# Image result for asylum justice

# Asylum Justice – Trustee Application Pack 2024

Thisis a crucial time for the human rights and migration justice movement in the UK, and Asylum Justice is working on the front line. To match the quick growth of our organisation, we need people from a variety of backgrounds – especially those with a lived experience of migration and/or the asylum system – to join our growing team.

**About Asylum Justice**

Asylum Justice is the only charitable organisation in Wales, and one of only two operating in the UK, offering free legal advice and representation to asylum seekers, recognised refugees and other vulnerable migrants. No other organisation provides this service in Wales and consequently Asylum Justice is the last and only place that people can turn to for help when they fear for their lives or the safety of their family in their country of origin.

Asylum Justice also provides free legal representation to migrants pushed to the margins of society, such as women trafficked to the UK or survivors of domestic violence. We represent these groups in applications to obtain legal status in the UK, an area of law no longer covered by legal aid.

The right to family reunion for recognised refugees is also excluded from legal aid, and Asylum Justice is the only organisation in Wales that provides refugees with an opportunity to exercise this fundamental right. Roughly a third of our work involves representing refugees in their applications to reunite with their partner and children in Wales. Without this vital service, families would remain separated indefinitely in war zones and refugee camps scattered across the world.

The value of our unique service cannot be overstated. Wales was described as a ‘legal aid desert’ in May 20221, and since then the sector has further collapsed. Numerous asylum and immigration solicitors in Newport, Swansea and Cardiff have ceased legal aid provision, and the remaining are working at full capacity. As a consequence, an increasing number of people are unable to access legal representation, including even for their initial asylum claim. Many asylum seekers cannot afford private solicitor fees and Asylum Justice, as the only OISC Level 3 organisation providing these services for free in Wales, is the last place they can turn.

At the same time, the quality of initial decision making has failed to improve. In the year ending September 2022, for instance, 52% of all asylum seekers who appealed against an initial decision by the Home Office to refuse them protection were successful2. This confirms that the appeals process remains a vital safeguard against individuals being returned to countries where they are at serious risk. However, this safeguard can only work effectively if asylum seekers are provided with proper legal advice and representation – but frequently this does not happen.

Consequently, most of the people Asylum Justice represents at appeal have been refused legal aid for their case, often dropped by their solicitors only weeks before their appeal hearing is due to take place. A critical shortage of legal aid solicitors in Wales, a shrinking sector, and the misapplication of stringent tests imposed by the Legal Aid Agency have led to an increasing number of clients denied access to justice. Under current rules, a solicitor must refuse a client legal aid if they believe the case has a poor chance of success. But overworked and underfunded legal representatives frequently make the wrong decision in these cases, leaving vulnerable asylum seekers unrepresented and facing imminent destitution if their appeal fails.

In this respect, Asylum Justice takes on the very hardest cases, but still wins 56% of the cases we represent on appeal3. Last year, Asylum Justice also were successful in 100% of family reunion applications and 93% of leave to remain applications. This demonstrates the professionalism and quality of the legal services provided by Asylum Justice.

**Trustees**

Our trustees play a vital role in making sure that Asylum Justice achieves its goals. They oversee the overall management and administration of the charity. They also ensure that Asylum Justice has a clear strategy and that our work and objectives are in line with our vision.

Board members have a collective responsibility. This means that trustees always act as a group and not as individuals and in the interests of our organisation’s aims and values.

**The duties of a trustee are as follows[[1]](#footnote-1):**

* Ensuring that the organisation pursues its stated objects (purposes), as defined in its governing document, by developing and agreeing a long-term strategy
* Ensuring that the organisation complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
* Ensuring that the organisation applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its charitable objects (ie the charity must not spend money on activities that are not included in its own objects, however worthwhile or charitable those activities are) for the benefit of the public
* Ensuring that the organisation defines its goals and evaluates performance against agreed targets
* Safeguarding the good name and values of the organisation
* Ensuring the effective and efficient administration of the organisation, including having appropriate policies and procedures in place
* Ensuring the financial stability of the organisation
* Protecting and managing the property of the charity and ensuring the proper investment of the charity’s funds
* Following proper and formal arrangements for the appointment, supervision, support, appraisal and remuneration of the chief executive (if the charity employs staff)

In addition to the above statutory duties, each trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the board of trustees reach sound decisions. This may involve scrutinising board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, or other issues in which the trustee has special expertise.

**What we are looking for**

We are recruiting up to three voluntary positions to join our Board of Trustees at a crucial time in Asylum Justice’s development. Our new Trustees will have experience in **one or more** of the following areas: 

* A personal experience of living in the UK as a refugee, asylum seeker, or migrant.
* Human Resources
* Financial Management
* Asylum & human rights law.
* Fundraising.

Whether you’re an experienced trustee, or someone putting yourself forward for the first time, we want to hear from you.

While we are based in Cardiff, if you are living in a different part of Wales or the UK, and think you can offer us the experience we need, then we encourage you to apply. Our meetings take place online, so there are no obstacles to applying if you live outside of Wales.

**As a New Trustee you will receive:** 

* Induction training with existing trustees
* Opportunities to make strategic decisions & develop new skills
* The chance to help a growing organisation providing front-line support.

**Time Commitment**

Asylum Justice Trustees meet 6 times a year, usually at 5.30pm on a Wednesday or Thursday every couple of months, including an additional Annual General Meeting usually held in October. Summary documents are provided ahead of these meetings, and trustees are also invited to participate in sub-groups for specific issues which are voluntary.

**How to Apply**

For more information about our work see <https://www.asylumjustice.org.uk/>.

If you would like to have an informal chat about the role, please contact our Chair, Bernie Rainey at **b.rainey@asylumjustice.org.uk**

To apply to become a trustee of Asylum Justice, please complete the information at the bottom of this document and attach it as an email to b.rainey@asylumjustice.org.uk with “Trustee Application” as the email heading.

**Closing date for applications:** 5pm, Thursday 29th February, 2024

If you are shortlisted for the role, you will be invited to an online interview in the week of the 4th March (subject to confirmation) with a panel that will include our Chair of Trustees Bernie Rainey and one other trustee. We look forward to hearing from you.

**TRUSTEE APPLICATION FORM - Asylum Justice**

**To apply for the role of Trustee, please complete the information below and send to** [b.rainey@asylumjustice.org.uk](mailto:b.rainey@asylumjustice.org.uk) **no later than 5pm on 29th February, 2024.**

**APPLICANT’S DETAILS**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Title** |  |
| **First name** |  |
| **Surname** |  |
| **Home address** |  |
| **Post code** |  |
| **Mobile telephone number** |  |
| **E-mail address** |  |
| **Where did you see this role advertised?** |  |

**INTEREST AND EXPERIENCE**

Please explain your interest and experience and why you are interested in joining the Asylum Justice Trustee Board using no more than 250 words.

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**RELEVANT SKILLS**

**DIT**

We are looking for trustees with experience in **one or more** of the areas below.

Please indicate which of the essential/desirable skills you have experience in by typing YES or NO in the box.

Please to try to demonstrate these skills by providing examples under skills/experience. If there is an area where you do not have any relevant experience, please the leave the box blank (we do not expect everyone to have all skills)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Your Experience | YES / NO |
| **Personal experience of the refugee/asylum system** |  |
| **Governance and Board experience** |  |
| **Experience of the charity sector** |  |
| **Financial Management** |  |
| **Marketing and communications** |  |
| **Fundraising** |  |
| **Advocacy** |  |
| **Recruitment** |  |
| **Human Resources** |  |
| **Policy and Influencing** |  |

**SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE FOR TRUSTEE SPECIALISM**

Please set out the experience you can bring to the Asylum Justice Trustee Team.

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**TIME COMMITMENT**

The Trustees meet 6 times a year, usually at 5.30pm on a Wednesday or Thursday every couple of months, including an additional Annual General Meeting usually held in October. There are some additional duties such as reading summary documents ahead of these meetings, and sub-groups for specific issues which are voluntary. Are you able to make this time-commitment? **YES / NO**

**REFERENCES**

Please give the name, address and position of two referees. References will only be taken up for successful candidates. References from friends and relatives are not acceptable.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name:** |  |
| **Position held:** |  |
| **Organisation:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |
| **Telephone No:** |  |
| **Email Address:** |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name:** |  |
| **Position held:** |  |
| **Organisation:** |  |
| **Address:** |  |
| **Telephone No:** |  |
| **Email Address:** |  |

**LARATION:**

**DECLARATION**

I have read and understood the role description, Code of Conduct and details on the eligibility to be a trustee and I confirm that the information I have given is true and correct. I confirm that if elected, I will fulfil the obligations laid down to the best of my ability.  
  
**DECLARATION OF ELIGIBILITY TO BECOME A TRUSTEE**

By completing and submitting this form I declare that I am not disqualified from acting as a charity trustee and that:

1. I am over age 18 at the date of appointment.

1. I am capable of managing and administering my own affairs;
2. I am not disqualified under the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) Adults’ Barred List (formerly the Protection of Vulnerable Adults List)
3. I am not an undischarged bankrupt.
4. I have not previously been removed from trusteeship of a charity by a Court or the Charity Commission.

1. I am not under a disqualification order under the Company Directors' Disqualification Act 1986, or to an Order made under section 429(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986

1. I have not been convicted of an offence involving deception or dishonesty
2. I have not been convicted of a sexual offence(s)
3. I do not have any financial interests in conflict with those of the charity to who I am applying (either in person or through family or business connections) except those which I have formally notified in the conflict of interest declaration.

1. I will abide by the Code of Conduct.
2. I give my consent for the charity to carry out relevant checks on me including, if necessary, identity checks, DBS checks and checks against the Charity Commission’s list of removed or disqualified trustees.
3. I give my consent for Asylum Justice to hold my personal details within a manual or electronic filing system in relation to the Data Protection Act 1998.
4. I understand that to knowingly make a false statement is a criminal offence under section 11 of the Charities Act 1993 and a false declaration could result in my removal as a trustee.
5. I have read and understand the role and responsibilities of a trustee and undertake to fulfil my responsibilities and duties as a trustee of Asylum Justice in good faith and in accordance with the law and within Asylum Justice’s objectives and Mission.

Thank you for completing this application.

Please return this to Bernadette Rainey, Chair  **b.rainey@asylumjustice.org.uk**

1. This trustee role description is based on the NCVO template and has been added to by Empower Support for the Voluntary Sector [↑](#footnote-ref-1)