1. **LASSN**

Leeds Asylum Seekers' Support Network (LASSN) was set up in 1999 to respond to the pressing unmet needs of asylum seekers and refugees and other migrants living in Leeds.

LASSN has three main strategic objectives: to support, empower and integrate asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants into life in the UK.

LASSN works in ways which are

* **respectful** of the knowledge and experience asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants bring with them;
* **informed** by lived experience, and up to date knowledge of migration issues;
* **empowering** of asylum seekers, migrants and refugees, volunteers and staff alike - to understand and take control of their lives, and to better understand the powers that shape their lives;
* **based on partnership and collaboration** in everything we do;
* **reliant on volunteers** – seeing their involvement as essential to the way in which we help forge strong, resilient relationships which are the foundations of cohesive and welcoming communities.

1. **Who are the charity's trustees?**

The Charities Act 1993 defines charity trustees as the people responsible under the charity's governing document for controlling the administration and management of the charity, regardless of what they are called. For LASSN the charity trustees are known as the Board of Trustees (from here on referred to as “the Board”). The Board comprises:

* the chair
* the treasurer
* up to eight additional elected trustees
* up to five appointed trustees

The trustee board appoints from among the trustees a vice chair.

1. **The role of the Board**

At its simplest, the role of the Board is to receive assets from donors, safeguard them and apply them for the charitable purposes as declared in the objects of LASSN. The Board must always act in the best interests of LASSN, exercising the same duty of care that a prudent person of business would in looking after the affairs of someone for whom he had responsibility. The Board must act as a group and not as individuals.

1. **Duties of a trustee**

The duties of a trustee are to:

* ensure that LASSSN complies with its governing document (its Articles of Association), charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
* ensure that LASSN pursues its objects as defined in its governing document
* ensure LASSN does not spend money on activities which are not included in the objects, however worthwhile they may be
* contribute actively to the Board of trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to LASSN, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets
* safeguard the good name and values of LASSN
* ensure the financial stability of LASSN
* protect and manage the property of LASSN and to ensure that proper investment of LASSN's funds
* appoint and support the Director and monitor their performance

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

1. **Minimum time commitment**

Trustees are expected to attend an induction session at LASSN prior to their first board meeting. Trustees are expected to attend all board meetings. Board meetings are held every two months and last around two hours - from 18:15 – 20.15.

* Papers are distributed one week in advance of meetings
* Trustees may be asked to join either the Finance sub-group or the HR sub-group. The Finance Group takes place quarterly, during the day at LASSN’s offices and lasts around an hour. The HR group meets on an ad hoc basis, usually for no more than 2 hours
* Trustees are invited to the annual general meeting (AGM) of LASSN which usually takes place in Leeds, on a Friday evening in Autumn
* Trustees can claim out of pocket expenses incurred in travelling to meetings

1. **Person specification**

Each trustee must have:

* a commitment to the mission of LASSN
* a willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
* integrity
* strategic vision
* good, independent judgement
* an ability to think creatively
* a willingness to speak their mind
* an understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
* an ability to work effectively as a member of a team and to take decisions for the good of LASSN.

The Board of trustees collectively needs skills and experience in:

* financial management, income generation and enterprise
* safeguarding and risk management
* Migration policy and practice
* national and local voluntary sector
* national and local government and statutory bodies
* human resource management
* volunteering management
* funding/foundations
* collaborative partnerships