarhus Convention and improved environmental governance.
- Analyse and critically respond to policy consultations, parliamentary inquiries and other legal issues by working collaboratively with colleagues and the Board of Trustees.
- Develop web-based resources and deliver training on environmental law and rights to a high professional standard, and to a wide range of audiences to develop capacity building.

## External relations

- Develop relationships with, and promote ERCS's law firm to, community groups and organisations in the environmental, equality and social inclusion sectors.
- Contribute to the development of ERCS's networks with key stakeholders within Scottish civic, legal, environmental and academic fields.
- Represent ERCS publicly by participating in meetings, events, and conferences.

## Governance and operations

- Support fundraising efforts, specifically with specialist information around the legal activities which may support funding applications.
- Work with the Chief Officer and Principal Solicitor / Legal Director to review business risks with respect to the legal team on a regular basis and ensure that suitable mitigations are in place.
- Fully comply with all the business processes, including those specifically developed for the legal team, reporting any non-compliance in a timely manner so they can be rectified.
- Support the Board of Trustees to perform its governance role by providing information and advice as needed, including statistical information and written reports.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues and with the Board of Trustees to deliver ERCS's operational workplans and strategic objectives.
- Ensure high quality standards and monitoring and evaluation systems are developed and maintained.
- Attend team meetings and events as required.
- Carry out other duties consistent with the job purpose and as ERCS may reasonably require.



## Person specification

### Knowledge including necessary qualifications

- Holder of an unrestricted practicing certificate with the Law Society of Scotland while employed in the capacity of a Scottish solicitor for a minimum of one year.
- Knowledge of the policy and regulatory context of environmental law (including related planning law), rights and protection.

### Experience

- Litigation experience ideally in environmental law and/or judicial review.
- Legal aid experience or a willingness to work with legal aid.
- Excellent experience of conducting legal research.
- An excellent track record of planning and prioritising legal case work.

### Skills

- The ability to understand and quickly identify legal issues and provide legal advice succinctly and in response to individual needs.
- The capacity to undertake high volumes of work and ability to deliver to strict deadlines.
- Sound judgement and good decision-making skills, coping well with competing time pressures.
- A track record of working effectively in a team and under own initiative.
- An excellent ability to develop, manage and maintain effective working relationships.
- An effective communicator capable of delivering complex messages in an accessible manner to diverse audiences.
- Excellent IT skills including Microsoft Office 365, Power point and electronic case management systems and online meeting software.
- The ability and confidence to create and present dynamic and engaging presentation and training materials.

### Motivation

- Dedication to the delivery of high-quality legal services.
- Understanding of, and commitment to, reducing the barriers to access to justice in public interest environmental law in Scotland.





## Terms and conditions

This is a permanent contract for between 21 and 35 hours per week, to be agreed on appointment and subject to a six-month probation. The salary will be £41,280 - £45,000 per annum (pro rata).

The leave quota is based on 25 days annual leave and 10 public holidays per annum (pro rata). ERCS staff accrue an additional 1 day of leave per year of service (pro rata) up to a maximum additional 5 days additional leave per year.

On occasion it may be necessary to work evenings or parts of weekends, for which time off in lieu will be granted. All approved expenses will be reimbursed.

ERCS operates an auto-enrolment workplace pension scheme with the NEST Pension where ERCS makes an employer contribution to employee personal pensions of up to a maximum of 8% of basic salary, complementing employee contributions.

