

Chair of Trustees Recruitment Pack



Registered as a Charitable
Organisation in England and Wales
Charity Number: 1116388
IAA Reference: N201100018
Justice First
133 Norton Road
Stockton On Tees
TS18 2BG

Message from the Chair



As Justice First celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, I find myself reflecting on what a privilege it has been to be part of this remarkable organisation and to serve as Chair for the past 17 years.

What began as a small group determined to stand alongside those seeking safety and justice on Teesside has grown into a trusted source of advice, advocacy, and hope for refugees and people seeking asylum.

We began in a small office setting with one passionate and committed caseworker and have evolved into our present team of five trained and experienced staff members who provide a superb service to our clients. Over two decades, we've witnessed lives rebuilt, families reunited, and countless individuals find their voice and place in our community.

For me personally, Justice First has always been about people – our clients, fellow trustees, our dedicated staff and volunteers, and so many supporters in the wider community who continue to stand with us. Their resilience and compassion have been constant reminders of why this work matters so much.

It is now time for me to step down as Chair. The need for justice, dignity, and fairness remains as great as ever. This is an exciting time for a new Chair to guide Justice First through the next years with so many opportunities for development and so much potential for an organisation that will continue to meet that need with the same commitment and heart that has defined us for twenty years.

Barbara Hungin

Chair of Trustees

About Justice First

Justice First is a charity dedicated to supporting people seeking asylum, refugees and irregular migrants in the Tees Valley and wider North East region. Established in 2006, we are celebrating our 20th anniversary this year—a milestone that reflects two decades of commitment, compassion, and life-changing impact.

We are the only charity in the North East exclusively offering legal advice and support to asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. Our work fills a critical gap, providing guidance and assistance to over 1,500 clients annually who would otherwise face the complex legal immigration system alone.



Our Mission & Vision

Our vision is of a society — and a Northeast — built on welcome, acceptance, and dignity, where people seeking asylum, refugees and other migrants have the specialist support they need to rebuild their lives.

We walk alongside individuals throughout their entire journey - from first claim through to settlement - offering specialist legal guidance, practical assistance, and a safe and trusting environment where every person's story is heard. We support people at every stage of the asylum process, including those considering a claim, those whose claims have been refused, and those moving between asylum and immigration routes. Alongside legal advice, we provide practical support, creating the stable foundation from which people can access healthcare, employment, and education, and begin to rebuild their lives.

WELCOME

ACCEPTANCE

DIGNITY

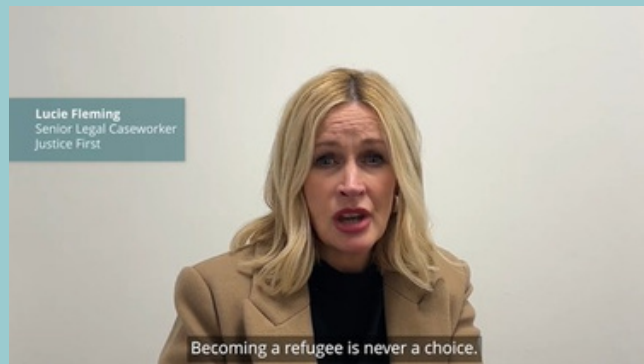
What Makes Us Distinctive

Justice First is unique in the region. We are the only charity providing this specialised legal advice and support to people seeking asylum in the North East. We do this work exceptionally well, achieving long-lasting, life-changing impact for vulnerable migrants and their families. Through our support, we provide a platform for people to reach their fullest potential and rebuild their lives in safety and dignity.

Our Impact

The work that we do changes lives.

- Over **1,500** clients access our services annually
- **56%** success rate - our clients achieve grants of status after entering our service
- **5** full-time staff members and **8** trustees, often described as 'punching above our weight'
- Geographic reach extending across **Teesside, Durham and Newcastle**



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"Your strong support, your constant words of peace, encouragement and calmness helped in more ways to keep my children and I going through this journey, more than you can ever imagine."



Strategic Context and Opportunities

Key priorities for the incoming Chair

The incoming Chair will help navigate both challenges and opportunities as Justice First moves into its third decade:

Growth and Development

Over the past 20 years, we have made significant strides in growing our team, expanding our reach, and broadening the areas of immigration law we cover. The new Chair will support the organisation as we consolidate this growth and plan strategically for the future.

Increasing Demand

Demand for our services continues to rise. Client numbers have reached 1,500, and the complexity of cases is increasing. The Chair will help ensure we have the capacity, resources, and governance structures to meet this need sustainably.

Challenging Policy Environment

New and divisive immigration policies create additional challenges for the people we serve. The Chair will help the organisation remain resilient, responsive, and focused on our mission in this difficult landscape.

Financial Sustainability

The funding landscape for charities remains challenging. We are exploring new strategies for sustainable income, including learning from organisations offering low-cost immigration advice or progressing to Level 3 IAA registration to access legal aid. The Chair will provide strategic oversight of this work.

Board Renewal

We recognise the need for fresh perspectives and expertise on our Board. The new Chair will lead a process of Board renewal, with a particular focus on recruiting trustees with lived experience of the asylum system. This will strengthen our governance and ensure our strategic decisions are informed by those closest to our mission.

Supporting Our Team

Our small but exceptional team works under significant pressure to serve our clients. The Chair will work with Senior Management to ensure staff feel valued, supported, and motivated as the organisation grows.



The Role: Chair of Trustees

This is an exciting time to join Justice First as Chair of Trustees. As we celebrate **20 years of impact** and look ahead to the next chapter, we need a visionary leader to guide our Board and support our dedicated team through a period of growth and change.

As our new Chair, you will play a vital role in helping us continue to support refugees and people seeking asylum in the UK, empowering them to rebuild their lives in safety here in the North East.

This is an opportunity to use your professional skills, leadership, and charity experience to make a meaningful difference to the lives of people who have been forced to flee their homes, communities, and livelihoods.

Governance and the Board

Justice First currently has a Board of eight Trustees, including the Chair and Treasurer. Following a planned leadership transition, our longstanding Chair will step down at the AGM in November after many years of dedicated service, creating an exciting opportunity for new leadership.

As our new Chair, you will lead a committed and experienced Board of Trustees, providing effective leadership and ensuring the charity is well governed in support of its vision, mission, and values.



Key Responsibilities

The Chair will:

- Provide strategic leadership to the Board of Trustees, ensuring effective governance and accountability, legal compliance and risk management.
- Chair Board meetings, ensuring productive discussions and clear decision making.
- Support and mentor senior management, particularly as they lead the organisation to its next stage of development.
- Lead Board renewal efforts, particularly recruiting trustees with lived experience of the asylum system.
- Act as an ambassador for Justice First, building relationships with funders, partners, and stakeholders.
- Ensure the Board fulfils its legal and regulatory responsibilities.
- Together with other key members of the Board, oversee organisational performance, risk management, and financial sustainability.
- Optimise the relationship between the Board and Justice First staff and volunteers.
- Help prepare for significant future opportunities and challenges.



Person Specification

Essential

- Board level experience, ideally in the charity sector either as a Trustee or a CEO (You do not need to have been a Chair before).
- Passionate about supporting refugees and people seeking asylum.
- Knowledge of charity law, governance and reporting requirements.
- Strong chairing and facilitation skills - demonstrating an inclusive leadership style able to inspire and support everyone to participate on an equal footing.
- Ability to build positive, productive relationships with diverse stakeholders
- Strategic thinking and sound judgement.
- Financial literacy sufficient to support the Treasurer and understand budgets.
- Resilient and capable of navigating challenging political and funding environments.
- Committed, dedicated and able to devote sufficient time to the role. As a small charity, things sometimes 'come up' that require the Chair to advise, support or give consent to. It is very helpful to have a Chair who is available and responsive.

Desirable

- Lived experience of the asylum or immigration system.
- Experience in the charity, refugee or migration sectors.
- Experience of fundraising and income generation.
- Connections with the North East region.
- Experience of leading organisational change or growth.



Trustee Responsibilities

In addition to the specific responsibilities of the Chair, the successful candidate will share the collective responsibilities of all Trustees in helping to lead and govern Justice First.

Trustee Role Description

As a Trustee, you will work with fellow Board members to provide strategic leadership, ensuring Justice First remains well governed, financially sustainable, and true to its mission and values.

Key responsibilities include:

- Contributing to the development of Justice First's vision, strategy, and priorities.
- Approving and monitoring organisational plans, policies, and performance.
- Providing oversight of the charity's finances, including budgets and annual accounts.
- Ensuring effective governance, legal compliance, and risk management.
- Supporting and constructively challenging the senior leadership team.
- Keeping informed about developments affecting the charity and the wider sector.
- Contributing to regular reviews of Board effectiveness and governance.
- Attending and actively participating in Board meetings.
- Acting with integrity, independence, and in the best interests of Justice First.
- Promoting the charity through your skills, experience, networks, and advocacy.

Additional Involvement

As a small charity, Trustees occasionally contribute beyond formal Board meetings. This may include:

- Reviewing Board papers and preparing for meetings.
- Leading or contributing to discussions on key issues.
- Providing advice or specialist expertise.
- Supporting new initiatives and strategic projects.
- Acting as an ambassador for Justice First.

Person Specification

We're looking for Trustees who can bring sound judgement, strategic thinking, and a commitment to Justice First's mission.

You'll ideally have:

- An understanding of the responsibilities of charity trustees and a willingness to fulfil them.
- Strategic thinking and the ability to make balanced, independent decisions.
- Strong communication and collaborative working skills.
- A commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Enthusiasm for Justice First's values and the people we support.
- A commitment to the Nolan Principles of Public Life: Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, and Leadership.

Equity, Diversity And Inclusion

At Justice First, we believe that a diverse Board brings broader perspectives, stronger decision-making, and better outcomes for the people and communities we serve. We warmly welcome applications from people of all backgrounds and experiences.

We particularly encourage applications from people with lived experience of the asylum system, as well as those from communities that are underrepresented in charity governance. We recognise that lived, professional, and voluntary experience can all bring valuable insight to our work.

We are committed to creating an inclusive environment where everyone feels welcomed, respected, and able to contribute fully. While Trustees are appointed to act in the best interests of the charity rather than represent specific groups, we strive to ensure our Board reflects the diversity of the communities we support. Justice First is committed to equality of opportunity and does not tolerate discrimination, harassment, or victimisation in any form.

We want our recruitment process to be as accessible as possible. If you require any reasonable adjustments at any stage of the recruitment or selection process, please let us know and we will work with you to support your participation.

Terms of Office and Time Commitment

Terms Of Office

Trustees are appointed for a three year term which is extendable. This is a voluntary position, but reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.

Time Commitment: *Estimated at 1-2 days a month*

- Attending Board meetings of which take place every 6 weeks and last for 2 hours. Currently meetings are of an evening (starting at 5.30pm) during the week. These are hybrid (with a preference for in-person attendance).
- Meeting with the Senior Manager as necessary with flexibility to respond swiftly to the occasional ad hoc issue.
- Attending AGM and annual review meetings.
- Trustees should also allocate time to read and respond to emails related to their duties.
- Providing additional support at key times, such as during recruitment processes, audits, or significant organisational decisions.

We understand that flexibility is important, and we're happy to discuss how this can work alongside your other commitments.

Why Join our Board?

This is an exciting opportunity to help shape the future of a growing and ambitious charity supporting refugees and people seeking asylum. As a Trustee—and particularly as Chair—you will play an important role in helping Justice First continue to provide life-changing support to people rebuilding their lives in the North East.

The role offers the opportunity to:

- Make a meaningful difference by using your skills and experience for social impact.
- Help shape the strategic direction of a respected and growing charity.
- Develop your knowledge of charity governance, leadership, and financial oversight.
- Work alongside a committed and passionate Board and staff team dedicated to justice and inclusion.

How to Apply

Reach Volunteering are supporting Justice First with their Board recruitment. Please submit your CV along with a covering letter that answers the following questions:

- What would becoming the new Chair of Justice First mean to you? (Tell us a little about your motivation and what draws you to this role).
- What do you know about Justice First and what draws you to us? (This doesn't need to be exhaustive – we just want to understand your connection to our work).
- What skills and experience would you bring to the role? (Think about relevant experience from any area of your life – professional, voluntary, or personal).

Completed applications should be sent to the Reach TrusteeWorks team: **trusteeworks@reachskills.org.uk**

If you would like to have an informal initial conversation either with the TrusteeWorks team or with a member of Justice First, please do contact TrusteeWorks who would be happy to arrange this for you.

The closing date for applications for this position is **Friday 4th of September by 5pm.**



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