

Front and centre: From lived experience to leadership

Summary

Our 'Front and centre' strategy aims to transfer 'ownership' of Together Now to those with lived experience by 2025. This includes those with lived experience of the family reunion process but also asylum and migration.

Principles

- People with lived experience of family reunion also have a lot to offer to the future of Together Now
- Together Now will be better able to serve refugee families if it is run by those with lived experience
- People with lived experience will be treated as any other board member or volunteer but given support as needed to contribute fully

Background

Together Now believe all refugee families should be reunited if they wish. For 10 years we have provided services to support refugee family reunion with a small group of volunteers. In our 11th year our case numbers rose dramatically, and we supported more clients than ever before.

We now provide a range of support services to refugees across the UK and have processes that allow us to be responsive to the needs of individual families. We use informal peer mentors, interpreters and have a network of people supporting others in their community to be reunited with family members.

However, the board membership has remained largely the same since 2010 and there is currently no representation from anyone with lived experience of family reunion.

Activities

To help us move towards our target we will start with:

1. Recruiting and training board members with lived experience.
2. Creating informal network of informal peer mentors and providing training.

3. Developing volunteer interpreters to contribute to their finding paid work.
4. Ongoing collection of client feedback to shape our services.

Milestones

January 2022: All clients contacted with invite to be involved in Together Now and process set up to include this in follow up for new clients.

September 2022: One or more board members with lived experience actively participating in running the organisation.

June 2023: Review of Front and Centre strategy

September 2023: Co-produced plan in place and actively recruiting and manage peer mentors

June 2024: Co-produced plan for board development

September 2024: Robust team of peer mentors recruited and trained with pipeline of future mentors established.

June 2025: Those with lived experience forming the majority of the board and being well equipped to run Together Now in the long term.