

Trustee Recruitment Pack



A welcome from our chair

Thank you so much for considering joining our board of trustees. You will be joining a committed and active board who share their diverse experiences, skills and expertise to ensure that the vitally important work of the Belong network supports communities and local places across the UK.

The forces of polarisation and division in the UK are growing and we are living increasingly segregated lives. Social mixing is one of the most powerful means of reducing prejudice and promoting empathy across difference. Yet contact between societal groups is limited. Although the pandemic saw many examples of kindness and community mobilisation, Belong's own **research findings** reveal that this was relatively short lived. As we emerge from the crisis, there is an urgent need for policy and programmes to build a stronger, more resilient and cohesive society.



Belong's vision is a more connected and less divided society. We are building a network and movement of leaders, organisations and communities. We provide them with the skills, capacity, knowledge, inspiration and courage to tackle divisions and polarisation and to address societal challenges together.

If the pandemic has shown us anything it has demonstrated our mutual interdependence and interconnectedness. We rely on each other. Social cohesion concerns us all; it is an everyone everywhere issue. Maintaining and strengthening our social bonds particularly across boundaries of difference is something that we all need to be engaged in, and vital for building a good society.

We are looking for passionate, committed and effective leaders across all sectors to join our board and work with us and our members to build a diverse, cohesive and equitable society. We very much look forward to your application and hope you will join us.

Ted Cantle

Chair of Belong's Board of Trustees

Who we are

Belong –The Cohesion and Integration Network is a charity and membership organisation founded in November 2018. Our vision is for a more integrated and less divided society. Belong is the UK's leading membership organisation on social cohesion and integration, offering academic research, consultancy, training, networking, thought leadership and events for members across the public, private and charitable sectors.

We think social cohesion and integration are everybody's business. Strong social connections, trust and bonds between different groups and communities, in our neighbourhoods, workplaces, institutions and public spaces help to develop a stronger, inclusive and resilient society. One where difference is welcomed and celebrated, and where harmful divisions, discrimination and inequalities are tackled.

We are proud to have our home in Manchester. We are a growing membership network with over 140 members across the private, public and civil society sectors, including founding members Manchester City Council and Savannah Wisdom Foundation. Together with our members we are building social connections, trust and social cohesion across the UK.



A worker bee statue in Belong's home town of Manchester - a symbol of unity in the city

Why our work is needed

Pre-Covid reports highlighted growing divisions across the UK, with 105,090 hate crimes recorded in 2019/20, an 8% rise on the previous year. Social mixing, fostering strong connections and trust is one of the most powerful ways of reducing prejudice, tackling divisions, and promoting empathy between different groups, but even before the pandemic it was limited. The 2019 British Integration Survey revealed that 44% of Brits have no contact with people from a different ethnicity.



The early days of the pandemic saw many inspiring examples of mutual aid, kindness, and connection. However, Belong's own **research** reveals that this was relatively short lived: divisions increased until June 2021, when 64% of respondents perceived the UK as becoming more divided. There is cause for optimism: the same research found local areas that had prioritised social cohesion reported higher levels of trust, neighbourliness, social connection, active social engagement, and more positive attitudes towards others (including migrants).

As we emerge from the crisis, old divisions and tensions have surfaced and we face huge social, economic, and environmental challenges. In an increasingly polarised and divided UK, there is an urgent need for action to bring people together and to challenge divisive narratives. As a nation, we need the skills, capacity, knowledge, leaders and networks to develop resilient, empowered communities that are able to take on complex societal challenges, including those presented by the climate crisis.

Belong is a cross sectoral network with UK-wide reach that speaks to issues of national significance and as you will read below we have achieved a huge amount in our first three years, despite the challenges of the pandemic.

We are now looking for enthusiastic, engaged and committed trustees to help us grow and to shape the next stage of our journey.

Our Plans for the future

Over the next three years we are committed to:

1. **Growing a thriving cross sector coalition of businesses, local authorities, civil society and public sector organisations who are actively fostering strong social connections and trust between different groups.** In 2022 we are particularly focused on expanding our offer across the north through building stronger, more active networks, increasing the scope for collaboration and sharing of best practice, and enabling a stronger collective voice on social cohesion.
2. **Strengthening people and leadership through building their skills, capacity, influence and networks to tackle division and discrimination, and build common ground via an inspiring and stimulating programme of events, training, and consultancy.** We are establishing and supporting a number of new 'communities of practice' (COPs). Led by our members these are collaborative networks within which organisations with a shared focus can come together to learn from one another and to develop their thinking and practice. This year we have begun by establishing COPs for local government, for sport and cohesion and for organisations with a focus on race and faith hate crime. In autumn 2022 we will be holding our flagship conference for Belong members, thought leaders and practitioners in the cohesion and integration sector, to network and share best practice.
3. **Providing practical applicable resources for building strong inclusive and resilient communities based on the latest research and evidence of what works.** This year we will be utilising the rich data set we have collated as a part of our Beyond Us and Them research project to develop best practice guidance on how **volunteering** can best support social cohesion, in collaboration with Shaping the Future, the coalition of volunteering involved organisations. Building on the launch of The Power of Sport online toolkit we will be working with our members and the wider sports sector to embed principles of cohesion and inclusion into the design and delivery of **sports and physical activity** interventions. We will be further developing Everybody's Business on the role **business** can play in promoting stronger social connections locally.
4. **Continuing to work with our members and the wider sector to influence key policy agendas that impact cohesion and integration.** Building on our research, evidence and the collective experience and impact of our members we will continue to feed into key policy areas, enabling a stronger **collective voice** on social connection work that brings people, communities and places together.

More information about our network and our [Vision, Mission and Values](#) can be found [here](#).

Just some of what we achieved in the last year

- We launched our **Power of Sport** digital toolkit, developed with sports organisations and in conjunction with Sport England and Spirit of 2012 to support sports and physical activities to maximise their impact on local community cohesion. Over 100 people attended the **launch** in December 2021 to find out more.
- We produced ground-breaking research (**Beyond Us and Them**) which for the first time demonstrates that a modest investment in strengthening social connections, trust and neighbourliness in local places can bring substantial individual and community level benefits and help communities to be resilient in a time of crisis. This research has been shared and referenced widely including via SAGE, Government Office Science, and in the British Academy's 'The Covid Decade' Report.
- We delivered our **Radical Kindness** programme, including hosting Radical Kindness Week in May 2021. This project highlighted and celebrated the work of individuals and organisations across the country who engaged in strengthening social connections and bridging divides at a time when it was never more necessary.
- We published **Together We Can Achieve Unity**, a report highlighting and sharing the excellent practice of nine organisations working in different ways to tackle race and faith hate crime. Belong presented the paper to an online webinar that was hosted by Lord Stephen Greenhalgh, Minister for Communities.
- We supported Belong members including facilitating unusual and surprising community conversations; bespoke training and consultancy packages; support with development of local strategy and plans and research and evaluation services.
- Via our webinars and training programme we strengthened our engagement with our members and wider stakeholders. Over the year we ran 16 online events with nearly 800 attendees.



Do you have what we're looking for?

We are looking for Trustees to join our board who will:

- Be enthusiastic ambassadors for the network, who can advocate for work which bridges societal divides and fosters strong connections in communities, workplaces and society more widely.
- Be willing to promote the cause of integration and cohesion across their own sector and more widely.
- Be committed to the vision and mission of the charity and able to leverage their own networks and connections to raise the profile of the Network.
- Bring experience and knowledge of sectors and / or communities currently underrepresented on our **board of trustees** and more broadly in British society.
- Bring marketing expertise and / or fundraising expertise and experience. We would particularly welcome a Trustee with these skills..
- Have governance experience and be familiar with the 6 main duties of a charity trustee as set out in the Charity Commission Guidance <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee-whats-involved#trustees-6-main-duties>



Time Commitment

The time commitment for a Belong trustee is expected to be 6 days per year.

- The term of a member of the board is three years, after which board members may be re-elected.
 - The Board meets at least 6 times a year (bi-monthly board meetings, and an annual strategic review).
 - Trustees are expected to plan to attend all meetings. At the moment the board of trustees meets mainly online, but we would hope for the board to convene in person at least once a year for an annual strategic board day.
 - In addition to Board Meetings, other contact –usually electronic or by telephone –will be necessary.
 - Our trustees can also get involved in various roles for the charity for example acting as an ambassador, spokesperson and expert advisor.
-

Recruitment Process

Charity People is our recruitment partner. Please send your CV and short cover letter (no more than two sides) to Tiku van Houtem tiku@charitypeople.co.uk The closing date for applications is 6th June 2022.

If you are shortlisted you will be invited to an informal interview with the Chair of the Trustees and the Chief Executive to discuss the role. This is an opportunity for you to fully understand the organisation and the role. If you are successful you will then be invited to observe a board meeting after which you will be formally recommended for adoption onto the board.

www.belongnetwork.co.uk

Twitter: [@BelongNetwork](https://twitter.com/BelongNetwork)

LinkedIn: [Belong -The Cohesion and Integration Network](#)

Belong -The Cohesion and Integration Network, Holyoake House,
Suites TF1 and TF2, Third Floor, Hanover Street, Manchester, M60 0AS

Telephone: 07503652488

