

Trustee role: information pack

Who we're looking for

We want to find four new Trustees to join Hear Me Out's Board. We're looking for people with expertise relevant to our work, who work well with colleagues and can help make good decisions. We're especially keen to find people who can bring us:

- Personal experience of immigration detention, asylum and immigration enforcement, **and/or**
- Expertise in generating gifts and earned income, especially through relationships with major partners and donors

The Trustee role is unpaid. If you're interested, please read on.

Our work

Hear Me Out takes music-making into immigration detention centres and other places where migrants are confined, like asylum hotels and army barracks. Our artists work with people in these places, supporting them to create, record and perform original music. We create platforms for their music and stories, building support and understanding of a group that is being placed under increasing pressure by the UK's 'hostile environment'. We are a national leader in this work with unparalleled experience in this complex territory, going back 20 years.

Our values and ethics frame our work. Hear Me Out should empower people, help them speak for themselves and take control of their lives. We look to create artistic work of the highest quality. We do not seek to impose a narrative but are curious about individual stories and experiences. We're independent, working with people going through the immigration system but not becoming part of it. We treat everyone we encounter with respect. We're committed to bringing co-creation into our organisation, and sharing power with the people Hear Me Out was set up to support.

Our Board of Trustees

The Trustees are the group in charge of Hear Me Out. They are responsible for what we do, and are the guardians of our charitable work. Our small team of staff, led by our Director and Artistic Director, deliver the work, and the Directors report to the Trustees. All these people work together to make Hear Me Out's aims a reality, and keep it that way.

The Board of Trustees meet 4 times a year, currently on Thursday afternoons. The meetings last 3 hours with a break in the middle. Information is sent out before the meetings about the topics to be discussed, in written papers and sometimes as audio/video. We also want Trustees to get involved in something else, perhaps a music activity or a group working on a special project, so that they bring deeper knowledge of Hear Me Out's work into Board meetings.

Charity boards can sometimes feel quite posh and formal, with unspoken rules that confuse and exclude. But we think ours is a friendly place to be, and a good team where everyone is respected. And we're on a journey to unpack how it works, to make sure it's only complicated when it really needs to be. So we think being a trustee at Hear Me Out will be a good experience for people with different backgrounds and life experience – whether or not they've done anything like this before. We need lots of wisdom to make good decisions about our complex work in this troubling time, and that's the way to get it.

Lived experience and professional experience

Professional experience and lived experience are of equal value on our Board. We need Trustees who understand what the people we work with are going through and what they need, and who can help make that happen. That combination will give us the strongest impact.

We want to bring more people with personal experience of detention, asylum, immigration enforcement and/or racial discrimination into leadership roles in Hear Me Out. We've started to do this but don't yet have the critical mass of lived experience that will really place our organisation inside the communities we serve. If you have this kind of experience then we would really love to hear from you. You don't need to have been a trustee before or to have a standard work CV.

We also want people's professional experience. Fundraising and income generation are particular issues for us at present, but our work needs a range of professional skills and expertise, so there are lots of ways to contribute. So if you're interested, tell us everything you can bring to the role.

Our plans

Hear Me Out is in a time of change. As a new trustee you'll be part of a process of long-term strategic planning, to agree our work priorities for the next 5-6 years, in the context of the many challenges that come with work in the immigration field. Charitable fundraising is hard at the moment, so we are looking for new ways of generating income (main options: major gifts, earned income, corporate partnerships) and the expertise to help us make that happen. Our Chair of Trustees and our Director are both planning to stand down after many years in their roles, so we have started on work to prepare for new leadership, including leaders with lived experience.

The Trustee role

The Trustees have overall responsibility for the charity's work and resources. They must make sure the charity is effective and true to its purpose, look after its interests, and set its goals and plans. They must work together as a group.

Together the Trustees oversee Hear Me Out's compliance with the law and its own rules, its careful use of funds, and its responsibilities to others. They set the organisation's aims, rules and ethics, appoint senior staff and make sure the team delivers high quality, effective work.

Each individual trustee must commit time to their role, use their experience and judgment, act in Hear Me Out's interests, and declare conflicts of interest so that these can be managed ethically. They must act professionally and act with determination if something is going wrong.

What we can offer you

Working in the immigration system is stressful, so we've been developing better ways to support everyone in Hear Me Out. We will offer support to new trustees well and ask you what you need. For example:

- Before you start, you could meet existing trustees, and/or come to a meeting, to try it out
- When you start we will take you to a music session so you can see our work for yourself
- We will tell you about what we're working on and ask what interests you the most
- We can help you prepare for meetings by talking through the topics for discussion and the information that has been sent out
- We may be able to arrange mentoring or training for you, to support you in the role
- We will repay expenses you incur from being a Trustee, but please note that currently it is not possible to pay Trustees for their time and expertise

What you can gain

As a Trustee you will give a lot to Hear Me Out, but you can get a lot out of it too. For example:

- Skills and experience that help you develop professionally
- Working with colleagues to make good things happen and find a way through problems
- If you have been through the immigration system, knowing that you're using that experience to help others going through similar experiences
- Joining a warm and supportive community

To apply

If you are interested, first of all please have a look at [our website](#) to find out more about our work, and watch [this video](#) to find out more about our Trustees. You can also find us on YouTube, Instagram and Facebook.

We'll be holding a zoom call on **Tuesday 2nd September at 5.00-6.00pm**, where you can hear more about Hear Me Out, meet some of our team, and ask us any questions. If you would like to attend, or cannot attend but would like to receive a recording, please email Shakhana Jeyananthan on shakhana@hearmeoutmusic.org.uk. If you have any extra questions about Hear me Out or the trustee role, you're welcome to email our Director, John Speyer on john@hearmeoutmusic.org.uk, and he'll be happy to provide a short written reply or have a chat. Tell him what you'd like.

Then, if you want us to consider you for the role of Trustee, please send us these three things:

1. Your CV **and**
2. A letter of no more than 2 pages, **or** a voice note **or** video of not more 6 minutes, where you answer the four questions below, **and**
3. Details of two independent referees who can tell us about your experience and qualities

The four questions you need to answer in your letter / voice note / video are:

- Why are you interested being a Trustee at Hear Me Out?
- What life experience and/or volunteering and work experience will you bring that is relevant to our work?
- What do you think you will gain from being a Trustee?
- What will you need from us to help you be a good Trustee?

You must send your application to John Speyer by email to john@hearmeoutmusic.org.uk, or (if you're sending a voice note or video) by Whatsapp to 07828 065624. You must do this by **11.00am on Monday 15th September**. We'll consider each application carefully and choose which ones to take forward. If yours is one of them, we'll invite you to come and meet a couple of us to talk in more detail.

Thank you for your interest. We look forward to hearing from you. Good luck!