

Listening Volunteers Meeting

27 Mar 2024

Present – Chris, Giancarlo, Sean, Mai, Maya, Luna, Matt, Julian, Sam
Josh Tatyana, Neil, Martin, Chris Birch, Greg, Lucy

Introductions + pronouns

Presentation – Giancarlo – Switchboard Board of Trustees

Originally from Rome, living in UK 13 years. Based in London and Brighton. Work in international development for Plan International, to advance children's rights and wellbeing and girls in particular. Came into the sector as a volunteer. From Uni he volunteered in a foster home/shelter for under 5s. Studying law, but charity work took over focus so not doing law now. Lived in Brazil, teaching IT and languages to young people.



Did a master's in international development and human rights. Moved to London to get experience and stayed, eventually marrying. Moved around a lot from one charity to another and gained a great deal of insight.

Being a trustee was a further challenge. Adds to who he is as a professional and helps him relate to his own trustees. Wanted to work in LGBTQI+ space and there was a vacancy at Switchboard.

Giancarlo is part of governance subcommittee.

As a trustee, we are responsible for strategic direction, finance stability, compliance with charities commission. Ensuring the charity is delivering activities that support its mission. CEO is accountable to the board.

Trustees are all volunteers, meeting bimonthly and adhoc.

Actively looking for TNBI people and POC to address lack of and underrepresentation on the board. Please do get in touch if you are interested. (Chris can help with that.)

Questions:

Number of trustees: currently 9 but can have more. Have 3 current vacancies.

Application process: interview regarding your understanding and commitment to our mission, plus relevant experience. Then coopted to join the board and then voted on at the AGM, by the members (all the volunteers).

Giancarlo asked what it was like taking calls. General discussion ensued with several volunteers sharing their experiences, rewards and challenges.

Two questions came up which we were not sure of and I will get back to you all with the answers, namely:

1. Does board recruitment also follow our “by and for” rules for staff and other volunteers. I.e. are they required to identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community?
2. Does being a board member exclude you from volunteering in other ways such as helpline listener, or rainbow neighbour?

It was a pleasure to meet Giancarlo and get to know him a little bit and to be able to share our thoughts and experiences.

It's great to get to know all the trustees over time. Volunteers did emphasise that, in order to make the AGM voting process meaningful, it is essential that there is an opportunity to somehow get to know future candidates in more depth than is possible in a 15-minute mixer before voting.

Rest of meeting

Social Events: Is anyone else interested in being part of this planning group? Sam Lau has joined. Thanks Sam.

Next activity:

16th April – going to a show at Brighton Uni.

switchboard
Volunteer Social
Ray Young: Out

The Stage ★★★★★
The Scotsman ★★★★★
Broadway Baby ★★★★★
Ed Fest Magazine ★★★★★
Everything Theatre ★★★★★

**Winner of the 2017 South East Dance 'A Place to Dance'
Brighton Fringe Award**

OUT is a duet, a conversation between two bodies, reclaiming Dancehall and celebrating queerness amongst the bittersweet scent of oranges. An interdisciplinary performance inspired by ongoing global struggles for LGBTQIA+ rights, OUT is a defiant challenge to the status quo. Bravely embracing personal, political and cultural dissonance, this work smashes through our violent colonial histories to reimagine, reclaim and celebrate our delicious queer future.

**Tuesday 16 April, 8:00pm
Attenborough Centre for
the Creative Arts,
Uni of Sussex, BN1 9RA**

Safeguarding Procedure: Update and questions.

Logging all calls: Chris – regarding unlogged calls

Requests for future volunteer meetings: Is there something you'd like to see at meetings or some specific training you could use?

Suicide Training – ASIST – Chris to research further

Check In: How is everyone? Any feedback from new volunteers?
Challenges in general?

Actions: Template email for people outside of the UK for migrants.
Reuben Davidson will create this for us.