

# 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**



Scan QR Code to watch our short film



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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!"*



# 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.

## *Key Responsibilities*

The Chair will:

- Provide strategic leadership to the Board of Trustees, ensuring effective governance and accountability
- Chair Board meetings, ensuring productive discussions and clear decision-making
- Support and mentor the CEO, 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



# Person Specification

We welcome and encourage applications from people across our diverse community. We are particularly keen to hear from candidates with lived experience of the asylum system. We interpret this broadly: this may include personal experience of navigating the asylum process, or experience gained through professional or voluntary work within the system, bringing a deep and practical understanding of its impact on those who go through it.

A Chair who brings this perspective, in any form, would play a vital role in shaping our strategic direction and ensuring our work remains grounded in the realities faced by the people we support.



## Essential

Commitment to Justice First's mission and values

Experience of effective governance and strategic leadership

Strong chairing and facilitation skills

Ability to build positive, productive relationships with diverse stakeholders

Strategic thinking and sound judgement

Time to commit to the role (approximately 1-2 days per month including meetings and preparation)

## Desirable

Lived experience of the asylum or immigration system

Experience in the charity, refugee or migration sectors

Knowledge of charity governance, law, and regulatory frameworks

Experience of fundraising and income generation

Connections with the North East region

Experience of leading organisational change or growth

# 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 the CEO to ensure staff feel valued, supported, and motivated as the organisation grows.



# Terms and How to Apply

<b>POSITION</b>	Chair of Trustees
<b>LOCATION</b>	Stockton-On-Tees (Hybrid Working Available)
<b>TIME COMMITMENT</b>	Approximately 1-2 days per month (board meetings, preparation, one-to-ones with CEO)
<b>TERM</b>	3-year term, renewable for one additional term
<b>REUMUNERATION</b>	Voluntary; reasonable expenses reimbursed

## How to Apply

### ***Interested in Becoming Our Next Chair?***

We'd love to hear from you - and we've kept the process simple!

### ***Not Sure If It's For You?***

Have a chat first. Our outgoing Chair is happy to speak informally with anyone who'd like to learn more about the role before deciding whether to apply. Get in touch at [info@justicefirst.org.uk](mailto:info@justicefirst.org.uk) to arrange a conversation.

### ***Ready To Apply?***

Fill out our short form. No CV required. We want to hear from you in your own words. Application Form Available on Our Website, or Accessible by Emailing Us.



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