

Refugee Council Trustee Roles

Candidate Information Pack

January 2025



Introduction from our Chair of Trustees

There hasn't been a more important moment for the refugee cause. With the issue often at the top of the political agenda, how the UK meets the needs of those seeking safety on our shores is one of the key questions of our time.

The Refugee Council is at the forefront of both the political and public debate, and at the forefront of meeting the needs of refugees and people seeking asylum. Our services reach around 14,000 men, women and children across England. As the oldest charity working with refugees in the UK – founded in 1951 when the UK was one of the founding signatories of the UN Convention - we have a proud history of being a leading provider of support and services, and the preeminent voice on refugee issues

The charity is in a good financial position with a strong executive leadership team and board of trustees united in delivering against a clear mission, vision and strategy. Following the change in Government last year we have already achieved some important reforms and there are opportunities to achieve more. We are also embarking on the development of a new five year strategy that will build on the organisational change already achieved in delivering our current strategy.

We are interested in receiving applications from candidates who have board level experience. We have previously recruited to the board those with authentic/lived experience of the refugee and asylum system within the UK, and we continue to welcome applications from those who have first-hand experience of the refugee protection process. Additionally, we would welcome a range of diverse candidates from different socioeconomic, cultural and geographic backgrounds across the UK. We understand that sometimes these and other protected characteristics intersect and welcome those who are currently underrepresented across charity boards.

We will be holding an **open question and answer session online via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 11th February at 12:30pm**, to give you the opportunity to find out more before the application deadline of 9th March. For more details about how to join the information session, please see page 9. If you have any questions, or would like to talk to a trustee about the role, please contact Lynne Gemba on lynne.gemba@refugeecouncil.org.uk.

We very much look forward to hearing from you and receiving your application.

Rachael Orr
Chair of Trustees

About the Refugee Council

Founded the same year as the United Nations 1951 Refugee Convention, the Refugee Council works with over 14,000 refugees and people seeking asylum in the UK each year. We provide crisis advice and practical support, help refugees to integrate into their new communities and offer mental health counselling to help people come to terms with the trauma so many have experienced. We are the only national organisation providing support to all refugee children and young people who arrive here on their own. We also campaign with, and for, refugees, call for improvements to the asylum system and ensure refugees have a stronger and more influential voice in decisions that will affect them.

Our vision, purpose and values

Our vision

Refugees are welcome to live safe and fulfilling lives contributing to the UK.

Our purpose

To work with refugees to transform their experience of seeking protection in the UK.

Our values:



Inclusive

We are inclusive. We work with - not for - refugees and people seeking asylum, so they have an equal voice, co-producing projects and ensuring their expertise and experiences are at the heart of what we do.



Collaborative

We are collaborative. Working with others is a priority in order to have the collective impact that is vital to achieve policy and practice reform.



Courageous

We speak out when we see injustice, cruelty and unfairness. We always stand up for what we believe is the right thing to do to transform the experiences of those seeking protection in our country.



Respectful

We are respectful of all those we interact with. We treat everyone – our staff, volunteers, beneficiaries, partners and people we disagree with – with the same respect, professionalism and understanding.

Strategic Ambitions & Enablers

Our ambitions

1. We will successfully press Government and other agencies to take action to improve refugee protection.
2. We will significantly improve access to quality support for refugees in crisis and those seeking to integrate.
3. We will successfully influence public attitudes to refugees in new and imaginative ways to reform the hostile environment.

Foundations to enable this change



1. **Lived Experience** - people with lived experience of refugee protection are at the heart of what we do by developing a whole organisation approach to their engagement and involvement.
2. **Collaboration** - we will collaborate with like-minded partners to maximise the impact we can collectively make.

People, Partner and Processes - We will develop our staff, invest in our systems and processes, prioritise a learning approach and attract the resources needed to deliver our ambitions.



Image: Ilyaz Hajat

Trustee Job Description and Person Specification

 	Role Description
Role	Trustee
Reporting to:	Chair of the Board of Trustees
Time Commitment:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Board Meetings plus pre-reading. • Annual strategy planning meeting. • Regular Subcommittee Meetings (when relevant). • Ad hoc events (including launches, networking events).
Term:	An initial term of 3 years, renewable twice up to a maximum of 9 years
Salary:	Unpaid
Role Purpose:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that the Refugee Council fulfils its duty to its beneficiaries and delivers its vision, mission and values. • To ensure the board fulfils its duties and carries out effective governance of the charity. • To act as an ambassador for the charity and its work, vision, mission and values.
Key Accountabilities:	Key elements/Tasks
Statutory Duties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure the organisation complies with its Memorandum and Articles of Association, its governing document. • To be a Company Director of the Refugee Council, and perform related duties as per statutory requirements. • To ensure that the Refugee Council pursues its objectives as defined in its governing document. • To ensure the organisation applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objectives - the charity must not spend money on activities which are not included in its own objectives, no matter how 'charitable' and 'worthwhile' those activities are. • To contribute actively to the Board of Trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals, setting targets, and evaluating performance against agreed targets.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To safeguard the good name and values of the organisation. • To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation. • To ensure the financial stability of the organisation. • To protect and oversee the property of the organisation and to ensure the proper investment of the organisation's funds. • To monitor the performance of the CEO. <p>In addition with other trustees to hold the charity “in trust” for current and future beneficiaries by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that the charity has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused on achieving these. • Being responsible for the performance of Refugee Council and for its “corporate” behaviour; ensuring that the charity complies with all legal and regulatory requirements. • Acting as guardians of the charity’s assets, both tangible and intangible, taking all due care over their security, deployment and proper application. • Ensuring that the charity’s governance is of the highest possible standard.
<p>Other Duties</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make full use of any specific skills, knowledge or experience to help the board make good decisions. • To perform all such additional duties as are reasonably commensurate with the role, for example, supporting recruitment of SMT executive posts.



Person Specification

<p>Personal Qualities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal integrity. • Time to commit to the organisation, its current functions and development. • A commitment to the Refugee Council’s mission, values and strategic aims. • A commitment to the welfare of refugees and people seeking asylum and to the promotion and protection of their rights. • Preparedness to promote the Refugee Council to contacts and networks. • Preparedness to represent the Refugee Council at external events (including public meetings and fundraising events) and promote its work, mission and values.
<p>Knowledge, Skills and Abilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship. • Commitment to the organisation and a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort. • Preparedness to make unpopular recommendations to the board, and a willingness to speak their mind. • Willingness to be available to staff for advice and enquiries on an ad hoc basis. • Strategic and forward-looking vision in relation to the charity’s objects and aims. • Good, independent judgement, political impartiality and the ability to think creatively in the context of the organisation and external environment. • Good communication and interpersonal skills and the ability to respect the confidences of colleagues. • Balancing tact and diplomacy with willingness to challenge and constructively criticise. • An ability to work effectively as a member of a team. • An understanding of the respective roles of the Chair, Trustees and Senior Management Team.
<p>Experience</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrable experience of building and sustaining relationships with key stakeholders and colleagues to achieve organisational objectives. • A proven track record of sound judgement and effective decision making. • A history of impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences.
<p>Equality and Diversity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A track record of commitment to promoting equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging.

About the role

Board of trustee meetings take place in person four times a year on a quarterly basis, during working hours. There is an additional board strategy day each year. Trustees also need to complete training as required.

Two meetings take place at service locations, usually outside London, with a service visit in the morning and a board meeting in the afternoon. Two meetings take place in London sometimes with training or in-depth focus sessions in the morning and the board meeting in the afternoon.

The role is non-remunerated but all expenses incurred in carrying out the role are reimbursed. Being based in London is not a requirement for the role.

The board has two sub committees – Finance and Resources and Nominations and Remuneration. Both meeting quarterly on line ahead of each board meeting. We are currently looking for new trustees to be involved in one of the committees.

As well as the chair role the board has a vice chair, a treasurer, a safeguarding lead trustee and an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion lead trustee.

Trustee terms are for 9 years with renewal on a three-year rolling basis. Annual board performance reviews are conducted and the chair conducts annual trustee appraisals.

The board of trustees' operations are governed by its Articles of Association which have recently been updated and modernised. Copies can be provided on request.

Recruitment Process

To make an application please apply in writing with your CV and a covering letter of no more than two sides of A4 setting out why you are interested in the role and how you meet the person specification.

Closing date: Sunday 9th March (midnight)

Interview: Tuesday 25th March (Stratford, London)

To find out more:

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 with Enver Solomon, Chief Executive or one of our Trustees, please contact Lynne Gemba to arrange this – lynne.gemba@refugeecouncil.org.uk

We will also be running a virtual drop-in session where you can learn more about the role and ask any questions:

Tuesday 11th February at 12:30pm

Join online [using this link](#)

Meeting ID: 339 900 281 481

Passcode: QM2qS6ib