



Trustees
Candidate Pack
Autumn 2021

About Room to Heal

Room to Heal is a grassroots community charity supporting survivors of torture and human rights violations who are refugees and asylum seekers. We provide a programme of therapy, casework and broader activities to assist people in overcoming the legacy of their traumatic experiences whilst navigating the practical challenges of life in exile.

The Room to Heal community is made up of around 100 people from over 30 different countries, all of whom have survived torture or other human rights abuses. Typically, they have lost their homes, their families and their place of belonging in the world. The common legacy of these experiences includes depression and suicidality, extreme isolation, traumatic symptoms including flashbacks and sleeplessness, and a range of other enduring physical and mental health problems.

The day-to-day struggles of our members exacerbate the above. Our members can find themselves in limbo: waiting for an asylum decision, in fear of detention or removal to the countries they fled and often threatened with homelessness and destitution.

Our mission: To support people who have survived torture and human rights abuse to rebuild their lives in exile through an integrated, community-based programme of therapeutic and casework assistance

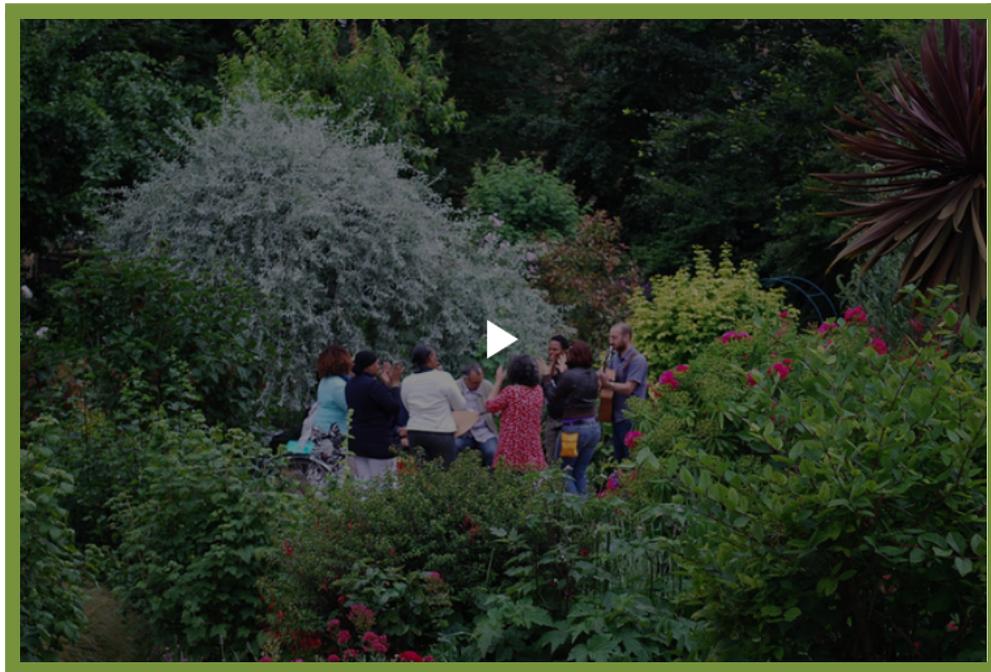


Our approach

Room to Heal's model, which combines therapeutic, casework and community support, addresses an unmet need in London and more widely. We believe that belonging to a mutually supportive community of survivors is central to healing from extreme violence, and the traumas of exile: people gain support and strength from one another. Our approach is holistic, taking into account nuanced and subjective individual needs.

A number of organisations tackle trauma symptoms and offer casework assistance - valuable services which can improve the quality of life of vulnerable people. However, very few work at the depth we do. We know from evaluations and observations that our community confers meaning to people where hope has been lost, and makes a profound and lasting impact.

Our staff have extensive experience of working with refugees and vulnerable and marginalised communities, and are continually upgrading their knowledge and skills.



[A short film](#) about Room to Heal: 10 years of creating community and restoring life after violence

What our members say

It is the positive transformation of individual lives that we witness daily that ultimately pays testament to the value of Room to Heal's approach. Our diverse, vibrant community continues to be a beacon of hope and inspiration for all who come into contact with it.



"Before I be part of RTH it was almost impossible for me to speak openly to other people, I was very negative, sad and depressed. Just after one year at the group I felt a lot of changing - I start to speak and express how i feel, I become less negative and having good time within the community at RTH. It gave me confidence and feeling of being part of community - not rejected."



"When I first came to Room to Heal, I was completely lost. This place changed everything. I came back to life again. Room to Heal is my family, my home. I feel so proud to be a part of it."



"At Room to Heal you are not a patient, or a reference number, you are a human being."



"Room to heal has helped me with soo many things which I could spend all day writing. If it wasn't Room to heal! I had lost hope. I was about to give up with my life when was introduced to them. They check on me by calling when I feel low. They make sure I have something to eat in this pandemic. I am warm. I don't feel lonely, every Tuesday I go on Zoom meeting and talk to my sisters and brothers. I thank you Room to Heal."



"Life is nothing except for love... all this I learnt from the group."

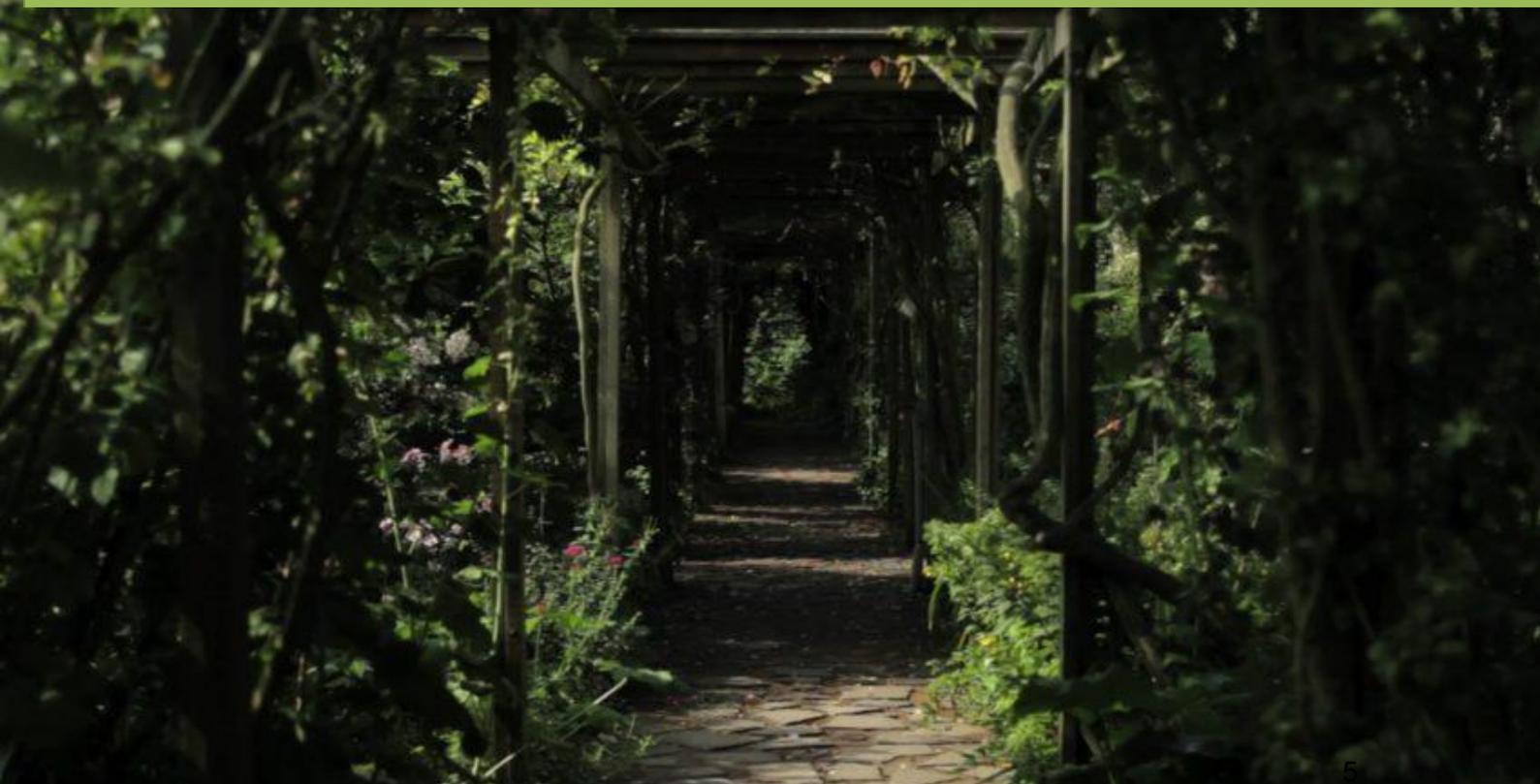


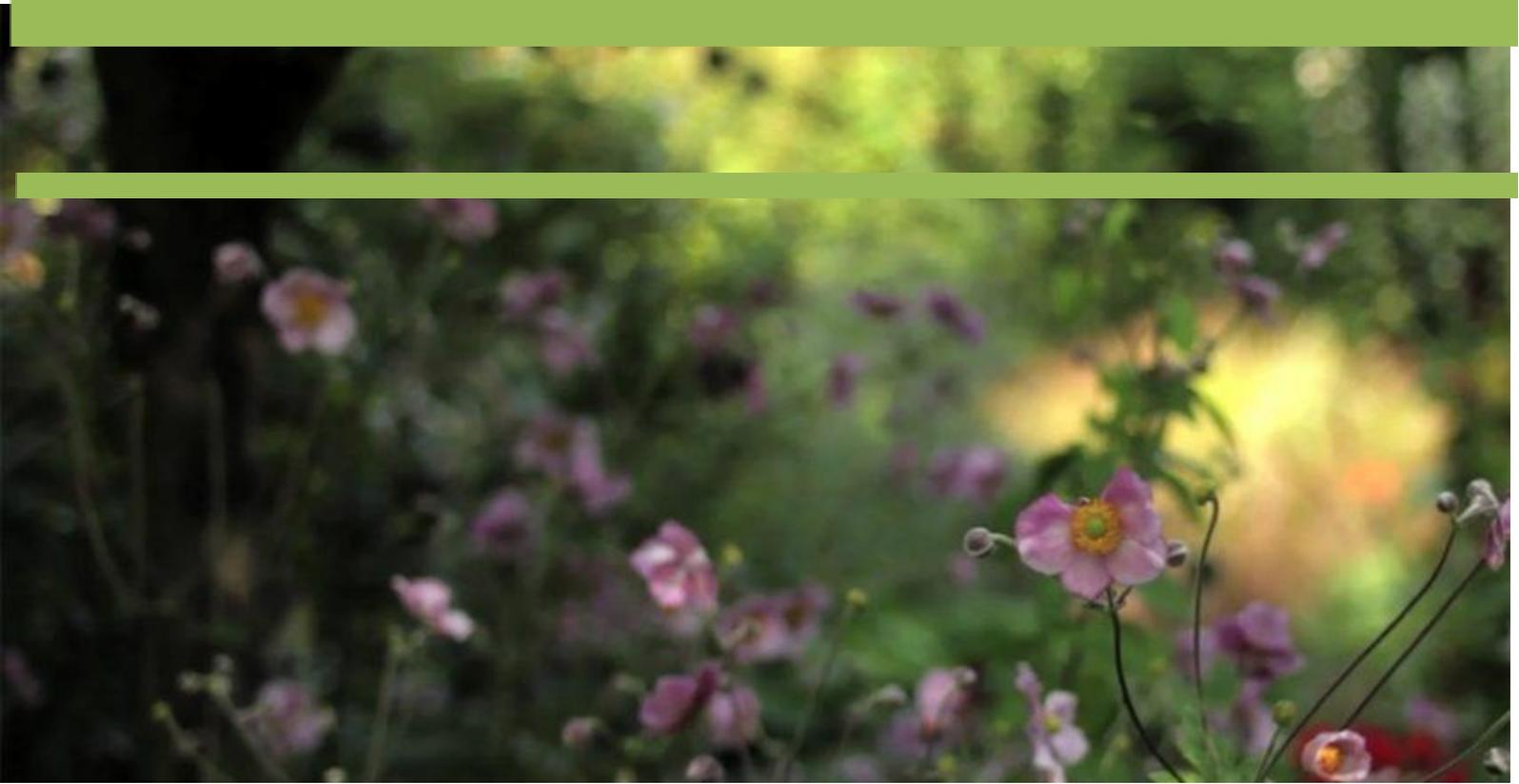
Our achievements

Over 2020 Room to Heal **supported 112 people**. 105 of these individuals were supported with casework and 65 people were provided with individual therapy and/ or group therapy. The 2508 completed casework sessions prevented homelessness, food poverty, destitution as well as improving access to education/ training and helping individuals to navigate the asylum process with appropriate legal advice.

Our key achievements over the last year are best described through the results of our Annual Members' Survey, which showed high levels of positive change:

- 100% of respondents felt therapeutic support had been helpful and that their mental health had improved as a result of being part of Room to Heal.
- 100% of respondents felt more able to deal with the effects of trauma including depression and anxiety, with 89% reporting an improvement in symptoms such as panic attacks, flashbacks and sleeplessness.
- 100% felt more positive about the future, less isolated/ lonely and more listened to.





Our members have overcome trauma to become active members of the wider community: volunteering, studying, teaching, and building meaningful lives. Our integrated community approach continues to serve as a 'lifeline' and 'home' for people even when they have gained status and begun to move forward with their lives.

We have a proven track-record of achievement and are recognised as leading innovators in the field, recognised as 'Charity Champions' by Comic Relief and as having 'Outstanding Impact' by Lloyds TSB. We are also supported by the United Nations and increasingly invited to train others in our approach and share our model and learning with policy makers. Room to Heal is a member of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT).

The role: Trustees

The role

Room to Heal has a strong board, which holds the organisation true to its strategic aims. We are now looking for new board members to bring different experiences, perspectives and leadership. To strengthen Room to Heal's governance, we are particularly interested in recruiting individuals with personal experience of the issues Room to Heal members face.

The new Trustees will work with our existing board and our Director and committed team to provide ongoing strategic vision, ideas and leadership to Room to Heal.

Person specification

As noted above, we are particularly interested in recruiting individuals with personal experience of the issues Room to Heal members face. These include, but are not limited to, being a refugee/person with humanitarian protection, asylum seeker, undocumented migrant or a person with leave to remain based on a human right.

Room to Heal is particularly keen to encourage applicants from as diverse a range of candidates as possible, to better reflect the community we work with.

Experience of supporting individuals who have experienced trauma would be beneficial, and specific skills in human resources, safeguarding, strategic and financial planning and budgeting/fundraising are also desirable. However, we are mostly looking for someone who has the time to commit to actively support Room to Heal, and contribute to the community.

More information about the Room to Heal team can be found on our website –

<https://www.roomtoheal.org/community/>

Time commitment

Board meetings take place via Zoom or in person in North London and are held in the evenings at least 4 times per year. There are additional subgroups that address particular strategic issues at Room to Heal that trustees can also participate in and Room to Heal projects that trustees are encouraged to participate in based on particular needs at the time, for example, one trustee helped set up an anti-racist group at Room to Heal, another trustee was involved in developing a Theory of Change for us.

The role is not remunerated but reasonable expenses are paid.

What difference will you make?

Your work will ensure that our members are able to rebuild their lives in exile through:

- Ensuring the sustainability of Room to Heal
- Enabling best practice in your area of expertise
- Good governance
- Strategic development.

This is an opportunity to offer your skills and experience for the benefit of an organisation which successfully operates as a therapeutic community for torture survivors in London. You would become part of a community made up of people from over 30 countries of all ages and religions united by a common belief in humanity and respect for human rights.

To apply

If you are interested in this role and want to know more, please contact Elli Free on **07515 461745** or via email [**elli.free@roomtoheal.org**](mailto:elli.free@roomtoheal.org)

We want to make this opportunity as accessible as possible and ensure a diverse range of people are able to demonstrate their potential. If you have any questions at all about the role or the processes please contact Elli as above.