

HACKNEY DOORWAYS

The Round Chapel Old School Rooms, 2 Powerscroft Road, London, E5 0PU
Charity registration number: 1139183 Company registration number: 07064774

HACKNEY DOORWAYS -TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT

Introduction

We're looking for some new trustees to help take Hackney Winter Night Shelter on the next phase of its journey, to deliver the vision of providing a route out of homelessness for everyone in need in Hackney. We are a small charity, with only 4 staff but around 700 volunteers, so trustees are pretty close to the action, and we can see the results of our work every night of the week.

About Hackney Winter Night Shelter

Hackney Winter Night Shelter (HWNS) began over 20 years ago, and has expanded over recent years. We offer a warm welcome, a hot meal, and a bed for homeless people from the start of November to the end of March, with a break over Christmas when guests go to Crisis. During the day, our two advocate workers provide support to help guests find more suitable accommodation and generally move forward in their lives.

Guests arrive at about 7.30pm, and stay until 8.30 the following morning. For most of that time, the shelter is run entirely by volunteers, overseen by an experienced coordinator – also a volunteer. Working in shifts, the teams will make up beds, cook dinner, stay overnight, cook breakfast, and then clear up, ready to hand the venue back as we found it. There's a short video on our website (www.hwns.org.uk) which brings the shelter alive.

The shelter venues are spread around Hackney. So far all venues have been church halls, but the charity is an organisation for people of all faiths and none. We take guests on the basis of need.

About Hackney Doorways

The organisation has expanded and - to ensure appropriate oversight - we registered as a charity and a limited company under the name of Hackney Doorways. Trustees are therefore also directors of the company, with formal responsibility for governance.

The Shelter doesn't seek government money, so we have to raise every penny ourselves. Grants and donations are an important source of funding, along with fundraisers including a comedy night at the Hackney Empire known as the Belter for the Shelter, and runners taking part in the Hackney Half-Marathon.

As well as the two advocate workers, we employ a Shelter Manager and an Administrator. The manager oversees the work of the shelter, and the staff team organise training, support safe and effective work at the venues, and help to coordinate the work of the volunteers.

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The charity is ambitious to do more for homeless people in London. To help with this, we want to recruit new trustees to help shape the future and to strengthen the governance of the organisation.

The role of trustees

Charity trustees control the charity and its funds. The trustees are responsible for the overall conduct of the organisation, ensuring that it is run properly and effectively, so as to deliver the vision and use resources to best effect.

In practical terms, our trustees meet once every month for a couple of hours (apart from in August). In a charity of our size, trustees need to be more hands-on than in a bigger organisation. So as well as attending meetings, each trustee takes responsibility for overseeing a particular aspect of the running of the charity, e.g. finances, fundraising, reporting impact, organising communications, or reviewing policies. This means that trustee roles here will involve several hours a month in addition to time spent at meetings. The reward for this is that the fruits of your efforts are very visible.

The trustee role is unpaid. Expenses are paid for exceptional costs.

Skills and experience sought

We have a number of vacancies, as several trustees are moving on for different reasons.

For all trustees, the following qualities are essential:

- Ambition to tackle homelessness;
- Understanding of the role and responsibilities of trustees;
- Commitment to roll up your sleeves and to give the necessary time to the role;
- Willingness to take a lead on specific issues as well as the general trustee role;
- Integrity.

We are looking particularly for people with knowledge of the following, whether professionally or from other volunteering:

- Financial management, though you don't have to be an accountant
- Fundraising
- Working with homeless people, or in related work eg housing, social care, or health

We are also looking for experience to supplement that of the existing trustees:

- Experience of work in local communities, in Inner London or in similar areas.
- Charity governance.
- Lived experience of homelessness.

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Alongside people new to the organisation, it will be useful to have someone with an understanding of the operation of the shelter.

We are keen to encourage diversity amongst the trustee group, so welcome applications from all sections of the community, who are currently well represented among volunteers but not amongst trustees.

Process

Andrew Hudson, the current Chair, is leading this recruitment exercise, and he will be happy to discuss the roles informally. Please email him at trusteejobs@hwns.org.uk to fix a time.

If you would like to apply, please send a CV plus a letter explaining your experience, why the role attracts you, and what you would bring to it. Please send this by email to trusteejobs@hwns.org.uk.

Before confirming appointment, we shall ask to speak to two referees but we do not need details at this stage.

The timetable is:

Applications to be received by Monday 12 November.

Interviews to be held in late November or early December, with a view to appointing before Christmas.