

## **Diversity, Equality and Inclusion at the Asylum Support Appeals Project - increasing the voices of those with lived experience of asylum support**

### **Consultant Specification May 2022**

#### **1. Introduction**

The Asylum Support Appeals Project (ASAP) is a small national charity with 11 staff, 45 volunteers and 12 trustees. We reduce destitution amongst people seeking asylum in the UK in three ways:

- We offer free legal representation to those who have applied for financial support or accommodation from the Home Office, have been refused/ had support withdrawn and are appealing. This is short-term advice for up to a week before the appeal, to the day of the appeal itself.
- We offer training and support to advisors around the UK assisting people to apply for asylum support through an advice line, an online google group, online factsheets/briefings/ guides, and e-learning courses/ webinars.
- We challenge unlawful Home Office policies and practices through policy work and strategic litigation.

ASAP's focus is on asylum support – housing or financial support for people seeking asylum, while other solicitors across the UK help people to submit their asylum claims.

ASAP has identified, as one of its key internal goals within its [strategic plan 2019-24](#), the need to increase the voices of those with lived experience of asylum support, across the organisation. ASAP is looking for consultants with expertise in diversity, equality and inclusion, to:

- a. carry out an audit of where ASAP is with this work,
- b. deliver training to staff and trustees, and
- c. support us to develop an action plan of recommended next steps.

ASAP would like to broaden out the scope of the work to look at diversity, equality and inclusion across the organisation, as well as a specific focus on those with lived experience of asylum support. While we recognise that the two are distinct, we think there is benefit to reviewing both.

#### **2. Background**

Because of ASAP's niche focus on asylum support, we define 'lived experience' as those who have experience of living on asylum support in the UK (support provided by the Home Office). We do not restrict our definition of 'lived experience' to those who have appealed against a refusal of support, although this is ASAP's specific focus, because this would reduce the pool of those we could involve to a very small one.

From 2019-21, ASAP has focused on increasing the voices of those with lived experience at a Trustee level, as a starting point. We have recruited 3 trustees with lived experience of asylum support, who all bring significant skills and expertise to the board. Although ASAP's staff team includes those from a range of ages, genders and nationalities, we do not have a wide range of ethnicities on our staff team, and none of our team has lived experience of the asylum support system.

Most of the people we assist to appeal against a refusal of financial support or accommodation are at a point of crisis, because they are facing destitution when we see them. Although we do seek feedback from those we assist, and use this feedback to influence our service delivery, we would like to explore other methods of engaging people in influencing our service's priorities, particularly once they have resolved their insecure housing. We tend to focus on issues related to eligibility for support (eg trying to ensure people can access the support they are entitled to), rather than issues for those in receipt of support (eg poor quality accommodation/ low levels of financial support).

### **3. What we are looking for**

We would like to find consultants with experience of diversity, equality and inclusion within the charity sector. We are looking for consultants to:

- a. Deliver training to our staff team of 11 on diversity, equality and inclusion, including a focus on recruitment practices (by September 22) and advise us on suitable training for future joiners.
- b. Deliver training to our 12 trustees, including a focus on trustees' roles and responsibilities in DEI (by November 22).
- c. Carry out an audit of ASAP's current equality, diversity and inclusion by December 22. Within this:
  - i. analyse ASAP's policies and procedures
  - ii. interview staff/ trustees as appropriate
  - iii. consider how to bring in views of those making use of ASAP's services into this audit in a way that is appropriate given the level of insecurity in peoples' lives at the point of our interaction with them, and the very short term nature of our interaction.

The audit should include a specific focus on those with lived experience of asylum support, including an analysis of how ASAP is doing with:

- The trustee board
  - The staff team
  - The volunteer team
  - Service delivery
  - Engaging experts by experience
- d. Write a report, summarising the findings of the audit by January 2023, with recommendations for potential areas of development, including a focus on recruitment, leadership, organisational culture and practices around diversity and inclusivity (eg to ensure accessibility for staff and volunteers), communications, service user involvement and methods of developing input from experts by experience.

#### **4. Timeframes**

- a. Deadlines for applications from consultants: 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022
- b. Decision made by: 15<sup>th</sup> July
- c. Consultants start August – September 22
- d. Training complete by Sep 22 (staff) / Nov 22 (Trustees)
- e. Audit complete by December 22
- f. Report, action plan and recommendations complete by February 23
- g. Budget: £7,000 approx including VAT – please cost individual elements in point 3.

#### **5. Application process**

**Please send a written outline of your proposal, by 23:59 on 1<sup>st</sup> July, outlining:**

- Your success in supporting charities/ non-profit organisations to develop their thinking on diversity, equality and inclusion.
- Your experience and understanding of the issues specific to increasing the voices of those seeking asylum in the UK, within service delivery organisations.
- How would you deliver each of the elements outlined in point 3 of this document, to the timeframes specified and given the very short interaction ASAP has with people?
- The proposed budget breakdown

We will mark applications against the above criteria and will seek references to confirm the quality of your previous work.

Please send completed applications to: [kat@asaproject.org.uk](mailto:kat@asaproject.org.uk)