

Trustee Role Description



Refugee Action Treasurer Job Description

Purpose of the Role

We are currently looking to recruit a new trustee to join the Board of Refugee Action. This role will be the lead Trustee for our Treasurer work to advise and guide Trustees in the charity's financial management to enable the board to fulfil their responsibilities.

As a trustee of Refugee Action, you will be part of a small team of volunteers who are collectively responsible for developing and guiding the strategic direction of the organisation and steering the long-term stability of the charity.

Trustees are often chosen for their previous board experience and long professional careers. However, we are interested in talking to anyone who can demonstrate the ability to think strategically and the integrity to take on this important role with time to give us. Please don't be discouraged if this isn't something you've done before, or if you don't meet all elements of the role specification; we will provide mentoring and training to support new Trustees to understand their role. Please do consider applying if you have the courage and enthusiasm to encourage, challenge, influence and support us to be the best we can be.

All our trustees are committed to being actively anti-racist and removing the barriers to power for people with lived experience. You will need to be committed to and demonstrate an understanding of shifting power to people with lived experience, anti-racist practice and decolonisation.

We benefit from being a majority 'lived experience' board where trustees also bring their perspectives from being a refugee or asylum seeker in addition to their professional skills and we'd be particularly keen to hear from any potential trustees with lived experience.

Our diversity as a small trustee board is important to us. We are currently underrepresented from the disability, youth and LGBTIQ+ communities.

Our new 2030 Strategy

We have recently launched our new 2030 Strategy; [you can read more here](#).

Everyone involved in developing our new strategy was clear that if we want to create the future that refugees and many people in the UK want, we must demolish the hostile environment. It's an environment that manifests itself in the racist rhetoric of our leaders and the systems they create; systems that are dehumanising and complex, which segregate people and sap their spirit. Our current leaders may be stooping to new lows with their words and policies, but they are simply repeating the behaviour of previous Governments. The hostility has been ramping up for years. And that hostility is rooted in a racialised logic that underpins the entire asylum and immigration system.

Trustee Role Description



We have written a [blog](#) to share the process and the strategy's central messages [here](#). I would love to hear your reflections and thoughts when you have a chance.

We're delighted that the experiences, hopes and dreams of people who have lived experience of the asylum system are at the heart of the strategy.

Alongside the new strategy, we have recently launched our "[Most Wanted](#)" campaign, to tackle the dire state of accommodation for people in the UK asylum system, where profit thrives over rights, and to link this appalling situation to wider structural disadvantage in the housing sector. Government policy enables private contributors to generate millions in taxpayer-subsidized profit through accommodation, surveillance, and even military-style operations in the Channel. Private contractors are paid billions to run an asylum-industrial complex, designed to be cruel and to punish refugees and people seeking asylum. Through the campaign, we are highlighting the level of profit flowing to these companies, while the conditions for people living in asylum accommodation long-term are worsening, with crowding, malnutrition and hunger, restricted movement, mould, room inspections, and attacks by racist groups, as investigated in [a report published by Refugee Action in April 2023](#).

This role will:

- Advise the board on the budgetary implications of strategy and ensure that strategy is optimal for Refugee Action to be a sustainable and successful going concern.
- Ensure statutory financial responsibilities are met and report formally to the board on the annual Auditor's report and accounts.
- Lead on the boards duty to ensure proper accounting records are kept, and financial resources are properly controlled and used.
- Work with and support staff in Refugee Action with financial responsibility, in order to be satisfied that the financial information presented to the board is comprehensive and accurate.

In addition, the Treasurer will work with the Head of Corporate services to ensure that:

- Refugee Action operates within the legal and financial guidelines set out in current legislation and its own standing orders.
- The board is informed of the medium-term budgetary perspectives within which budgets are proposed to the board for adoption as a mandate for management in the coming year.
- Adequate financial controls are in place, and that RA operates within a sound financial framework.

Trustee Role Description



- Grants and other funds received for specific purposes are appropriately spent.
- Identify the reserves and deposit strategy to maximise returns compatible with RA cash flow needs.
- All financial dealings are adequately accounted for.
- Identify financial risks facing RA and recommend appropriate action.
- Manage the process of appointment of Auditors to Refugee Action.

Overall duties of Trustees

Statutory duties

- To ensure that the organisation complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- To ensure that the organisation pursues its objects as defined in its governing document for public benefit.
- To ensure the organisation uses its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects: the organisation must not spend money on activities which are not included in its own objects, no matter how worthwhile or charitable those activities are.
- To contribute actively to the board of Trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
- 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 manage the property of the charity and to ensure the proper investment of the charity's funds.

Other duties

In addition to the statutory responsibilities outlined above, other duties may include

- Lead and provide guidance to the board in a given area of expertise.
- Meet with donors and any other stakeholders to represent Refugee Action and its beneficiaries.

Trustee Role Description



- Keep up to date with Refugee Action's services to clients, Influencing and Fundraising work.
- Attend 5 meetings a year– 4 board meetings and 1 away day.
- Read and scrutinise board papers before a meeting so as to be able to contribute fully in the meeting
- Occasional participation in a working group
- Occasional participation in staff interview, disciplinary or grievance panels

Specialist skills, knowledge & experience for this role:

Specialist skills, knowledge & experience for a treasurer

- Experience of working in a senior financial role: setting budgets, working with management accounts, financial controls and risk assessment systems.
- Ability to work with auditors with a good understanding of the financial obligations of charities.
- Ability to effectively guide and support Finance staff.

Safeguard and promote the values and mission

- An understanding of, and empathy for, the needs of refugees and asylum seekers and of their communities.
- Commitment to Refugee Action's (RA) vision, purpose and values and to act in a manner consistent with these.
- An understanding of the importance of RA being responsive to the needs of its beneficiaries and of their wider communities.

Determine the Strategy and Structure

- Experience of setting, monitoring and reviewing strategic plans so as to be able to ensure any Refugee Action plan reflects the charity's values and mission and that progress is being achieved.
- An understanding of how an organisation remains sustainable.

Be effective, responsible and accountable

- As part of the Trustee board, be able to ensure that the organisation is using its resources appropriately (comply with legislation and ensure the organisation can account for its activities).
- An understanding of and ability to review key areas of risk for Refugee Action to ensure appropriate policies and controls are in place.
- Ability to review organisational policies and practices.

Trustee Role Description



Make sure the board of Trustees functions effectively

- An understanding of the role of Trustee and the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities attached to it.
- An understanding of the role of the Hon Officers (Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer) and those of the Chief Executive and his/her management team.
- A commitment to prepare for and attend Trustee meetings.
- Ability to analyse information and, in an appropriate manner, challenge when necessary.
- Ability to recruit and induct other Trustees where necessary.

Terms of Office

Trustees will be appointed for a period of three years.

At the end of this time, they may offer themselves for re-election. No member of the Board shall be in office for more than 9 years in total.

External Resources:

The following documents and links will help you understand the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities that being a Trustee involves.

[What is a trustee? — NCVO Knowhow](#)

[The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Advice for first time charity trustees - YouTube](#)