



THINKING OF BECOMING A TRUSTEE? Guide for Applicants

Cheshire, Halton & Warrington Race & Equality Centre
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Introduction

Hello and thank you for showing an interest in becoming a Trustee for the Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Race & Equality Centre. This guide has been designed to help you understand what it means to be a Trustee and how you could help us to achieve our aims.

The Trustee Board of the Race and Equality Centre is made up of 11 Trustee Directors. This means that they are both trustees and directors - trustees for the purposes of charity law and directors for the purposes of company law as the REC is a charitable company.

The people on the Board come from the general membership, whether as individuals or organisational representatives and are voted on at the Annual General Meeting. There are spaces for an additional 3 co-opted non voting members each year to be voted on. Usually these places are given to those with special skills or experience that might be missing from the elected Board. The Director (chief officer) of the REC also sits in an advisory capacity at the Trustee Board.

Our Aims:

Our aim is to 'to work towards the elimination of discrimination, especially racial discrimination and to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial and other groups'

We do this through providing 4 key services:

1. **Race specific casework** – we provide legal advice and assistance to people who are experiencing discrimination
2. **Community development** – we have a specialist community development worker who provides advice and support to BME and faith community organisations
3. **Public Awareness** – we raise awareness about equality issues through presentations, training, conferences and circulating information
4. **Policy development** – we give advice on best practice in equality, to organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors

We also carry out projects that fall in line with our general aims, for example we are currently funded by the Big Lottery to carry out research in secondary schools into the levels of racism.

We currently also manage a community facility – the Unity Centre, which is a focal point for BME communities where we provide a wide range of educational, social and leisure activities as well as subsidized accommodation for community groups.

All our work falls into those key categories. Some of our services are grant funded but other we have to charge for. For example we provide training and we charge a consultancy rate for this unless it is part of a service level agreement with a funder.

The Role of the Board

The aims of our Board is to:

- Provide strategic direction for the Race & Equality Centre (REC)
- Ensure that the REC is operating in line with company and charity law
- Govern the REC in line with the REC's policies and procedures
- Ensure the REC's financial viability is secured
- Achieve continuous improvement

The Board delegates responsibilities to both task groups and staff of the REC, but it is overall legally responsible for all actions taken by the REC and all employment matters.

To achieve the aims above, each board member has a role to play. The Board Trustee volunteer description can be found on page 5. A balance of skills and experience is important for the Board and the Board Trustee 'skills and experience' document on page 7 outlines the sorts of things we look for in new Board members. Of course this isn't everything and we realize that everyone has something different to contribute. You should use the application form to tell us what skills, qualities and experience you can offer us.

What Would My Commitment Be?

The Board usually meets on the last Thursday of the month, every month between 7-9pm. Involvement varies for Trustees, but there will be pieces of work to carry out between Trustee meetings – whether that be a discreet piece of work or involvement in a task and finish group. We are also need Trustees to represent the REC at partnership and strategic meetings.

The Board has one planning day a year which all Trustees are expected to participate in as this is to set the strategic direction of the REC.

All Board dates are set out at the beginning of the year to help you plan your diary.

Will I Be Paid?

Charity trustees are generally unpaid positions. We do however pay expenses for Trustees such as travel costs and child care (where agreed in advance). We also provide refreshments at meetings, and lunch or dinner where the meetings are during the day.

Retirement Rota

Trustees are normally appointed for a three year term of office. Our rules say that at least one third of members of our Board must retire each year at the Annual General Meeting. Retiring Trustees are automatically eligible to stand for another term of office, up to a total maximum service of three terms of office (nine years).

Positions on the Board

There are several key positions on the Board that you may stand for if you join the Board

Chair – Main duties are to chair meetings of the Board, be a figurehead for the organisation, speak to press when required and represent the REC at strategic meetings

Deputy Chair – Main duty to stand in for the Chair, where the Chair is unavailable

Secretary – Keeps the minutes for the Board.

Treasurer – Responsible for keeping an overview of the finances and reporting back financial matters to the Board

I'm interested – what do I do next?

After reading this pack you will need to fill in an application form (attached to this pack)

When you've filled it in please send to The Governance Secretary, Cheshire Halton & Warrington Race & Equality Centre, The Unity Centre, 17 Cuppin Street, Chester, CH1 2BN. Tel: 01244 400730 e-mail office@chawrec.org.uk

VOLUNTEER DESCRIPTION - Board Trustee

1. Role

Board Trustee/Director

2. Location

Primarily meetings will be held at the REC's office in Chester, but from time to time meetings may take place at other venues

3. Timings

Board and other Committee meetings tend to be held in early evening. Board meetings are held monthly.

An annual board planner ensures that the Board director is always given sufficient notice of meetings.

4. Remuneration

There is no remuneration for this role. Expenses will be paid for travel to meetings or on REC business at a rate agreed on an annual basis. The rate for 2013/14 is 45p a mile.

5. General Overview of the Role

To be responsible for the overall strategy and direction of the Race & Equality Centre's activities, ensuring that the REC complies with charity and company law and operates within good practice.

6. Main Expectations of the Role

- a) Prepare for and fully participate in meetings of the Board, committees and other events (minimum 80% attendance at all three)
- b) Ensure the delivery of a business plan
- c) Ensure that the REC conducts its affairs lawfully, adhering especially to health and safety, equality, employment, charity and company legislation as well as complying with quality standards
- d) To monitor the overall performance of the REC to ensure that it meets its objectives
- e) To monitor and promote the REC and its policies
- f) Uphold the REC's code of conduct, presenting a positive image of the REC
- g) Without reservation, fully endorse the values and objectives of the REC, in particular the REC's stance on equality and diversity
- h) Board input to appoint new staff
- i) Represent the REC at external stakeholders on occasions

- j) To ensure the financial viability of the REC
- k) To at all times maintain the utmost confidentiality of all REC and Board matters

Board Directors/Trustees may be required to carry out other duties from time to time.

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

Below is a list of ideal experience and skills for the role of board director/trustee:

These are only to be taken as a guide.

Commitment

- Be prepared to take an active role in committees
- Be able to devote an appropriate level of time and commitment to REC business
- Demonstrate commitment to equality of opportunity and anti racist practice
- Maintain high levels of probity and respect confidentiality of information
- Contribute to and share full collective responsibility for all Board decisions
- Open to learning and continuing to develop skills and knowledge
- At all times to act in the interest of the REC as an organisation and not in the interests of any individual or organisation

Skills/ Knowledge

- Able to make a measured and appropriate contribution
- Knowledgeable in equality matters
- Able to demonstrate an ability to act and think strategically rather than operationally
- Can interpret financial and other statistical information
- Experience of working as part of a decision making group, formal or informal, paid or voluntary

Personal Qualities

- A good team player
- A commitment to the values, mission and vision of the REC
- Respect for colleagues and their point of view
- Can demonstrate a high level of risk awareness

Other events

- The ability to attend out of hours meetings, training and other