



# Rural Refugee Network (RRN) Chair of Trustees

## Role Description

The Rural Refugee Network (RRN) is a small local charity that supports refugees to thrive in the East Hampshire, Havant and Portsmouth area. RRN is looking for a Chair of Trustees to lead the Board at an important stage of consolidation for the charity. Joining RRN's friendly Trustee board means being part of a team making a difference in the community, and the incoming Chair will have the opportunity to work alongside an experienced co-chair and a committed board.

- **Paid or unpaid role:** Unpaid volunteer role.
- **Commitment:** 4 to 8 hours per week, including Board meetings (every 3 months, approx. 2 hours, evenings or weekends), ad-hoc availability for decisions between meetings and occasional external representation or attendance at events.
- **Location:** Board meetings usually are in person in central Petersfield, easily accessible by train.
- **Expenses:** We cover reasonable travel and out-of-pocket expenses.
- **Deadline:** Applications will be processed on a rolling basis.

### About the charity

We directly impact the lives of people in the local community. RRN works alongside refugees from Afghanistan, Syria, Ukraine and other war-torn countries as they find their feet in our community through training, schooling, housing, English language. We also recently launched the Youth Discovery NEST, funded by the National Lottery, a weekly drop-in with monthly outings that supports and connects young people who have arrived in the UK alone and so are looked after by the local authority.

The charity has 3 part-time employees, including a highly experienced CEO, and we also have several contracted English teachers. All the Trustees and other team members are voluntary positions, who contribute in various teams, like Housing, Resettlement, Education and Community, that work directly with refugee families or in support roles.





## About the role

The Chair provides strategic leadership and effective governance, ensuring robust decision-making and full compliance with legal and regulatory responsibilities.

### Key responsibilities:

- Foster a Board culture of accountability, collaboration and shared purpose.
- Work with the Secretary to ensure effective, inclusive Board discussions and clear, recorded decision-making.
- Work alongside the CEO between meetings to provide thoughtful guidance and constructive challenge.
- Lead trustee recruitment and board development.
- Act as a point of contact for governance and ensure the charity operates within its legal and regulatory obligations.
- Represent RRN externally, in partnership with the CEO, who leads on operational engagement with key stakeholders such as local authorities.

## Who we are looking for

We are seeking a values-driven and experienced leader who can bring strategic oversight, sound judgement and integrity to the role.

### Essential:

- Commitment to RRN's mission and values.
- Understanding of governance and trustee responsibilities, ideally with experience in the social impact, refugee, migration, or community sector.
- Emotionally intelligent leadership and decision-making style, able to navigate different perspectives and build consensus without avoiding difficult conversations.
- Ability to build a strong, trusting working relationship with the CEO, offering both support and appropriate challenge.
- Comfortable representing RRN publicly and engaging with a wide range of stakeholders.
- Time and capacity to fulfil the role effectively.

### Desirable:



- Experience in a CEO, senior leadership, or governance role in a small or medium-sized charity.
- Knowledge of refugee resettlement, housing, or statutory support systems.
- Experience of supporting organisational development.
- Local connections in East Hampshire, Havant or Portsmouth.

Most importantly, we seek an individual with a genuine commitment to supporting refugees and asylum seekers, who can provide visible, constructive leadership and work in partnership to amplify RRN's positive impact.

### Co-Chair Arrangement

RRN is open to a co-chair arrangement with an experienced trustee who has deep knowledge of the organisation, the sector, and the governance context. This means you will not be walking in alone and there is support in place from day one.

Responsibilities will be agreed collaboratively based on capacity and strengths.

### How to Apply

We welcome informal conversations before application. Please contact Katherine Lawrence ([research@ruralrefugeenetwork.org](mailto:research@ruralrefugeenetwork.org)) to find out more or to arrange a call.

To apply, please send a brief expression of interest (no more than one page) explaining what draws you to this role and what you would bring to RRN, along with a short CV or profile, to Katherine Lawrence at [research@ruralrefugeenetwork.org](mailto:research@ruralrefugeenetwork.org).

We are committed to building a diverse Board and particularly welcome applications from people with lived experience of displacement or migration. Previous trustee experience is not required; we offer induction, training and ongoing support to help you succeed in the role.