



Trustee Recruitment Pack

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ASSIST Sheffield is expanding its Board of Trustees!

Could you become an ASSIST Trustee and be part of the movement for migrant justice?

We are looking for new Trustees to strengthen and diversify the skills and experience of the board, including two new Co-Chairs and a Treasurer

This is a fascinating opportunity for people who want to work collaboratively to shape and strengthen the future work and direction of ASSIST.

21 years ago, ASSIST was founded in Sheffield as a resistance movement against the injustice of the UK’s discriminatory immigration laws, standing against the marginalisation and dehumanisation of people in our society. Two decades on, the challenge remains, but the movement has grown stronger and we remain as committed as when we began.

We are a proud community-based organisation, working in solidarity with those who have been refused asylum, and never has our work been more needed. Join our board and work with us to help build a future in which all are free!

This document contains the following:

1. About ASSIST 3

2. Our current strategy 5

3. What does an ASSIST Trustee do? 6

4. Legal duties and responsibilities 11

5. Experience required 12

6. Benefits for you 13

7. How to apply and key dates 14

1. About ASSIST

ASSIST Sheffield is a local charity providing practical support and solidarity to people who, after having their asylum claim refused, face destitution in our community. Through our small staff team of 12 and a 130-strong volunteer network, including people with lived experience of the asylum system, we support people to live with hope and dignity for the future by providing a safe place to live, money and casework and advocacy support for people navigating and challenging complex systems that, by design, stop them accessing basic rights.

We were founded by a community of committed and capable volunteers and have learnt a great deal about how to listen, learn, uphold and champion the rights of people seeking sanctuary, alongside delivering effective, empowering critical support services. **We work in solidarity, not charity.**

We are led by the voices of our clients, ensuring people who are Experts by Experience are informing the work ASSIST does. We are actively committed to challenging the daily realities of racism and all forms of oppression, in our organisation and externally, and we still have a lot to learn about how to do this work well.



This is a truly exciting time to join ASSIST as we bring in fresh perspectives and experience into our community to complement the passion, knowledge and experience of our capable long-term staff and volunteer teams.

In 2023/24, we supported 87 clients, 23 of whom successfully moved on to asylum or statutory support or were granted Leave to Remain (LTR). We have designed and developed a Three-Stage Model of support, which sees our organisation gradually working with clients into a progression path out of destitution: Stabilising, Planning for the future, and Moving on.

We are the largest provider of accommodation for people who have been refused asylum in South Yorkshire. Through a portfolio of ten properties and a network of volunteer hosts, accommodation is available for short-term and longer-term periods (up to 24 months) for up to 37 people who would otherwise be homeless.

Alongside accommodation, we support approximately 60 people per week with financial payments, bus passes and emergency support via a weekly multi-agency drop in. Clients attend regular sessions with our caseworkers and volunteers, who deliver person-centred, trauma-informed support for up to three years, including referrals for legal advice, applications for statutory support, accompanying to essential appointments (e.g. the Home Office or healthcare), interpreting, and access to English classes, sports groups or volunteering activities.

We are rooted in the local community and regularly consult our clients on organisational developments to ensure our work is led by those with lived experience.

2. Our current strategy.

We are in the 5th and final year of our current strategy. We have been engaged in innovative work to deliver on the following 5 goals;

Goal 1. **INCLUDE**: Clients influence the way ASSIST work and that our ways of working become even more reflective of different groups in society.

Goal 2. **STABILISE**: We will increase the capacity and quality of housing we offer and increase the lengths of stay so that more clients will move on positively from our accommodation.

Goal 3. **EMPOWER**: Clients are supported in a way that is clear, fair, effective and informed by their own priorities and choices.

Goal 4. **SUSTAIN**: We are in a position to continue supporting our clients through our core services: housing, casework support and financial support. Staff and volunteers have what they need to do this, Now and in the future.

Goal 5. **PARTNERSHIP**: Clients will see the benefits of us working more closely and effectively with our partner organisations.

Our latest annual review is here: <https://www.assistsheffield.org.uk/content/our-2023-24-annual-review>

We are so proud of what we have achieved in the last 5 years and have made great progress towards our strategic goals. We also recognise the socio-political climate has changed greatly in this time, and it is now even harder to access rights, entitlements and dignity as someone seeking sanctuary in the UK.

Soon, we will be setting a bold new vision and strategy for ASSIST's next 5 years. This will be a collaborative process engaging clients, volunteers, staff and local and national partners in the movement for migrant justice to work out and agree how ASSIST can best mobilise its community and resources to bring about the change we want to see in the UK. **We want our new trustees to be a key part of this process.**



3. What does an ASSIST Trustee do?

Trustees provide collective guidance, governance, oversight and support to the staff to fulfil ASSIST's vision and strategy.

Trustees provide direction, scrutiny and oversight to how ASSIST operates ensuring the organisation is financially sustainable and that our resources are used in line with our mission, and values and to achieve our goals. Although Trustees are ultimately responsible for the charity, we have a long proud emphasis on collective working and we consult, engage and include clients, volunteers and staff in key strategic decisions. This commitment to participatory working reflects our values of equality and empowerment.

Our Board consists of 8–12 trustees and board meetings are also attended by the ASSIST Director and on occasion other members of the ASSIST community (staff, volunteers, clients).

The Board is influenced by the feedback from our Client Consultation Group, a monthly meeting space where clients give feedback on ASSIST's work.

All trustees can serve for a period of **three years**, after which they can seek re-election. Trustees may currently serve for up to three consecutive three-year terms (nine years in total).

Each Trustee is required to;

1. Attend our board meetings (currently bi-monthly):

Meetings are 2.5 hours long and some preparation is required beforehand e.g. reading papers. Meetings are ideally in person and we like to have a social element beforehand, though there is scope for online participation if needed. We prefer face-to-face relationship building. These meetings are where key decisions are made but also new ideas are brought and discussed.

2. Join, lead or chair at least one other ASSIST sub-committee or working group:

Sub-committees have essential legal functions to fulfil and must have a minimum of two trustees present for decisions to be made, whereas working groups are more creative spaces that do not have a legal function but do allow attendees to co-lead, develop and coordinate key areas of ASSIST's work;

Examples of subcommittees are:

- HR;
- Finance;
- Accommodation and Asset Management.

Examples of working groups which already exist, or are being considered,

- Communications and Campaigns;
- Fundraising (Community, Grants and Income Diversification);
- Safeguarding;
- Collective Care and Wellbeing;
- Anti Oppression/Collective Liberation;
- Client Voice;
- Monitoring, Evaluation and Demonstration of Impact.

3. Be an active member of the ASSIST community:

We would like Trustees to attend and contribute to the wider ASSIST community; whether that be attending events such as our volunteer socials, Annual General Meeting and Away Days, or training sessions.

Specific roles we are recruiting for;

1.Co-Chairs

We are actively seeking two co-chairs to lead the board. These roles have the additional responsibilities of:

- Planning and facilitating the board meetings;
- Creating and maintaining a healthy and inclusive culture within the board;
- Being figureheads for the organisation;
- Providing inspiring vision and leadership to the board;
- Guiding and supporting the work of the Director.

We want our trustees to bring their skills, experience and passion into our organisation; we want you to roll your sleeves up and get involved.

Approximate time commitment: 6-8 hrs per month.

2. Treasurer

We are seeking a Treasurer to help ensure our finances receive appropriate scrutiny and to help ASSIST ensure it is financially sustainable. This role would have the additional responsibilities of:

- Attending monthly meetings of the Finance Sub-Committee;
- Advising the board of their financial responsibilities;
- Providing support and advice to ASSIST's Operation Manager and Finance Officer.



3. Other skills & Experience we would welcome;

People Care

- HR and/or governance management;
- Strong people skills and the ability to engage and include others
- Mental Health support
- Immigration Law

Housing

- Property and asset management;
- Sustainability and retrofits;
- The housing/homelessness sector;

Finance

- Financial management and oversight;
- Fundraising

Communications

- Campaigns work
- Graphic or web design
- Group Facilitation & Training

Culture

- Anti-oppression and anti racist work experience;
- Developing vision, strategy and positive work cultures
- Centering Experts by Experience.

4. Legal Duties & Responsibilities - that the Board of Trustees is collectively responsible for (though individuals may take lead roles)

1. Strategic leadership: To develop the strategic direction of ASSIST Sheffield in close partnership with the Director & Leadership Team and all stakeholders and to oversee the implementation of that strategy.

2. Governance: To ensure that ASSIST complies with UK Charity Law and best practice, and to offer support and guidance to the Leadership Team on governance within ASSIST and its staff team.

3. Financial oversight: To oversee the setting of annual budgets and to ensure financial accountability for the health of the organisation. This involves the regular reviewing of accounts and budgets, signing off the annual accounts for independent examination, and overseeing the appropriate use of financial resources for the charity to ensure its sustainability, in partnership with the Leadership Team and the Treasurer.

4. Health and Safety: To ensure that appropriate policies and processes are in place and are being implemented to safeguard the safety and wellbeing of all staff, clients, volunteers and other stakeholders of ASSIST. We require generous and progressive approaches to policy creation.

5. Risk Management: To oversee the management of all risks to the charity and to review and amend the risk register with the Leadership Team and other trustees during each Board meeting.

6. Performance management: To oversee and ensure that outcomes are in line with funders' expectations in partnership with the Director. To ensure that staff appraisals are undertaken annually and that staff pay and conditions are reviewed as appropriate.

7. Representation: To be an ambassador for ASSIST and to engage with other agencies, individuals, and organisations on behalf of ASSIST when appropriate. This entails supporting and seeking to enact the vision and values of ASSIST and representing those values publicly where appropriate.

5. Experience Required

Ideal candidates will have some of the following experience and attributes:

- A commitment to, and understanding of, ASSIST's members, vision, mission, and values (**essential**)
- Personal qualities of integrity, reliability, and a passion for acting in solidarity with people seeking asylum, refugees, and migrants facing destitution (**essential**)
- The confidence and ability to digest reports, papers, and accounts, and ask questions in a supportive and constructive manner (**essential**)

*We are happy to present information and papers in different, accessible formats based on trustee feedback)

- A collaborative and positive working attitude that is comfortable with being challenged and that actively supports colleagues to do their best work (**essential**)
- A commitment to working within an anti-racist, anti-oppressive organisation and to supporting ASSIST in tackling racism and prejudice of all forms (**essential**)
- Lived experience of immigration control and/or destitution (**desirable**)
- Experience as a charity board member with an understanding of, and commitment to, ensuring good governance, best practice, and sound financial oversight (**desirable**)

6. BENEFITS

- Making a tangible difference to the lives of some of the most marginalised individuals in our community; building power together to create a more just world!
- The opportunity to gain experience in leading a fast-paced, medium-sized organisation at a strategic level;
- Access to training opportunities will be available (e.g. anti-oppression facilitation skills training or trauma-informed approaches to work)
- Access to our wellbeing support - currently available to staff and volunteers
- A Trustee buddy will be provided from within the ASSIST community - meeting with you throughout your first year in post.

Remuneration

Trustees are volunteers and therefore do not receive payment, but you will only have to give your time and energy as all reasonable expenses will be covered. These are listed in full in the volunteer policy.



7. Application process

1. Find out more about the role/s; If you are interested and would like an informal chat before applying you can contact;

- Anna Rudd (ASSIST Director) on anna@assistsheffield.org.uk or arrange a call with on 07543334794
- Paul Harvey (ASSIST Trustee) on paul.harvey@assistsheffield.org.uk

2. You can also come to our Prospective Trustees Info Evening

When: 5 -7pm Tuesday 24th September

Where: Our Offices; Victoria Hall, Norfolk Street, S1 2JB (the entrance is on Chapel Walk, next to City of Sanctuary).

This **optional event** will be an opportunity to find out more about ASSIST, the Trustee roles, and an opportunity to ask questions and chat to staff and current Trustees. Questions about the application process will also be welcome.

3. Complete our online volunteer application by **9am Thursday 3rd Oct**

Link to application form:

https://database.assistsheffield.org.uk/volunteer_application_form

Due to the limitations of our application form format, we suggest writing out your application in a separate document and pasting the text into our form when submitting.

4. Informal getting-to-know-you conversations/interviews will take place **between 10th and 24th Oct** with the Director and Board Members

5. **25th Oct** - all candidates will be contacted to confirm whether or not they will be invited to join the board.

Other key dates for your diary

- Volunteer Welcome and Induction training will be arranged during the first half of November.
- First full meeting of the Board: Thursday 28th November 2024, 4.30-7pm.

Probationary period

Please note that applicants who are invited to become trustees will be required to attend a minimum of three board meetings before they are formally appointed as a voting member of the board. These meetings are your opportunity to observe how the board operates and you are encouraged to participate in the meetings and ask questions. Following this, you will meet with the Director and a current board member to discuss how you have found your initial probationary period. Trustees are then appointed by the board by means of a vote in their fourth meeting. meeting.