



# WORKING TOGETHER TO ENABLE REFUGEES TO FLOURISH IN STOCKTON

February 2024

## Message from Peter Chapman, Chair of Refugee Futures' Board of Trustees

Thank you for looking at this pack. I welcome your interest in Refugee Futures and hope that the information provided stimulates further interest - please get in touch if a conversation would help (contact details are on page 2 & 6).

Refugee Futures works with partners to ensure local opportunities are accessible to refugees and people seeking asylum, that they are able to maximise their abilities and connect with and feel included in the local community. Ultimately, we hope people will opt to remain in Stockton once their status is secured.



We are a relatively new charity (established 2021) with a board of seven trustees which leads the governance of the organisation supported by the executive director, Heather Petch and a small, committed team of staff and volunteers. The trustees have a range of diverse life and work experience in the public sector, charities and other not for profit organisations, business, and also with lived experience of the immigration and asylum process. We seek to become an organisation where people with lived experience are in the driving seat of our direction.

Over recent months trustees have been undertaking development work to clarify our roles and responsibilities, identify the gaps within the existing Board of trustees and how we go about filling these, as well as how we make sure that new trustees are welcomed and supported in joining the board and participating. We have decided on a rolling programme of recruitment over the next 18 months and to recruit in stages, bringing on two or three people at one time and with the first cohort hopefully attending our May/June 2024 Board meeting.

## COULD THIS BE FOR YOU?

To help you decide please see:

- Our expectations of Trustees and the support we offer on p.3
- Trustee responsibilities on p.4
- Characteristics that help in being a trustee p.5 & 6
- A film by some of those volunteering with us
- Our latest accounts and our strategic plan including our vision, mission and values, and a profile of existing trustees.

You can find more general information about becoming a trustee from:

[Reach Volunteering](#)

[Getting on Board](#)

[The Charity Commission](#)

## HOW TO FIND OUT MORE

If you would like to have a short discussion about the role and our expectations of a trustee, please get in touch with Claire Paxton ([claire.paxton@refugeefutures.co.uk](mailto:claire.paxton@refugeefutures.co.uk)) who will put you in touch with myself, our vice chair Ruth Hicks or Heather Petch our Executive Director.





# TRUSTEE CANDIDATE PACK

February 2024

## OUR EXPECTATIONS AND SUPPORT FOR OUR TRUSTEES

- Trustees must be enthusiastic about our work and our values.
- The legal responsibilities of a charity trustee are described on page 4. Training and induction will be provided so it is not essential that everyone has previous trustee experience.
- We believe the characteristics outlined on page 5 and 6 are important in making sure a board functions well as a group and that trustees are willing and able to make decisions together, so taking collective responsibility.
- We believe that a range of both professional and life experiences - including lived experience of the immigration and asylum system - are important in strengthening the board's ability to maximise the charity's effectiveness.
- Trustee appraisals are crucial to good governance, and to the effective functioning of charities. We are working towards best practice as a board and will be setting up effective trustee appraisals in the foreseeable future.

### We expect trustees to commit to:

- one day of training and introductions (including online sessions you can undertake in your own time)
- attending board meetings - six two-hour meetings a year plus one all-day meeting
- to give adequate time to prepare for these meetings, approximately 2 – 3 hours per meeting.



## THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF A TRUSTEE

### Trustees

- are volunteers who play a key role in ensuring a charity is run well, in the interests of the people it is there to support.
- are the guardians of the charity's purpose, making sure it pursues its objects as defined in its governing document and that all decisions put the needs of the beneficiaries first.
- ensure the charity has a clear strategy and its work and goals are in line with its vision and mission.
- safeguard the charity's assets including: people – our most important asset; physical assets, such as property and money; and intangible ones such as its reputation. Trustees make sure the charity's assets are used well and that the charity is run effectively and efficiently.
- don't do the day-to-day running. The operations are usually delegated to a team of staff often with other volunteers involved. In Refugee Futures the operations are delegated to an executive director.
- play the role of a 'critical friend' to the executive director by giving support and challenge, so as to help the staff team manage the charity effectively.
- function on the basis of collective decision-making.





# TRUSTEE CANDIDATE PACK

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## WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

Whether you come with relevant personal/life experiences and/or professional experience we are looking for people who are:

**Curious** - *it's important to ask questions*

**Thoughtful** - *reflecting on issues is important to good decision making*

**Effective and responsive listeners**  
- *we need to hear what people are saying to us*

**Interested in cultural diversity** - *living out the diversity that underpins our vision is crucial*

**Good team players** - *valuing others is the basis for working together effectively*

**Dependable** - *it's important people turn up*





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## WHO ARE WE LOOKING FOR? (continued)

To be an effective board we also need people to have some of the following abilities:

- **Forward thinking** - able to identify issues to consider now in relation to future plans and trends
- **Longer-term thinkers with strategic abilities** to help Refugee Futures to prioritise, to maximise use of resources and be sustainable
- **Ability to thrive on organisational development and change**
- **Practical** - able to ask difficult questions to bring strategy and vision down to earth
- **Approachable qualities** - we need people who are open and welcoming
- **Good communicators** - able to articulate positive narratives about people seeking asylum including via social media and writing reports, so highlighting the difference we make.
- **Analytical thinkers** - able to approach problems and issues from alternative perspectives
- **A positive attitude to learning** - this is key to our development, collective decision-making and team work

## HOW TO APPLY

If you want to explore further the possibility of becoming a trustee with Refugee Futures, either this year or at some future date, then please send Claire Paxton ([claire.paxton@refugeefutures.org](mailto:claire.paxton@refugeefutures.org)) a few bullet points or a video telling us why you want to join the board and what skills and experience you bring (feel free to send a CV if you have one). We look forward to hearing from you!