



Operations Manager Recruitment Pack

About Us

LFT Charitable Trust was established as a family foundation in 2017 to promote and support charitable purposes and activities. We are a family-led Trust funded by entirely by donations from Alterity Investments, a privately-owned property and investment company, which has pledged up to 50% of annual operating surpluses to LFT.

Current Board of Trustees

Gavin Lonergan, Chair
Aidan Lonergan, Settlor & Trustee
Anne Lonergan, Trustee
Darren Lonergan, Trustee
Ciara Lewis, Trustee
Jill Downing, Trustee
Andy Donachie, Trustee
Anne Bailie, Trustee

Current Staff Team

Aisling Johnston, Chief Executive
Christine Paisley, Programme Information
& Communications Officer



Vision & Aims

LFT's vision is of a just world where people have equal opportunity to transform their lives, participate in their communities and build successful futures.

LFT aims to fund work delivered by partner organisations which:

- will make a lasting difference to people's lives as well as alleviating the symptoms or current problems;
- is aimed at reducing isolation, inequality and stigma; and
- inspires or empowers individuals to realise their potential and share in the life of the whole community.

Values

LFT Charitable Trust is family led and reflects the vision and values of its founders.

Compassion

We are committed to listening to and understanding the needs of those who are suffering and we are driven by a desire to act responsibly.

Fairness and Integrity

We aim to operate in a clear and transparent manner and make the process of applying for funds as simple as possible for prospective partners

Continuous Learning

We seek to build honest relationships with partners in which both success and failure offer opportunities for learning. We strive to be responsive to change, unexpected consequences and external developments that require shifts in strategy and expectations.

Partnership & Collaboration

Recognising we can achieve little on our own, we aim to develop close relationships with our partners in order to best support their work and to achieve shared goals.

What we do

Grant Making

LFT Charitable Trust is primarily a proactive funder. We build our knowledge by talking to and meeting with individuals and organisations working within our priority areas. This approach enables LFT to proactively identify, through research and engagement, initiatives and organisations related to LFT's focus areas. Where we identify opportunities and the prospect of a project that aligns with our current grant making policy, we invite proposals for funding. This pre-invitation engagement is led by individual Trustees, facilitated by the Executive Team.

Invited applications are scored by the sponsoring Trustee and presented as a recommendation, if appropriate, to the full Board of Trustees who are responsible for all grant making decisions.

On occasion the proactive approach will be supplemented by open calls for speculative applications to address a specific need or beneficiary group. In the past 12 months we have made open calls for applications to promote intergenerational relationships, projects tackling poverty at grassroots level, nature-based interventions to support mental health and the provision of adult counselling.



Personal Involvement

LFT aspires to be recognised as a relational funder and Trustees are committed to adopting a personal approach in grant making. Trustees are typically engaged from the outset meeting prospective grant partners before inviting an application and keeping in touch post award.

It is recognised that the personal visit is as much to benefit the grant partner in a display of support as it is to inform and enhance LFT's knowledge and understanding of the sector and its challenges.

Areas of Interest

LFT Charitable Trust will only make grants that further its charitable purposes for public benefit.

The charitable objects are defined in the Trust Deed as follows: the relief of the suffering and distress of those persons who are in need; the furtherance and advancement of the education of children and adults; and the promotion of the health and wellbeing of children and adults.

Principles of LFT Grant Making

Our grant making strategy is reviewed and updated at regular intervals to ensure it is responsive and relevant to current needs.

A number of guiding principles that underpin the strategy have been agreed:-

- LFT attaches great importance to its role as a family foundation which embraces and promotes the family's values
- LFT will focus on its role as a grant making body responding to the expressed needs of the community & voluntary sector rather than directing and managing projects to secure specific outcomes
- LFT strives to be a responsible grant maker by building trusted and equitable relationships with grant partners that will foster partnership and true collaboration
- LFT seeks to prioritise the promotion of the impact and value delivered by its grant partners rather than the role of LFT as a grant making body
- LFT aims to carve out a position as a perpetual independent family foundation that sets its own agenda and retains agility and flexibility to respond to emerging needs

Grant Partners

Identifying the right network of dedicated and ambitious partners enables us to deliver on our charitable purposes and activities.

Our Ideal Grant Partner demonstrates:

- **Effectiveness and impact** – expert understanding of the issue, how best to address it, how to measure and continuously improve outcomes;
- **Strong governance and management** – a leadership team that is passionate, professional, ambitious, courageous and credible;
- **Synergy** – connecting and collaborating with others to maximise outcomes for beneficiaries;
- **Grassroots Engagement** – lived experience, strong track record, embedded in their community and a history of mobilising collective action.

Funds Committed

To date LFT Trustees have pledged almost £7m in grants to over 250 grant partners. Funds totalling £5.5m have been disbursed.

ARC Fitness



ARC Fitness uniquely combines the therapeutic benefits of exercise, education and individual coaching to support people in recovery from addiction.

L'Arche



The belief that everyone has unique gifts to offer, and that true community is built on the recognition and celebration of these gifts, is central to L'Arche.

Women's TEC



Women's TEC was established with a clear vision in mind: to break down barriers, challenge stereotypes and create a more inclusive and diverse workforce.

Crisis Café



The goal in setting up Crisis Café was to empower young people with leadership skills to create and direct solutions that make a real difference to mental health provision.

Angel Eyes



Angel Eyes NI empower families with information and skills to raise aspirations and make informed choices for their child.

Oh Yeah Music Centre



Oh Yeah Music Centre use music as a unique and powerful stimulus for reawakening self-awareness and social connectedness in people with dementia.

What we're looking for

LFT Charitable Trust funds powerful, life-changing work led by our grant partners and we're looking for a full-time Operations Manager to help us do this well. You'll bring a financially confident and discerning eye to appraising applications and monitoring performance.

We want someone who reads numbers and people equally well: curious enough to ask questions, fair enough to not assume the worst and generous enough to share their own expertise wherever it would help.

You don't need a background in the charity sector to thrive here. We'd love to hear from people with business, consultancy, advisory or financial experience too - what matters most is your judgement and your people skills.

Key Responsibilities

Manage the grant making process end to end - from soliciting and assessing applications through to letters of offer, payments and record-keeping.

Appraise applications and financial information with sound judgement, asking constructive, probing questions where something needs a closer look.

Check that grant partners have delivered on what they promised, including using the evaluation methods they set out and offer sensitive, considered support where a project has drifted off track.

Look for ways to add value beyond the grant itself - sharing your skills, contacts or advice with partners wherever it would help.

Support all of our grant partners with equal enthusiasm, whatever their beneficiary group or cause.

Keep on top of sector trends, prepare reports for internal and external use and support any staff in the Grants Team.

This is a full-time, office-based role - there's no remote or hybrid option.



Operations Manager - Role Description

Purpose

To lead LFT's grant making with financial rigour and good judgement and to build genuine, mutually beneficial, relationships with our grant partners - helping people realise their potential and share fully in community life.

Specific Responsibilities Include:

Grant making

- Help build and manage a pipeline of applications that reflect LFT's priorities, advising prospective applicants along the way.
- Assess applications and complete due diligence - including a thoughtful look at accounts, budgets, governance and legal status - noting anything that needs a closer look and giving applicants the chance to talk it through with you.
- Appraise applications with balanced judgement, following up diplomatically on anything unclear or overstated to build the most realistic picture.
- Communicate decisions clearly and helpfully to all applicants, issue Letters of Offer and keep grant payments and records accurate and on time.
- Maintain the grants database and ensure records are well kept.

Grant Partner Relations

- Be the main point of contact for up to 100 live grant partners, reviewing their progress and final reports.
- Compare final reports against original applications to check delivery matches what was promised, following up directly where it doesn't.
- Offer proportionate, diplomatic support to any partner who's fallen off track and look for chances to add value beyond funding - sector insight, introductions, informal advice.
- Visit partners as needed and ensure they have an excellent experience with LFT.

Performance & Impact Reporting

- Take responsibility for the quality of grant making data, designing impact metrics and producing reports.
- Monitor grants for impact and report on progress to Trustees.
- Prepare updates for the website, newsletters, quarterly reports, Annual Reviews and Board papers and build strong relationships with partners, funders and other institutions.

Strategic Review

- Help improve the grant life cycle end to end, from sourcing applications through to payment and reporting.
- Keep an eye on sector trends and use them to inform our practice and research new funding priorities as they emerge.
- Help LFT be a value-adding partner, not just a funder and contribute to a grant making strategy that keeps Trustees engaged and partners well supported.

Line Management & Support

- Manage any other staff in the Grants Team.

Undertake any other duties as required, commensurate with the role.



Operations Manager - Person Specification

Key Qualities

- Curious about how organisations plan, deliver and evaluate their work - whether that curiosity comes from the charity sector or a business/consultancy background.
- Comfortable asking probing questions with warmth and respect, applying judgement that's neither naive nor overly sceptical.
- Treats every beneficiary group as equally deserving, regardless of personal interest or affinity.
- Generous with their own expertise, contacts and time.
- Enthusiastic, high-integrity and committed to learning.

Essential Skills & Experience

- Five years' relevant experience - in grant making, business, financial or management - third sector experience is not essential.
- A relevant business, finance or voluntary sector qualification.
- Strong financial skills, able to interpret accounts and observant enough to pick up on the finer details.
- Comfortable comparing planned versus actual delivery and following up diplomatically on any gaps.
- Highly organised, with strong Excel skills and excellent communication.
- Access to transport for travel throughout NI.

Desirable Skills & Experience

- Experience of grassroots, independent, relational grant making.
- Experience working across the community & voluntary sector.
- Experience in measuring and reporting impact.

Salary & Benefits

- £32,000 - £38,000 (subject to qualifications and experience)
- Permanent position, subject to successful probation
- 5% employer pension contribution
- 31 days holiday entitlement
- Learning & development opportunities
- Accessible office location with free parking
- Smart modern working environment
- Small dynamic team that works closely together



The Application Process

1. Interested candidates are asked to download the Job Application Form available [here](#)
2. Completed forms should be submitted via email to jobs@lftcharitabletrust.com by **3pm on Thursday 24th September 2026.**
3. It is anticipated that interviews for the position will be held Thursday 8th October.
4. Interviews will include scenario-based exercises details of which will be provided on the day of interview.
5. All offers of employment are subject to receipt of satisfactory references. Referees will not be contacted prior to a job offer being made.



Enquiries related to this recruitment can be addressed to:

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Belfast
BT7 3JH

Tel: 028 9620 6151

Email: jobs@lftcharitabletrust.com

Web: www.lftcharitabletrust.com

LFT is registered with the Charity Commission for N. Ireland NIC107373