



## TRUSTEE JOB DESCRIPTION

Hackney Migrant Centre (HMC) was established in 2007 to provide advice and support to migrants to help them overcome problems with their immigration status and in accessing services. We welcome all migrants, regardless of immigration status, nationality or current place of residence. The environment migrants face now is even harsher than when we started, so our work has become even more important.

We run a weekly drop-in advice service with the help of our volunteers and professional advisers. Visitors can receive initial immigration, housing and welfare advice, as well as advice on accessing a GP and dealing with charges for hospital care. Outside the drop-in, we work with visitors to resolve the urgent problems facing them and link with immigration advisers to help them regularise their status.

### **Being a Trustee of Hackney Migrant Centre**

The trustees of Hackney Migrant Centre play a vital role in the organisation. They are responsible for ensuring that its services are maintained and developed for the benefit of its visitors, in line with its ethos and objectives.

HMC staff are responsible for the day-to day running of HMC's services but trustees work closely with staff in discussing and deciding on policy issues, staffing developments and campaigning as well as overseeing finance and fundraising to ensure that the organisation is sustainable and monitoring the impact of HMC's services.

Our trustees are recruited according to our Trustee Recruitment policy. We welcome trustees from a variety of backgrounds to ensure that a broad range of skills and experience are represented. Trustees are encouraged to gain first-hand experience of the work of HMC but regular volunteering is not a requirement.

### **The Charity Commission**

Hackney Migrant Centre is a charity registered with the **Charity Commission**. This gives the organisation many advantages, and also places some legal obligations on trustees. The Charity Commission states that the six main duties of trustees are to:

1. Ensure your charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
2. Comply with your charity's governing document and the law
3. Act in your charity's best interests
4. Manage your charity's resources responsibly
5. Act with reasonable care and skill
6. Ensure your charity is accountable

Further details can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee-whats-involved>

## **What Trustees of Hackney Migrant Centre are expected to do**

All trustees are expected to attend the ordinary trustees' meetings as well as other meetings and events where possible/appropriate. The main activities which HMC trustees are involved in are:

- **Ordinary Trustee Meetings** – these are the major decision-making forum for trustees. They are held in the evenings roughly every six weeks and generally last for 2 – 2 ½ hours. Staff – the directors and other staff where relevant – also attend. There are also occasional special meetings when necessary
- **Trustee awaydays** – we organise one or two awaydays each year which take place on Saturdays, normally half a day.
- **Annual General Meeting** – this is a public event to publicise HMC's activity during the year, generally with a specific theme and invited speakers. Supporters, partners and funders are invited. Trustees are expected to attend.
- **Sub-committee meetings** – we currently have **Finance and Fundraising** and **Employment sub-committees**. These meet roughly every three months, or as necessary. They include some trustees and relevant staff members. Any decisions/proposals are reported to the full board for discussion/approval.
- **Appointments and interview panels** – One or more trustees normally sit on interview panels for the appointment of new staff. The members of the employment sub-committee are also involved in drawing up job descriptions in consultation with staff.
- **Other events** – HMC organises or supports a number of other events including fundraising, campaigning and social events. Trustees are encouraged to participate in these where possible and may take a role in organising events, in collaboration with staff and – where appropriate – HMC volunteers.

## **What makes a good trustee?**

### **HMC trustees must have:**

- An understanding of the issues facing migrants and refugees and a commitment to migrants' rights;
- Willingness and ability to take an active role in the trustee board
- Integrity and commitment to working for the good of HMC and its visitors
- Willingness to speak their mind and to evaluate decisions critically
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team for the good of HMC.
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of being a trustee

### **Trustees collectively needs skills and experience in the following areas:**

- Understanding of voluntary sector organisations, including policy development, staff management and regulation and governance,
- Fundraising, including grant applications and community involvement

- Financial management
- Knowledge of the local community and experience of community activity
- Legal knowledge especially in the areas of immigration, housing and welfare.
- Organisational and administrative skills
- Campaigning experience, communications including digital media
- Experience of migration and the issues faced by HMC's visitors.

## **Charity Commission six main roles of trustees**

### **1. Ensure your charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit**

- ensure you understand the charity's purposes as set out in its governing document
- plan what your charity will do, and what you want it to achieve
- be able to explain how all of the charity's activities are intended to further or support its purposes
- understand how the charity benefits the public by carrying out its purposes

### **2. Comply with your charity's governing document and the law**

- make sure that the charity complies with its governing document
- comply with charity law requirements and other laws that apply to your charity

### **3. Act in your charity's best interests**

- do what you and your co-trustees (and no one else) decide will best enable the charity to carry out its purposes
- with your co-trustees, make balanced and adequately informed decisions, thinking about the long term as well as the short term
- avoid putting yourself in a position where your duty to your charity conflicts with your personal interests or loyalty to any other person or body
- not receive any benefit from the charity unless it's properly authorised and is clearly in the charity's interests; this also includes anyone who is financially connected to you, such as a partner, dependent child or business partner

### **4. Manage your charity's resources responsibly**

You must act responsibly, reasonably and honestly. You and your co-trustees must:

- make sure the charity's assets are only used to support or carry out its purposes
- not take inappropriate risks with the charity's assets or reputation
- not over-commit the charity
- take special care when investing or borrowing
- comply with any restrictions on spending funds

### **5. Act with reasonable care and skill**

- use reasonable care and skill, making use of your skills and experience and taking appropriate advice when necessary
- should give enough time, thought and energy to your role, for example by preparing for, attending and actively participating in all trustees' meetings

### **6. Ensure your charity is accountable**

You and your co-trustees must comply with statutory accounting and reporting requirements.

You should also:

- be able to demonstrate that your charity is complying with the law, well run and effective
- ensure appropriate accountability to members, if your charity has a membership separate from the trustees
- ensure accountability within the charity, particularly where you delegate responsibility for particular tasks or decisions to staff or volunteers