Management Committee Member (Trustee)

APPLICATION BRIEFING PACK

Thank you for your interest in the role of **Management Committee Member (Trustee)**.

This briefing pack contains information on Detention Action, what being a Trustee entails, and how to apply for the role.

If you have any questions, please contact: recruitment@detentionaction.org.uk

About Detention Action

Detention Action (formerly London Detainee Support Group) is a registered charity (charity no. 1198554), which was founded in 1993. Our aim is to promote the welfare and rights of people in immigration detention in the UK and to advocate for detention reform. Our vision is a country where no-one is detained indefinitely for immigration reasons and where people born or raised in the UK are not deported from the place they call home.

Detention Action's work is overseen by a five-member Management Committee (Board of Trustees). The charity currently has 8 staff and a pool of around 40 volunteers, who largely work on a remote basis. Our main funders include Trust for London, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Comic Relief, Henry Smith Charity, City Bridge Foundation, Legal Education Foundation, Barrow Cadbury Trust, Bromley Trust and AB Charitable Trust.

Detention Action began as a visitor group for people detained at the immigration removal centres (IRCs) at Heathrow. Over the past 33 years we have developed our direct support services for those held at these centres, and also offer support to those held under immigration powers in prisons throughout the UK. Our Casework team provides emotional and practical support and casework support to people in detention, through in-person visits and a freephone service. We undertake general casework for people detained, including referrals to legal representatives and other specialist organisations and assistance with communicating with these agencies. We also work closely with solicitors on strategic litigation where it is necessary to defend the rights of people in detention. We do not currently provide immigration advice.

We are an ambitious and dynamic charity. We bring strategic litigation to prevent human rights abuses in the immigration system, we run high profile and visible campaigns and we work across the media to advance our goals. In 2020 we brought litigation in the Court of Appeal, which prevented the unlawful deportation of 25 people to Jamaica, and we brought further litigation to pressure the government to release the majority of people in detention due to COVID-19 risks. We also lead cross-party efforts to push for a statutory time limit on immigration detention and secured a successful vote in favour of a time limit in the House of Lords. In 2022, we were one of the lead claimants in the initial challenge to the Rwanda removals policy.

Drawing on evidence obtained from our frontline work, Detention Action undertakes media, campaigns and policy work to advocate for reform to immigration detention and deportation policy and practice. We regularly feature in national, regional and local print and broadcast media and work with others to lead the debate around the protection of human rights in the immigration system. Our campaign against indefinite detention aims to end the long-term detention of people without a time limit. We have coordinated innovative networks of people with lived experience. A major priority for our organisation is to ensure that people with lived experience are at the heart of our work at every level.

As with many charities, we have experienced significant financial challenges in the difficult funding environment of recent years. In late 2025, we took the difficult decision to restructure our staff team and reduce our budget to ensure our work is sustainable. We have important work ahead to secure more long-term funding and rebuild our work at a time when it is vitally needed.

We have supported thousands of detained people, and continue to advocate to keep detention on both the political and media agenda. For more information about Detention Action and what we do, please visit our website.

About the Trustee Role

Trustees have an opportunity to help shape and steer Detention Action, and to support and make a real difference to people in immigration detention and those who are subjected to the UK's harsh deportation policies. As part of a small, yet impactful organisation, they are responsible for overseeing the strategic direction of the charity, as well as ensuring its long-term stability.

General

- Over the year, Trustees are required to attend six regular Management Committee meetings and our Annual General Meeting, which all normally take place on Tuesday evenings, via Zoom, from 6.30-8pm. Trustees may also arrange additional meetings as necessary.
- This is a voluntary, unpaid position, however, reasonable expenses will be reimbursed, in line with Detention Action's Financial Procedures policy.
- Trustees receive a full induction and ongoing support, in order to allow them to understand and excel in their role.

Responsibilities

- Actively contribute to the Board of Trustees, giving strategic direction to the organisation and setting overall policy, in line with Detention Action's vision and values.
- Ensure that the organisation complies with its governing documents, charity law, company law and other relevant legislation and regulations.
- Safeguard the good name and reputation of the organisation.
- Ensure the financial stability of the organisation and its efficient administration.
- Act as a critical addition to the existing Board, offering guidance, support and constructive challenge.
- Represent Detention Action internally and externally, and to be a positive ambassador for the charity and the sector.
- Keep up-to-date with Detention Action's work.
- Read and scrutinise board papers before meetings so as to be able to contribute fully.
- Occasionally participate in relevant working groups.
- Occasionally participation in staff interview, disciplinary or grievance panels.

Requirements for the Trustee Role

The best trustee boards have a diversity of skills, experiences and perspectives. Some trustees are chosen for their previous board experience and long professional careers in finance or service delivery, and others for their knowledge of the immigration system through lived experience.

Specific Requirements

In 2024, we carried out a skills audit to assess skills gaps we would like to fill. Trustees identified skills and knowledge areas that would be particularly useful when recruiting new trustees. We would particularly welcome applications from people with experience of any of the following:

- Lived experience of immigration detention in the UK
- Digital communications and social media
- Immigration policy / sector experience
- Fundraising (trusts & foundations, and public fundraising)
- Finance
- Charity governance, HR or legal expertise
- Mental health support

General Requirements

- You'll be committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in all aspects of our work.
- Commitment to Detention Action's vision, purpose and values and to act in a manner consistent with these.
- Understanding of the issues and challenges faced by people facing detention and removal from the UK.
- Sound independent judgement and a willingness to speak your mind.
- An ability to work collaboratively and effectively as a member of a team.
- Ability to read and understand financial information.
- Ability and willingness to positively represent the organisation.
- The confidence and insight to make positive contributions to board discussions through effective communication and being able to work with other trustees to guide and steer Detention Action effectively, with clarity and vision.
- A willingness to share your experiences where you feel able to, and to learn from fellow board members.
- Experience of strategic thinking and of setting monitoring and reviewing plans.
- An understanding of the risks that might affect an organisation like Detention Action.
- Ability to review organisational policies and practices.
- Understanding of the role of Trustee and the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities this involves.

- Commitment to prepare for and attend all Trustee meetings during the year, unless otherwise unable to do so.

Please note that no previous trustee experience is needed. We are keen to talk to anyone interested who can demonstrate the ability to think strategically and has the integrity to take on this important role. Please do not be discouraged if this is not something you have done before, or if you do not meet all elements of the role specification - Detention Action can provide relevant training, if needed, to help all trustees to understand what is expected of them.

Please consider applying if you have the time, the interest and enthusiasm to encourage, challenge and support us to be the best we can be.

How to Apply

Please email your CV and a covering letter stating why you would like to become a Detention Action Trustee and how you meet the requirements of the role to recruitment@detentionaction.org.uk **by 12th March 2026**. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an interview with some of our existing Trustees and members of our staff team.

Important Notes

As a Trustee of the charity:

- You would be liable for a sum, not exceeding £10, as a contribution to the assets of the charity in the event of its being wound up, and this will be throughout your time as a trustee and for one year after ceasing to be a trustee.
- You consent to the charity maintaining and processing your personal data and details for all its governance purposes.
- If you resign from your role, you consent to your personal data and details to be retained for a period of six years, plus the financial year at the time of resignation.
- Your details may need to be shared with some of our service providers, such as banks and financial service companies. This would require sharing identification and proof of address documents, and you may be subject to a credit check.

We want to ensure that this role is as open and inclusive as possible, so please get in touch with us to discuss any support you may require in relation to the role.

We look forward to hearing from you.