



# Breaking Barriers

Meaningful employment  
for refugees



## Chair of the Board of Trustees

Flexible location



# Welcome from our CEO

Welcome.

Thank you for taking an interest in this opportunity. Breaking Barriers is looking to recruit a new Chair to lead the organisation in a non-executive capacity.



Ciara Devlin  
CEO

At Breaking Barriers, we welcome refugees into meaningful employment with one-to-one advice and guidance, education, and training. We currently provide support to refugees over the age of 18 years across Birmingham, Glasgow, Greater Manchester, Liverpool and London.

The organisation has grown from being an ambitious start-up to a fast growth and high-impact charity serving over a thousand people annually. But there is still so much more to do.

Following the founding CEO's departure this financial year, the board has welcomed a new CEO into the high-performing SLT. Whilst the organisation has plans to grow, we are aiming for the next financial year to be one of consolidating our USP and place in the sector and strengthening our foundations in preparation for a period of growth towards ambitious 2030 goals.

We have built our board mindfully – ensuring that we have a range of views, experiences, and backgrounds reflected in our governance decision making. We currently have 27% of trustees identified as having lived experience and we are keen to continue to build on this.

The successful candidate will join existing board members to support the CEO to lead the delivery of an ambitious multi-year strategy to accelerate progress towards the charity's mission.

Please note: the role of Chair is not paid, although travel & subsistence to attend board meetings will be covered. We recognise the ability to undertake unremunerated work is not possible for many. If you are interested in the role, but concerned about the terms, we would encourage you to get in touch as we will work hard to remove any obstacles we can to participation.

We're Breaking Barriers so every refugee can access meaningful employment and build a new life. Join us.

P.S: You might enjoy our recent award-winning documentary [My \(Refugee\) Life](#)

Ciara Devlin, Breaking Barriers, CEO

# About Breaking Barriers

## Our vision

We're Breaking Barriers so every refugee can access meaningful employment and build a new life.

## Our mission

We welcome refugees into meaningful employment with advice, experience and education. We believe in the power of responsible business to change society for the better through our innovative partnerships.

## Our values

Our values underpin everything we do at Breaking Barriers; and our organisation strives to be:

### Mission-led

We put refugees first in everything we do. We listen and respond. We act with integrity. We're focussed on impact.



### Entrepreneurial

We believe in the entrepreneurial spirit of every individual to build a better life. We believe in the power of responsible businesses to achieve social change. We're brave and bold enough to give new things a go. We're driven by making a lasting impact.



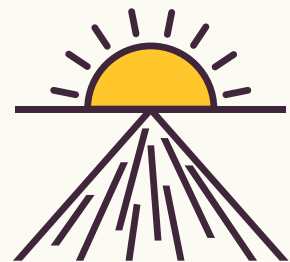
### Welcoming

We welcome people of all backgrounds with an open mind. We will make everybody feel comfortable working with us every step of the way. We treat everybody fairly and are friendly. We champion diversity, equality and inclusion.



### Collaborative

We believe in the power of teamwork and partnerships. We work collaboratively with colleagues to find creative solutions for the greater good. We're proud to share our expertise and knowledge with partners to further our positive impact.



# Role Description

**Role title:** Chair of the Board of Trustees

**Location:** Flexible (travel to London will be required at least once a quarter)

**Salary:** N/A (Volunteer role)

**Time commitment:** 1.5-2 days per month

**Contract:** The Chair is appointed for an initial 3-year term with the option of renewal for up to 3 terms. The maximum term for all trustees (including the Chair) is 9 years.

## Purpose of the role:

Are you seeking a board opportunity with a high-impact charity that aligns with your values and vision for society? Passionate about refugee welfare, integration, and unlocking talent for the UK? This is an exciting opportunity for an experienced leader to join a growing, impact-focused and ambitious charity supporting refugees to access meaningful employment and build a new life.

The Chair leads the board, ensuring that it governs Breaking Barriers effectively, in service of our vision and mission. The Chair leads in an inclusive way, supporting the board to work together well, and providing support and challenge to the Chief Executive. The Chair is also an ambassador for the charity.

The Chair of Breaking Barriers provides visionary leadership and strategic direction, ensuring that the organisation effectively achieves its mission while adhering to its core values. This pivotal role involves governance oversight, board leadership, executive support, and serving as an ambassador for the organisation.

## Key responsibilities

- **Strategic leadership and vision:** Guide the organisation with a strategic vision, aligning the board and staff's efforts with the mission. Lead the development and review of long-term strategies to ensure responsiveness to community needs and adaptability to the changing environment.
- **Governance and oversight:** Ensure effective governance, oversee board operations, and ensure compliance with legal, ethical, and functional responsibilities. Monitor financial performance and adherence to non-profit management best practices.
- **Resource mobilisation:** Support and participate in fundraising strategies, leveraging networks, and engaging with donors and stakeholders to secure necessary resources for the organisation's work.
- **Building and leading the board:** Ensure the board comprises members with diverse skills and perspectives. Lead recruitment, orientation, and training of board members and facilitate effective meetings and discussions, ensuring productive governance to advance the purpose and values of the organization.

- CEO support and evaluation: Support and maintain a constructive relationship with the CEO, creating a positive and strong working relationship to jointly set and achieve appropriate targets, staying in regular contact and acting as a sounding board to discuss strategic or staffing issues - coaching, supporting and challenging as necessary. Ensuring accountability for organisational performance.
- Ambassadorship: Act as the primary ambassador, representing and promoting the organisation’s mission, values, and interests to external stakeholders, enhancing its reputation, and fostering collaboration, fundraising and promotional opportunities.

## Person specification

Skill / experience	Essential	Desirable	Point of assessment	
			Cover letter	Interview
Technical				
Visionary, values-led leadership: Proven capability in leading organisations through significant change or growth, aligned with a demonstrable passion for social change and empowerment of refugees through employment.	✓		✓	✓
Exceptional communication and influential presence: a natural collaborator, networker, and relationship-builder who establishes rapport and trust quickly and can inspire and persuade others. Able to navigate contentious discussions with calmness and confidence in an inclusive, outcome focused way.	✓		✓	✓
Innovation and strategic adaptability: Demonstrated foresight in addressing future challenges, with resilience and adaptability in leading through complex situations to achieve organisational goals. Strategic and reflective thinker with a proactive approach to problem solving in partnership with others and strong analytical skills.	✓		✓	✓
Commitment to diversity and inclusion: A track record of promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion within organisational cultures and practices.	✓		✓	✓
Dedication and capacity to commit: Willingness and ability to dedicate necessary time and energy to the role, engaging deeply with the strategic, operational, and governance challenges.	✓		✓	✓
Governance acumen with charity insight: Experience of a non-executive role, or other governance function, in a non-profit or social	✓		✓	✓

enterprise environment with an understanding of the operational and regulatory landscape. A working knowledge of the SORP and the Charity Commission as a regulator.				
Lived experience as a refugee: which we define as people from a refugee background, with first-hand experience of seeking sanctuary or migration to the UK.		✓	✓	✓
Exceptional corporate credentials with a focus on social responsibility: Senior-level experience in corporate settings recognised for their commitment to social responsibility, including significant contributions to CSR or social enterprises.		✓	✓	✓
Sector-specific expertise: Expertise in areas relevant to the mission, such as employment law, strategic fundraising, refugee support, digital marketing, or financial management. Understanding of the challenges and opportunities in integrating refugees into employment is particularly valued.		✓	✓	✓

## What's in it for you?

Holding the high-profile role at the Chair of Trustees have a number of benefits, including the following:

- **Contributing to an important cause:** Having appropriate support for refugees in the UK to access meaningful employment does not only benefit the refugee community. It also supports businesses to have access to a wider talent pool and helps foster integration in the society.
- **Opportunity to make a difference:** As the new Chair for Breaking Barriers, you will have the opportunity to drive the growth of a highly impactful Charity with current funding of circa £4 million per year. Breaking Barriers have ambitious plans to extend its impact and you will play a part in spearheading this.
- **Expanding your network:** Breaking Barriers partners with some of the most high-profile corporates such as Macquarie, Bank of America, LinkedIn, Ikea, and the Big Yellow Group. Being the Chair of Trustee means that you will have exposure to these organisations. You will also have access to other senior stakeholders within Breaking Barriers' wider network, amongst the trustees, executive, and founding teams.

## Considerations

As part of our safeguarding commitment to our clients, we carry out checks to ensure that successful applicants are suitable to work with adults at risk. These include basic DBS checks, obtaining references and verifying a candidate's identity and right to work in the UK.

We are proud to be a member of the [Experts by Experience Employment Network](#), which aims to increase representation of people with lived experience in the charitable sector. Please feel free to use information and resources found [here](#), which may help in preparing your job application.

Breaking Barriers is committed to protecting an adult's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect and for their views, wishes and beliefs to be fully considered when deciding action.

## Your Application

Please apply via Charity Jobs by submitting a cover letter (up to approximately 2 A4 pages), referencing how you believe you best meet the person specification.

### Essential Information for applicants

1. **Demonstrable achievements and qualities:** Candidates are invited to share specific instances of leadership achievements, particularly those that demonstrate innovation, resilience, and a commitment to social change. Highlight how your experience supports our mission of empowering refugees through employment and your contributions towards enhancing diversity and inclusion.

2. **Impact expectations:** The chair's leadership is crucial in guiding Breaking Barriers towards achieving its strategic goals and expanding its influence within the community and across the broader sector. Applicants should be ready to articulate their envisioned impact, both within the organisation and externally, in promoting our mission.

3. **Commitment level required:** The role requires a significant commitment of approximately 1.5-2 days per month, including availability for board meetings, all (relevant) sub-committee meetings, strategic planning sessions, and project and related events to advocate the work of the Charity and to represent its interests in a variety of situations. The Chair is appointed for an initial 3-year term with the option of renewal for up to 3 terms. The maximum term for all trustees (including the Chair) is 9 years. Candidates should confirm their willingness to allocate the necessary time and effort, ensuring deep involvement with our strategic, operational, and governance challenges.

4. **Collaboration and relationship-building:** Outstanding abilities in collaboration and establishing relationships are essential. This encompasses creating a cohesive board environment, engaging effectively with the CEO and staff, and forming strategic partnerships and networks to support Breaking Barriers' aims.

5. **Performance evaluation:** The chair's performance will be assessed against defined criteria aligned with our strategic objectives and values. This approach guarantees accountability and fosters the continuous enhancement and effectiveness of our leadership.

6. **The unique opportunity:** Leading Breaking Barriers presents a rare opportunity to significantly impact refugees' lives and contribute to societal change. We are looking for

a Chair who is committed to our mission and excited by the chance to lead an organisation at the forefront of social impact.

#### Additional Information

##### The Charity's Commitment to Board Members

- Dates and times of Board meetings, Sub-Committee meetings, Board Strategy Day, and the Annual Review will be confirmed at the last board meeting of the preceding year
- Board meeting / Sub-Committee agendas and papers will be distributed at least five working days in advance of meetings.

#### Legal Requirements of the Trustee Role

##### 1. Responsibility for the proper administration of the Charity

Trustees must ensure assets and resources are only used for the purposes of the Charity, as set out in its' Objects. Trustees must also make sure the Charity acts lawfully by complying with charity law, company law, and other regulatory legislation such as employment law, environmental law, health and safety law etc. Trustees must ensure they check the eligibility of new board members to serve as trustees.

##### 2. Ultimate responsibility for everything the Charity does

Breaking Barriers staff carry out the day-to-day management of the Charity. The Board of Trustees discharge their responsibility by setting policies and strategies, approving and monitoring performance and budgets and holding the staff to account. The Board also delegate the exercise of certain powers to sub-committees. The Articles and Scheme of Delegation set out the terms under which matters can be delegated to committees. Terms of Reference for committees are written down and updated regularly to make sure that both the Board and the committee are clear about what the committee may decide without referring back to the Board. The Board strives for complete clarity about what decisions are to be made only by the Board and what are delegated to staff.

##### 3. Responsibility to act reasonably and prudently in all matters relating to the Charity

Trustees are expected to use a reasonable degree of care but are not expected to be experts in any particular field. They are expected however, to be aware of situations where they need to seek professional advice, and to seek it when appropriate. Seeking advice is not a luxury but a responsibility. In particular, Trustees must ensure that the Charity is solvent.

##### 4. Responsibility for safeguarding the assets of the Charity

Trustees make sure that proper controls are in place to protect bank accounts and the handling of funds and to that other assets are properly cared for.

##### 5. Responsibility to act collectively

Decisions and responsibilities are shared. The Board acts by majority, but all trustees share responsibility unless they make it plain that they disagree with a decision but are overruled. The Board does not accept "sleeping trustees" or regular absences from meetings of the Board.

##### 6. Responsibility to act in the best interests of the Charity

All trustees have a common responsibility to further the objects of the Charity.



Responsibility to avoid any conflict of interest between their personal interest and the interests of the Charity, or between their interests in another organisation and the interests of the Charity.

Conflicts of interest might occur, so there is a mechanism for trustees to declare that interest and rules for dealing with it.

## The Recruitment Process

If you are shortlisted for a role with Breaking Barriers (BB), you will be invited to interview via email. In your invite, you will be asked if you require any adjustments for the interview process. Please feel free to tell us how we can make the process accessible for you.

The interview panel will include a representative of the Lived Experience Panel. This is one of the ways we better involve people with lived experience in our work (lived experience defined as people from a refugee background, with first-hand experience of seeking sanctuary or migration to the UK).

In order to make our interview process as accessible as possible, a summary of the interview questions will be shared ahead of the interview.

You will have the opportunity to ask questions to your interviewers at the end of the interview. We endeavour to inform you of the outcome of the interview as soon as possible. This will usually be via email.

## What does our work mean to our clients?

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I got to know about Breaking Barriers when I first got my status and I got a very nice case worker which helped me on how to build my CV, how to build my confidence. They taught me interview skills and also put me into workshops with other organisations that trainings me to be who I am today.

I think my caseworker is the most amazing person I know. Just to know there's somebody out there that's got your back. My support worker told me "Kemi, I got this job. I think it is going to be interesting for you". Which I applied and that's the job I am now. It's a charity that helps refugee worker into employment, and within three months that I got the job, I got promoted twice and all because of Breaking Barriers because even while I'm on the job, Breaking Barriers keep supporting me, telling me what to do and how to carry myself

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**Kemi,  
Breaking  
Barriers client**



# Diversity and inclusion at Breaking Barriers

Breaking Barriers is committed to promoting diversity and inclusion regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership status, pregnancy and maternity status, race, religion, or belief.

We aim for our workforce to be truly representative of all sections of society and our clients. We celebrate diversity within our workforce and are committed to creating a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimisation, and unlawful discrimination, promoting dignity and respect for all, and where individual differences and the contributions of all staff are recognised and valued.



We belong to the Experts by Experience Employment Initiative, which advocates and supports organisations to employ more people from a refugee background. With this in mind, we particularly welcome applicants with experience of seeking asylum and/or a refugee background.



As a member of the Disability Confident Scheme, we are committed to offering an accessible recruitment process and guarantee an interview to all disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for the role.



## Accessibility of our offices

Our offices have full disabled access on all floors.

- WeWork Office (London): At the main entrance you can use the free access lift and then the main passenger lifts to all the floors. There is one disabled toilet per floor.
- Landmark Office (Birmingham): This building is designed as three specific cores served by a core staircase in each core – on each floor within each of these cores is the provision of male, female, unisex and accessible toilet facilities, with accessible passenger lifts to each floor.
- Landmark Office (Manchester): This building offers level access to the main entrance, wheelchair accessible lifts to all levels, accessible toilets in each lift lobby and disabled refuges, with two way communication, to each level.

We are open to flexible working arrangements and alternative working patterns.

If you require this recruitment pack in another format, please email: [enquiries@breaking-barriers.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@breaking-barriers.co.uk)

For an informal discussion about the role, please contact Dani Meier (HR Manager) [d.meier@breaking-barriers.co.uk](mailto:d.meier@breaking-barriers.co.uk).