



## Chair of Trustees Background information

### Our work

Hear Me Out takes music-making into UK immigration detention centres to release the words, music and life stories of people held inside.

Young or old, resident or refugee, 28,000 people every year are locked in UK immigration detention centres with no end date. Their lives are stopped while authorities decide their fate. People who have fled torture have described detention as the worst experience of their lives. Meanwhile the detention system, and the experiences of detainees, is little understood by the public. Narratives around immigration are often fraught with anxiety and distrust, ignoring real lives, real experiences, and real human feeling.

We help people inside immigration detention centres to express their humanity through music – to air their losses and fears, their hopes and their dreams. And we help everyone outside to hear the music and understand the lives of people trapped inside. We're working for the day when all migrants are treated with dignity.

Previously known as Music In Detention, for 15 years we have supported people in detention to recover their sense of wellbeing and resilience, and make their voices heard, by:

- Offering a creative outlet that supports self-confidence and agency
- Providing positive experiences to counter the psychological damage of detention
- Enabling communication over the wall which separates them from the outside world
- Building platforms to bring their creative work and life experience to a public audience

### What we're looking for

Sue Lukes, our Chair of Trustees since we started work in 2006, is standing down later this year. We've changed a great deal in that time. Now we're looking for a new Chair to add their voice to ours, and see our organisation through another major shift in how we do our work.

Our artists have always created music with, not for, participants in our music sessions. We are now working to run the organisation the same way as its activities, that is on the basis of co-creation. We're impatient with tokenistic approaches to diversity, and want the decisions we make in our staff team and Board of Trustees to draw as much on **lived** experience of immigration enforcement, as they do on **professional** experience. This means, among other things, getting people with personal experience of detention, asylum, migration or immigration enforcement involved in our organisation at all levels, and changing how we run our Board, to make charity governance less mysterious and more accessible.

So we're looking for a new Chair who can help us take this exciting work forward. Could this be you? You need to be a natural or potential leader, but you don't have to have held a leadership role before, or been a charity Trustee. You may bring lived experience, or professional experience, or both. We need someone who can add their voice to ours, bring us fresh thinking, and make our close-knit Board even stronger. There is no set way to deliver the role – we are ready to frame it around your ideas and support you.

## The role

The Chair is one of the Trustees, who has a specific role on the Board. The role is not paid, but we will reimburse expenses you incur in the course of the role. There's no fixed term but we want to find someone who would like to stay in the role for at least 3 years.

As a member of Hear Me Out's Board you will be a charity Trustee and a company Director, sharing with the other Trustees the overall responsibility for the charity's work and resources. The Trustees 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.

The Chair chairs meetings of the Board of Trustees (every three months), and may take on additional responsibilities, such as:

- Supporting and supervising the Director (Chief Executive)
- Acting as a channel of communication between board and staff
- Acting as a figurehead for Hear Me Out, eg representing us at functions
- Helping us develop our brand and public recognition
- Recruiting and supporting other Trustees
- Leading on the development of the board and ensuring its decisions are implemented
- Taking urgent action/decisions between Board meetings

Few Chairs do all of these tasks and none of them are compulsory. We will mould your role around your abilities and interests and other trustees will be able to take on other tasks. In essence, the Chair leads the Board, the Director leads the staff, and between them they take the organisation and its work forward.

## The recruitment process

If you are interested, we suggest you first take a look at our website ([www.hearmeoutmusic.org.uk](http://www.hearmeoutmusic.org.uk)) read about our work, and listen to some of the amazing music we have helped people in detention create. You are also welcome to contact either Alastair Owen ([alastair@alastairowen.com](mailto:alastair@alastairowen.com) / 07733 063605) or Marie-Anne Mackie ([mamansfield64@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:mamansfield64@hotmail.co.uk) / 01264 772982), to arrange an informal initial chat. Alastair and Marie-Anne are both Trustees of Hear Me Out. They're not involved in the selection process so this conversation will have no bearing on our decisions.

If you want us to consider you for the role of Chair, please get in touch and tell us:

- A bit about yourself
- Why you're interested
- What you've done before that would be relevant (this could be all sorts of things, eg lived or voluntary or paid experience)
- What you would bring to our organisation

You can do this in any format. For example we'll be happy to receive a letter, video, email or artwork. We should be able to read/view all of it in 10 minutes. Please send it to our Director, John Speyer (email [john@hearmeoutmusic.org.uk](mailto:john@hearmeoutmusic.org.uk)) by **1.00pm on Thursday 28th October**.

We'll consider every submission carefully and then choose a few to take further. If yours is one of them, we'll invite you to meet a group of us, to talk some more about yourself, our organisation and the role. These meetings will be on **Monday 15th November**. You'll be able to choose to meet in person or remotely. We'll work out some questions and share them with you in advance.

We will then choose one person to join our Board meeting on **Tuesday 23rd November (2-5pm)**, before all involved make a final decision on who will be Hear Me Out's new Chair of Trustees.

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