



Mary  
Seacole  
House

# TRUSTEE APPLICATION PACK

An introduction to becoming a member of the Board at Mary Seacole House



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# A note from the Chair

## Would you be the perfect addition to our Board of Trustees?

We are looking for committed new team members to join the Board of Trustees at Mary Seacole House, Merseyside's leading wellbeing service for Black and racialised communities.

As a small local charity, we punch well above our weight, serving communities across Liverpool – from our weekly schedule of drop-in activities in the heart of Toxteth, to our culturally appropriate advocacy service in psychiatric units and prisons across the city region. Our services are designed with the ethos of 'same rights, different needs' - recognising that mental health and wellbeing do not exist in a vacuum but are influenced by the world around us – a world in which racialised disadvantage, oppression and discrimination are still pervasive.

Mary Seacole House benefits from a long-standing and committed staff team, though since the retirement of the CEO of 20+ years and some longer-standing trustees, we're working through a tricky period of transition. To support us to navigate these changes, we have commissioned two brilliant co-CEOs on an interim basis, who are already doing an excellent job in identifying and navigating key challenges, modernising systems, and laying the best possible foundation for a new permanent leader. We are hoping that new trustees can join us in this effort, forming a strong and stable system for leadership and governance moving forward.

The challenges and opportunities that we face at Mary Seacole House will need a skilled and dedicated team of trustees, with a passion for the role we play in tackling racial injustices in mental health. At this particular time, trustees are expected to go above and beyond the usual one meeting per month: There are big decisions to be made, funding to be won, a new CEO to recruit and a staff team needing leadership and support. We need folks who are ready to roll up their sleeves and get stuck in, pitching in with their professional expertise, while also being ready to learn new areas of charity law, pick up new skills and seek appropriate advice as and when needs call.

Specifically, we are looking for trustees with experience of Board-level leadership, finance, HR, service development and bid writing. Experienced chairs and potential treasurers are particularly encouraged to apply.

Of course, as a charity serving racialised communities, we particularly welcome applicants with direct experience of racism and/or xenophobia, though we welcome all applicants with a demonstrable understanding of, and commitment to dismantling, racism in the UK.

**If this sounds like you, please email the interim co-CEO [dawn.tolcher@maryseacolehouse.com](mailto:dawn.tolcher@maryseacolehouse.com) to request the briefing pack. You can also book a quick phone call with Dawn to chat through the roles and commitment [here](#).**

# Introduction to Mary Seacole House

Mary Seacole House is a pioneering institution dedicated to providing comprehensive support and advocacy for individuals from racialised & refugee/asylum seeker communities to improve their health & wellbeing. Rooted in evidence-based practices & cultural sensitivity, we are committed to addressing the unique challenges faced by this community. Our organisation strives for equity, inclusivity, & empowerment, ensuring that every individual receives the care & resources they deserve while also standing in solidarity by influencing policy.

Nestled in the heart of Liverpool, Mary Seacole House stands as a beacon of hope & healing for the community it serves. Established with a profound commitment to mental health support, Mary Seacole House provides a safe haven for individuals navigating the complexities of mental health challenges. Beyond its welcoming façade, Mary Seacole House embodies a sanctuary where compassion, understanding, & empowerment flourish. With a dedicated team & a comprehensive range of services, Mary Seacole House is a cornerstone of resilience, fostering an environment where individuals can embark on their journeys towards well-being & recovery.

Founded in 1991 on a legacy of compassion & resilience, Mary Seacole House draws inspiration from the indomitable spirit of Mary Seacole herself. This institution's roots trace back to a fervent desire to offer equitable mental health support to Liverpool's historic Black community. Witnessing too many people with mental ill health going without appropriate services, being sectioned & hospitalised far from family, being misdiagnosed & mistreated, The Granby Mental Health Group set up Mary Seacole House specifically to meet the needs of the racialised & immigrant communities in Liverpool's L8.

With values deeply rooted in empathy, dignity, & holistic care, Mary Seacole House remains dedicated to ensuring every person who walks through its doors experiences a sense of belonging & finds the support they need to thrive.

Currently the core services include:

- The multicultural wellbeing service (or 'day service') - a drop-in service offering support for individuals & families to improve their health & wellbeing, access health services & tackle welfare issues through education, information & signposting.
- The advocacy hub - supporting individuals to understand their rights around housing, employment & other issues intersecting with their mental health, as well as in specific situations such as after being detained under the Mental Health Act & in prison.

Service leads are supported by a small team of coordinators, support workers & volunteers.

**Read more about Mary Seacole House:**

- [Website](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Annual Report 2021/22](#)



# Role Description

Mary Seacole House is a registered charity with the Charity Commission of England and Wales. The organisation is governed by a Board of Trustees, made up of between 6 and 12 members from a range of professional and life experiences.

Mary Seacole is seeking up to three new trustees who are passionate about Mary Seacole House's mission and can contribute their expertise to its effective leadership and governance. This is an exciting opportunity to have a meaningful impact in an organisation embarking on a significant chapter of change.

## Key challenges and opportunities

- **Transitional period** – Through this period of change, it's vital we can bring stability to the areas of strength at Mary Seacole House, while taking the opportunity to review and refresh systems that need updating.
- **Income security** - As the leading, and often the only local charity offering the tailored support that we do, Mary Seacole House has been a trusted provider of several significant local authority contracts, which have become the backbone of our funding. Of course, this comes with risks as council budgets are squeezed, so a key objective over the coming months and years will be income diversification and stabilisation.
- **Service development and full-cost recovery** – To strengthen our financial basis, and deliver the best for our service users, we need to ensure an accurate and strategic approach to bid-writing and budgeting, as well as developing new service offers to support income diversification.

## Key responsibilities

### All trustees:

- Ensure that Mary Seacole House is run in accordance with the decisions of the Board and the Articles of Association (governing document), as well as in compliance with charity law.
- Provide regular support to the CEO and senior management team
- Work with trustees and CEO to develop and ensure delivery against organisational strategy
- Work with trustees to prepare for Board and committee meetings and ensure that business is covered efficiently and effectively in those meetings
- Take on appropriate responsibilities as an officer or committee member, eg finance & risk, safeguarding or secretary.



**Chair (in addition to the above, the Chair would be expected to):**

- Ensure Board meetings are scheduled, planned and facilitated effectively, working with trustees, CEO and relevant staff to prepare and circulate papers, plan a suitable agenda and make space for appropriate discussion and decision-making.
- Work closely with the CEO to give direction to Board policy-making and to ensure that meetings are well planned, meaningful and reflect the responsibilities of trustees
- Provide line management support and accountability for the CEO.
- Liaise with the CEO to maintain an overview of the Charity's affairs, providing support as necessary
- Support the development, performance and accountability of trustees.

**Treasurer (in addition to the above, the Chair would be expected to):**

- Work with the CEO to ensure timely, accurate and accessible financial reporting is shared with trustees, with support for those with less financial experience to meaningfully engage.
- Ensure appropriate financial policy and protocols are developed, understood and implemented effectively.
- Work with the CEO, Chair and auditors to ensure appropriate financial reporting to the Charity Commission and Companies House.

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

This is a voluntary role, although reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.

We usually hold meetings online, but particularly welcome applications from those based in Liverpool, who can meet in-person occasionally and see our service on-the-ground.

The time commitment is approximately 4 hours per month - 2 hours for Board meetings and prep, plus work with committees etc.

Trustees are expected to serve a term of 2 years, with the chance of renewal.



# Who we're looking for

We are looking for committed volunteers, ready to roll up their sleeves and make a big difference to an important charity. We're looking for folks with an understanding of the rich cultural heritage & historic struggles of Liverpool's Black, racialised & immigrant communities & demonstrable commitment to addressing the inequities in service provision, experience & outcomes for those groups.

If you meet 70% of the criteria & aren't sure whether you fit the bill, please still apply. We understand not everyone will meet all the requirements, but you may also have skills we didn't know we needed, or lived experiences that are as valuable as professional or academic expertise. We're more than happy to talk through the role with you and work out how you could contribute.

## Experience

(all desirable – if you're not sure if you're the right fit, organise a call to talk it through):

- Leadership experience, particularly experience as a Chair, trustee and/or CEO or director.
- Professional experience that we are currently missing at Board level, specifically: finance, HR, service development and bid writing.
- Lived experience of racism, migration and/or accessing mental health services. We are particularly keen to welcome trustees from the L8 area and/or with a deep understanding of the rich cultural and historical context that Mary Seacole House operates within.

## Skills:

- Team working and the ability to meaningfully contribute to group decision-making in the best interests of Mary Seacole House
- Digital competence including the use of Microsoft 365
- Sound judgement backed up by scrutiny and application of charity law, governing documents, organisational policies and resources.



In addition to the above, we would expect the **Chair** to have skills in:

- Facilitation, to support meaningful engagement of all trustees in meetings and decisions
- Leadership and governance, including strategy development, risk management and charity law.
- Line management, particularly as we welcome a new permanent CEO and support them to settle into their role

In addition to the above, we would expect the **Treasurer** to have skills in:

- Financial management, including accounting, budgeting and forecasting, with the ability to present financial reports in an accessible way to trustees with less experience
- Accuracy and attention to detail, with the ability to ask tough questions and raise concerns as appropriate.

### **Attributes:**

- Demonstrable commitment to anti-racism
- Understanding of the rich history of L8 and the communities we serve
- Commitment to safeguarding of service users
- In line with our safeguarding policy, this role is subject to an enhanced DBS check. Prior convictions will not automatically exclude any candidate, but please feel free to chat this through if you're unsure.

**To talk through the role and begin your application, please email the interim co-CEO, Dawn Tolcher - dawn.tolcher@maryseacolehouse.com - to organise an introduction.**

Volunteer

“Since I moved to the UK on 12/2015, I had that feeling that I am lost. Being in a place without friends and family is too hard. Can't find words to explain my relation with MSH, which converted from being volunteering to charity to become like being surrounded by my family. Emotional support I got from MSH is unexplainable, even the personal support. Thanks MSH for being in my life.”

**Mohamed Abdi -**  
*Mary Seacole House*  
*Service User*

“Mary Seacole House has made sure that I have a place to attend for the last 12 years. The staff have ensured that I stay well, which has enabled me to stay out of hospital. The services Mary Seacole House provides.

es has made sure I have access to many charitable services. These services help with benefits, housing, well-being services.

The main services are all interconnected to mental health to benefit services, which take a lot of pressure off myself. Which means I stay in the community, not become a revolving door patient.”



## Application process

As a starting point, please email the interim co-CEO, Dawn Tolcher - [dawn.tolcher@maryseacolehouse.com](mailto:dawn.tolcher@maryseacolehouse.com) - to organise an introduction. After an initial introduction, we'll gather further information and references, before a brief interview with other trustees.

This is a rolling recruitment, so please apply at the earliest opportunity. We will keep the application open until we find the right candidates.