



ROLE DESCRIPTION

Chair: Bradford City of Sanctuary

February 2026

Context

Established in 2008 and registered as a charity (CIO) in 2015, we are part of the national [City of Sanctuary](#) movement which numbers nearly 100 groups. In 2010 Bradford was one of the first cities to be nationally recognised as a 'City of Sanctuary'; in 2021 Bradford Council achieved the [Local Authority of Sanctuary Award](#).

We work with local groups and organisations, large and small, as well as many inspiring individuals to ensure that people seeking sanctuary can access local services that recognise and understand their needs, and to meaningfully participate in all aspects of the life of the city. We have excellent and long-established relationships across the city (see [here](#)). Critically, all our work is informed by our [Advisory Group](#) of people with lived experience of the refugee journey. We employ a small [team](#) of three outstanding and dedicated staff: our Director, our [Schools and Colleges Project](#) Coordinator and our Administration & Communications Officer. Each role is part time.

We have an experienced, capable and harmonious trustee board with a diversity of relevant skills and experience. After 17 years, our founding Chair is due to retire in Spring 2026 and so we are seeking a successor to take forward our work, in close collaboration with the Director, staff and trustees. The board currently meets quarterly, with subgroup meetings in between.

At a time of rising tensions across the UK, fuelled by misinformation and distorted 'truths', the need for our work is greater than ever.

Key Responsibilities of the Chair

1. Strategic Leadership

- Lead the trustees in steering BCoS's strategic direction in line with our charitable objects.
- Ensure BCoS remains alert to relevant risks and opportunities affecting our work.

2. Governance and Compliance

- Ensure compliance with regulatory requirements, including charity, employment, and – in collaboration with the Treasurer – financial legislation.
- Ensure that the board monitors financial health and sustainability of the charity.
- Contribute to high-level financial planning and risk management discussions.
- Oversee policy review and development (with one trustee taking the lead on this).

3. Board Development and Diversity

- Regularly review board composition, knowledge and capacity, ensuring timely trustee recruitment.
- Work to ensure the trustee board reflects a diversity of perspectives, including actively seeking, recruiting and supporting trustees with relevant lived experience to strengthen the board's insight and decision-making.
- Facilitate regular board evaluation, ensuring that trustees are effective in their roles and supported in their development.
- Support induction and ongoing training of new trustees.

4. Director Oversight and Support

- Provide line management and an annual appraisal of the Director, fostering a strong, effective, and harmonious working relationship.
- Negotiate and respect boundaries between the Chair and Director's roles.

5. Trustee and Staff Relationships

- Foster and maintain positive relationships between staff and trustees.
- Work with the Director to schedule and plan trustee meetings, ensuring the exchange of relevant information between trustees and staff..

6. Additional information

The above list is indicative only and not exhaustive. The Chair of the Board will be expected to perform all such additional duties as are reasonably commensurate with the role.

Person Specification

	Essential (E) Desirable (D)
A genuine interest in and sensitivity towards the needs of people seeking sanctuary	E
A strong, visible passion and commitment to BCoS' vision and objectives	E
Previous senior strategic leadership experience	E
Knowledge and understanding of the local voluntary sector	D
Lived experience of the refugee journey	D
A broad understanding and knowledge of charity governance and appreciation of the financial, legal and operational responsibilities of a Board of Trustees	E
Experience in supporting trustee recruitment, development and diversity initiatives	D
Understanding of organisational risk, safeguarding and regulatory compliance	D
Ability & willingness to commit time to conduct the role well	E
Experience of chairing meetings and facilitating effective board discussions	D
Strong leadership skills, ability to motivate Board members, staff, and volunteers – bringing people together	E
Demonstrable commitment to promoting lived experience within governance and decision-making	D
Ability to represent an organisation externally and build partnerships with key stakeholders	D
A strong commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion, with understanding of the challenges faced by people seeking sanctuary	E
Personal qualities of integrity, credibility and compassion	E
Living in Bradford District	D