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## Introduction

At Refuge, we believe that no-one should have to live in fear of violence and abuse, and we help empower survivors and children to rebuild their lives, free from violence and fear. We **provide** high-quality services for those who have experienced violence; **protect** survivors by advocating for a strong criminal justice response to perpetrators; and **prevent** future violence through education, training and awareness-raising.

### The roles

Trustees oversee Refuge's governance, compliance, strategy and planning, and are also Company Directors. We advise and support the executive team, enabling them to achieve our aims as effectively as possible. Our watchwords are openness, inclusion, challenge and support in equal measure, and we bring a range of different experiences, professional backgrounds and skillsets to this vital work.

We are scheduled to meet as a full Board four times a year, either in London or (recently due to travel and meeting restrictions) by videoconference. Issues are scrutinised through a sub-committee structure, which will then recommend a course of action to the full board, and new appointees should expect to be invited to serve on a sub-committee. The minimum requirement of trustees is attendance at Board meetings and one or two away days per year. We hope trustees will also have some availability to join a sub-committee(s) and engage in other ad hoc events and training sessions.

As with any organisation, the Refuge Board needs to respond quickly and dynamically to situations as they arise in Refuge and in the broader sector. As a result there may be instances where emergency Board meetings are required, and whilst these are rarely mandatory, it is hoped that Trustees will be as flexible as possible to participate in and provide their feedback where required.

### Priority areas of expertise

- We are seeking interest from those with knowledge and expertise of **crime / law enforcement**, especially as it pertains to victims of domestic abuse and/or children and navigation of related investigations and follow-on actions. Complex cases, for example where victims have had engagement with law enforcement or related agencies (housing or social services), whether because of drug / substance abuse or anti-social behaviour, require a nuanced approach, and your contribution to our emerging thinking around this will be welcome.
- The post of **Audit & Risk Committee Chair** will become available towards the end of 2021, and we would welcome approaches from those who bring relevant, recent experience in this area. The A & R Committee monitors the integrity of financial statements, oversees the external auditor relationship, advises the Board on budgets, financial statements and financial policies, reports on the performance of financial investments and oversees the risk assessment process. The last of these must be a current area of expertise for candidates, and an understanding of fraud prevention, bribery and whistleblowing are also essential. As part of a broad business background, you must have led and managed the audit process. **An accountancy qualification would be welcome, but is not essential provided that you can demonstrate the skills, competence, experience and understanding to effectively oversee the functions of the committee.**
- In common with many organisations in our sector, we want to continue to develop our **digital and technology strategy** and offering. Strong candidates are likely to have led the technology function in a mid/large sized organisation, and will either have sat on the board or reported to it. A demonstrable grasp of technology strategy will be complemented by a practical basket of operational insights, and successful project / programme delivery would be a definite advantage. Outstanding candidates will have overseen all technical aspects of a digital transformation process.

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## Core tasks and responsibilities of trustees

### Governance

- Ensure that Refuge has a clear vision and strategic direction and is focused on carrying out its purpose for public benefit
- Delegate authority to the CEO within the terms of the strategic plan and approved key performance indicators
- Appoint and remove the CEO and to establish a means of monitoring, supporting and holding them to account for the delegated functions

### Compliance

- Ensure that Refuge complies with its governing documents, legal and regulatory requirements, taking final responsibility (as per the Memorandum of Association) for the charity's overall activity

### Judgement

- Make balanced, informed decisions, being prepared to question and challenge when necessary, and thereby helping to maintain a balanced, constructive relationship between the board and the executive

### Resource management

- Secure and manage the resources that Refuge needs
- Ensure resources are deployed effectively
- Ensure that Refuge's plans and budgets are in keeping with its aims
- Approve such budgets to ensure Refuge is managing cash flows and reserves prudently

### Accountability

- Ensure that Refuge's governance is of the highest possible standard, acting with all due care and skill and managing all risks – financial, reputational and others – efficiently and effectively
- Adhere to our Code of Conduct (based on the NCVO Code of Conduct) in all matters

### Engagement

- Monitor Refuge's operating environment, addressing emerging issues that may impact on its strategy, planning or reputation with key stakeholders; ensuring that Refuge retains its ethos, values and standards and offering advice to the CEO and board on areas of personal experience and expertise
- Trustees may – on occasion, and with prior agreement – be asked to advise staff on issues pertaining to their particular areas of expertise, or introduce staff to their contacts / network.

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## Person Specification

- Demonstrable track record of proven and significant achievement with the criminal law or law enforcement, risk and audit or within digital/ technological transformation.
- Understanding of Refuge and the breadth of our activity and the support we provide and a commitment to our aims and values.
- Successful experience of operating on a Board or a committee in a charity, public sector or commercial organisation.
- Ability to think creatively, good independent judgement and a willingness to speak their mind.
- Demonstrable experience of building and sustaining relationships with stakeholders and colleagues to achieve organisational objectives.
- Confident and effective communication skills with a range of audiences and the ability to challenge in a constructive way.
- Empathy or lived experience of having lived in fear of violence and abuse.

### Commitment and Remuneration

- Depending on when an appointment is made relative to our AGM cycle, appointments will usually be made on an initial three-year basis (renewal may be tabled at the 3<sup>rd</sup> AGM following appointment)
- Trustees will be expected to demonstrate commitment to the role and the organisation, and are asked to give a minimum of 3 hours per month to Refuge
- In 2021 the board of trustees will meet formally four times a year, plus one strategy away day. In addition, trustees are required to attend occasional evening events or meetings
- Trustees work on a pro bono basis. All reasonable travel expenses will be reimbursed