



SDCAS

Southwark Day Centre
for Asylum Seekers

TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT PACK

March 2022

Southwark Day Centre for Asylum Seekers
Copleston Centre, Copleston Road, London SE15 4AN
020 7732 0505
office@sdcas.org.uk
sdcas.org.uk

Charity no: 1143912
Company no: 07519992

Welcome From Chair

Thank you for your interest in the Trustee role at Southwark Day Centre for Asylum Seekers (SDCAS).

We're a small but impactful charity that is passionate about supporting asylum seekers and refugees through our online and drop-in services. We're looking for new volunteers to join our board at this exciting time.

This is an opportunity for passionate and committed individuals to help us navigate delivering hybrid services and develop our strategy for the next two years.

We're particularly interested in diversifying the membership of our board so welcome applications from all the communities we support.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Alan Robertson
Chair
alan@sdcas.org.uk

What We Do

Southwark Day Centre for Asylum Seekers provides a wide range of holistic services which support, promote and secure the rights of asylum seekers and refugees in the London Borough of Southwark.

SDCAS opened its doors in 1997 and prior to the pandemic, we operated three drop-in day centres in the borough, each of which was open one day a week to provide support to refugees and asylum seekers. At our centres, vulnerable people are advised about their rights, can socialise, learn skills and access healthcare and other support. During the pandemic some of our services were delivered online where possible and we continued to support the most at risk with food parcels. Our services are reopening and we are exploring how we can best support our communities.

Our Values



A's Story

What stood out in the hardship and uncertainty of last year was the huge relief we felt when hearing of A's positive ending to a 10 year ordeal. A fled the civil war in Darfur in Sudan as a teenager on his own. On arrival in the UK his age was disputed by the Home Office, he was given a random date of birth and, instead of offering him accommodation while his asylum claim was being considered, he was taken to a detention centre.

For many months A was moved from one detention centre to another – 6 in total - without having committed a crime. After release he was even more traumatised than on arrival and for the following 7 years the battle with the immigration authorities continued. He came very close to giving up on many occasions.

However, during those 7 long years of waiting he studied tiling and carpentry and in 2018 he qualified as community interpreter. Nearly 8 years living on £37 per week - a long lockdown as he called it - has taken its toll but he used his time constructively.

For the past 2 years, A has been volunteering at the Day Centre and we all appreciate his presence and his kindness towards others. Then finally this summer he was granted refugee status. We celebrated COVID-style, at a safe distance but totally delighted. 10 years after fleeing Darfur A has already found a job and is now hoping to move into his own accommodation, leaving the NASS system behind for good.



Trustee Responsibilities

SDCAS' Board of Trustees is the body accountable for all the charity's work. Trustees are both directors of the company and trustees of the charity and so have duties under the Companies Act 2006 and a responsibility to the Charity Commission.

The main role of the Board of Trustees is to govern the charity and provide overall policy direction to ensure the charity achieves its aims in the most efficient and effective manner, consistent with our values.

The specific tasks for which the Board of Trustees are responsible are set out below:

Governance

- Setting the mission, vision and strategy for the charity and ensure that these are adhered to.
- Setting up and monitoring sub-committees, agreeing the terms of reference and membership for sub-committees, and ensuring they report regularly to the board.
- Ensuring the charity complies with charity law, good practice (specifically Charity Governance Code), company law and other legislative and regulatory requirements.
- Overseeing SDCAS' policies and procedures.
- Ensuring that the charity's activities are within the stated charitable purposes.
- Safeguarding and protecting the assets of the charity and ensuring that charitable funds and assets are used for the purposes for which they were given.
- Developing and keeping under review a scheme of delegation setting out decisions reserved to the board, those delegated to sub-committees and staff, and the limits of financial authority.



Trustee Responsibilities (cont.)

- Developing and keeping under review a Governance Manual which includes a Trustee Code of Conduct and a policy for Trustee recruitment, induction, appraisal and removal.
- Ensuring SDCAS acts at all times in the best interests of its beneficiaries, uses its resources effectively, and maximises its reach and impact.
- Ensuring SDCAS upholds and promotes the principles of equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of its work.
- Regularly reviewing the risks to which the charity might be exposed, and how those risks are mitigated.

Planning and budgeting

- Having financial responsibility through receiving and monitoring plans, reserves and budgets, and monitoring and evaluation of the work programmes against agreed standards and targets.
- Ensuring SDCAS has an up to date and relevant Strategic Plan that is drawn up and reviewed on a regular basis.
- Ensuring an Annual Budget and Work Plan are drawn up for each year defining income and cost objectives for the year ahead, linked to the objectives of the Strategic Plan.

Performance management

- Appointing and appraising the CEO.
- Supporting and holding the CEO to account for delivery of the strategy and budget.
- Monitoring the charity's performance.

Formal guidance on the responsibilities of trustees is issued by the Charity Commission. See their '[Essential Trustee](#)' guidance which all trustees are given upon appointment.



Trustee Role Description

Overview

All trustees are expected to follow the Charity Commission's guidance, carrying out these duties to the best of their skill and knowledge, acting at all times in the best interests of the charity.

Specific Duties

- Ensuring that the organisation pursues its stated objects (purposes), as defined in its governing document, by developing and agreeing a long-term strategy
- Ensuring that the organisation complies with its governing document (i.e. its trust deed, constitution or memorandum and articles of association), charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- Ensuring that the organisation applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its charitable objects (i.e. the charity must not spend money on activities that are not included in its own objects, however worthwhile or charitable those activities are) for the benefit of the public
- Ensuring that the organisation defines its goals and evaluates performance against agreed targets
- Safeguarding the good name and values of the organisation and its reputation
- Ensuring the effective and efficient administration of the organisation, including having appropriate policies and procedures in place and have been regularly reviewed as required
- Ensuring the financial stability of the organisation and all audits and monitoring is undertaken
- Protecting and managing the property of the charity and ensuring the proper investment of the charity's funds
- Following proper and formal arrangements for the appointment, supervision, support, appraisal and remuneration of the chief executive (if the charity employs staff)

In addition to the above statutory duties, each trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the board of trustees reach sound decisions. This may involve scrutinising board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, or other issues in which the trustee has special expertise.



Trustee Person Description

Experience may be paid or voluntary, full or part-time, in the UK or overseas.

Candidates will be shortlisted on the following specifications:

Core:

- Commitment to the welfare of asylum seekers and refugees
- Understanding of, and commitment to, the work of SDCAS
- Knowledge of and commitment to diversity in relation to the protected characteristics and a commitment to anti-racism
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- Proven interpersonal skills such as an ability to work cooperatively, show empathy and listen to others
- Strong strategic and critical thinking skills
- An ability to think creatively
- Enthusiasm and energy
- Knowledge of charities such as SDCAS and how they work

Desirable:

- Committee experience
- Experience of working or volunteering in the charity sector
- Lived experience of being an asylum seeker/refugee
- Knowledge of one of the following would be particularly useful:
immigration policy, health and safety, human resources, data protection.



Commitment

- You will need to attend 6 meetings of the Board per year each lasting 90 minutes.
- In addition you may be asked to be a member of a board sub-committee which meets in addition the meetings above.
- We have recently been meeting virtually but hope that some of our meetings will be face to face in the near future.
- Whilst this is a volunteer role, reasonable travel expenses will be reimbursed.
- One third of trustees (those longest in office) are required to retire at an annual meeting and may be re-elected. In line with the Charity Governance Code trustees are not expected to remain in post for more than 9 years.

How to Apply

If you would like to apply for the position of Trustee please send your CV and a brief cover letter explaining your interest in SDCAS and how you believe you could contribute as a trustee to alan@sdcas.org.uk by 9am Monday 2nd May 2022.

If you need this recruitment pack in an alternative format or if there is anything we can do to make it easier for you to attend an interview, please let us know.

