



In solidarity with destitute asylum seekers in Bristol

BRISTOL HOSPITALITY NETWORK TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT PACK

Mission

As a member-led organisation, we extend mutual solidarity and work equitably with people seeking asylum and experiencing destitution, through accommodation, advice and community involvement.

Vision

We work together to end the destitution of asylum seekers, and to create greater awareness of the humanity and gift of asylum seekers and refugees.

About us

BHN is a registered charity which began in 2010.

We are not part of any religion, and we welcome people of any faith, or of no faith.

We work alongside asylum seekers (our ‘members’) whose claims have been refused, who don’t know what their status is, and / or who are being forced into destitution.

We do this by finding accommodation with volunteer hosts, providing advice, and giving opportunities for community engagement. We provide £30 per week through our destitution fund for hosted members, safe community space and a hot meal at our Welcome Centre drop-in, volunteering and training opportunities, and sanctuary breaks for members who are volunteers or who are hosted.

Our Hosting Manager oversees our 11-bedroom men’s hostel, supported by live-in House Hosts, a volunteer House Team and the House Coordinator. Our Host volunteers offer a spare room for a short or longer stay. The Hosting Manager coordinates these placements and gives Hosts induction, training and support for the duration of the placement.

Most of the people we host are single men; there are a few women. We don’t host children, who are the responsibility of the local authority if they’re homeless. Some people become very involved in the families they stay with; others spend most of their time with their friends.

Our members come predominantly from countries experiencing conflict or with high levels of human rights abuses and oppression. Currently, the highest numbers are from Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, Sudan, Eritrea and Iran.

Our Advice team of trained and experienced volunteers is led by the Advice Manager.

We aim to support people to make successful asylum claims or to find other long-term solutions to the crisis they face. All hosted members are required to engage with this, so they can move on from BHN to more stable lives.

Learn more about us from our website [here](#) and reading our latest annual report [here](#).

We have 9 part time members of staff, and more than 80 volunteers.

www.bhn.org.uk



Charity No. 1138498

Company No. 07308750



Culture and Values

Hospitality: we want to make a welcoming space which lets everyone at BHN express their individuality. This needs a culture of acceptance, openness, curiosity, discussion and learning.

Mutual Empowerment encourages us to welcome and learn from each other's views and cultures.

Anti-Oppression and **Equity** also help us do this. People do not all have the same power, privilege or opportunity, and our members are often very disempowered and experience entrenched structural and social oppression.

Integrity: We try to be open about our decisions and actions, and to create a culture which everyone who uses BHN feels like they 'own'. We try to use humility, to recognise our limitations and to learn from our mistakes.

Creative Resistance: We stand up for the rights of marginalised people, advocating for the lives and rights of asylum seekers in our city. We try to do this creatively, and to be willing to change for the benefit of those we support.

Solidarity and Mutual Empowerment mean that we don't want to just work for our members, but to support them to have the power to make decisions and take control of their lives. We work to be member-led, to ensure that member voices inform our strategy, and to support members to take leadership roles in the organisation.

EDI

We are working towards being a member-led organisation; to this end we have an advisory board who through listening, support people to have a voice in BHN and in the city through the BRASP partnership, sharing information and knowledge with others to improve our services and outcomes for members.

Why are we needed?

The UK asylum process is complex, making it very challenging for people seeking asylum to provide the evidence required to be granted protection. Many asylum seekers are made destitute as a result, without the right to work, claim any benefits or apply for housing. They may be extremely marginalised, often sofa-surfing/sleeping rough and with little knowledge of their rights or how to change their situation. Many experience the effects of living with the consequences of trauma, loss, exclusion and long-term homelessness.

Our hosting gives people the safety, time, support and stability to act to make a safer future.

In Bristol and nationally, the situation is very difficult for people due the deliberate hostile environment created by the current government. We receive more hosting referrals than we can accommodate, and sadly, on occasion, we can't help. But the drop-in is open to all people seeking asylum, or refused asylum.

Who we are looking for

We want individuals who are passionate about social justice and believe in the right of displaced and persecuted peoples to seek asylum in the UK. Your sense of fairness and empathy is much more important than any professional background you have. In fact, if you are keen to learn and support our staff team in a particular area of our work, we are happy to support you in developing new skills and an understanding of the asylum system in the UK.

Your skills, knowledge and attributes are valuable whatever your background — professional or otherwise. Let us know where your interests lie and what you feel you can bring of yourself to our team. We do currently have vacancies for particular trustee roles such as company secretary, safeguarding lead, and we would particularly be thrilled if anyone wanted to support our communications and fundraising workstreams.

If you are new to being a trustee, we will give you plenty of support and training and there are plenty of resources we can point you to too. If you'd like to know more about the Role of a trustee before you apply you can find some information [here](#) to get you started.

About our board of trustees

We currently have 6 trustees and are looking to appoint 3 more. You can find out about them on our website [here](#).

Our trustees meet all together 4 times a year for trustees' meetings, plus we have an annual general meeting every year.

Our trustees also take part in sub-groups such as the Finance sub-group, and some take on a governance responsibility like Chair, Treasurer or Secretary, or support an area of work such as hosting or advice or communications etc.

You may want to think about what kind of time commitment might suit your lifestyle and other commitments if you decide to join us.

How to apply

If you would like an informal conversation please contact James Collett james@bhn.org.uk to arrange a time for a chat.

Otherwise, please apply with a covering letter explaining why you are interested in becoming a trustee for BHN and attaching your CV. Send this to recruitment@bhn.org.uk

We hope to invite prospective applicants to a short interview and to observe a trustee meeting on 25th April.

Deadline for Submission Monday 25th March 2024