



Trustees

Appointment Brief | July 2026

Introduction

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in applying to become a Trustee of the RCN Foundation. I am delighted that you have chosen to find out more about these key roles for the charity. Please find in this pack an overview of the Foundation, a Trustee role description and person specification, and details on how to apply.

We are recruiting as part of a proactive succession planning process to replace two Trustees who will be retiring from the Board in 2027. We are seeking two Trustees with a background in finance and/or investments to join our Board from 1 April 2027. As part of their Trusteeship, one of the successful candidates will also be appointed as the Chair of our Income Generation and Investment (IGI) Committee, which has oversight of the charity's income generation activities including the performance of our investment portfolio and our fundraising activities. A role description for the Chair of the IGI Committee is included in the pack. In addition, the Trustee who is Chair of our IGI Committee will also sit on the [RCN Group Audit Committee](#) which is responsible for overseeing the RCN Group's financial reporting processes, risk management systems, the annual accounts and the internal and external audit programmes.

We are also seeking a second Trustee with a background in finance or accounting to help strengthen the financial skillset on our Board. They will also be expected to sit on our Income Generation and Investment Committee.

This is an opportunity to utilise your financial expertise for a charity that aims to make a tangible difference to the nursing and midwifery workforce.

The RCN Foundation is a charity and grant-maker that supports members of the nursing and midwifery teams (nurses, midwives, Nursing Associates and healthcare support workers) to improve the health and wellbeing of the nation.

Our strategy for 2024-2028, entitled *Ignite, Inspire, Aspire: Our Vision to Transform Lives*, aims to continue the transformational impact of the support provided by the RCN Foundation. During this strategy period we will increase our support in the three core areas of our work – hardship, education, and research and innovation – ensuring that the voices of nursing and midwifery are reflected throughout our work. To read our strategic plan in full, please visit our website: [Our strategy 2024-28](#)

I joined the Board of Trustees in 2019 because I am passionate about the positive difference that the Foundation makes to nursing, midwifery, and health and social care. This is a particularly important time to be joining the RCN Foundation's Board, as we continue to deliver our ambitious strategy and seek to increase our impact. We have plans for the growth and development of our work, and we hope that you will consider joining us at this exciting time.

I look forward to receiving your application.



Professor Dame Jane Cummings
DBE CBE RN

Overview of the RCN Foundation

The RCN Foundation is an independent charity (registered charity number: SC043663 [Scotland]; 1134606 [England and Wales]; registered company: 7026001) and grant-maker which is part of the RCN Group. It was established in 2010, when the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) separated its charitable from its trade union activities. Our purpose is to support and strengthen nursing and midwifery, to improve the health and wellbeing of the nation. The charity supports current and former nurses, midwives, nursing associates, healthcare support workers and students, but they do not need to be a member of the RCN to benefit from our support – the RCN Foundation exists for all nursing and midwifery staff.

We provide support through a high impact programme that includes:

- Support for individuals facing financial hardship through grants and signposting, helping them to recover, rebuild and return to practice where possible.

- Offering education grants to those who want to enhance their skills and develop their practice.
- Funding research and innovation that improves patient care and advances professional practice.

Since our creation in 2010, **we've supported over 11,000** nurses, midwives, nursing associates and healthcare support workers through our hardship and education grants.

During our first 15 years, we have awarded **£4.68 million** in hardship grants, **£2.78 million** in education grants, and nearly **£4 million** in research grants. Our work makes a transformational impact on nursing and midwifery staff, on the care that they provide every day to individuals and communities.

As an organisation, our values are to be: relevant for today and ready for tomorrow; focused on impact; accountable; ambitious; and collaborative.

Further details about our work can be found on our website at www.rcnfoundation.org.uk.



Governance

The Board of Trustees has provision for up to 12 Trustees, four of which must be RCN members. There are three substantive committees of the Board – the Grants Committee, the Income Generation and Investment Committee, and the Governance and Nominations Committee – which meet on a quarterly basis.

The Grants Committee is accountable to the Board for the development and implementation of the grant-making strategy which spans grant-making for hardship and education, nursing-led practice development and research projects; and activities that raise the profile of the profession.

The Income Generation and Investment Committee is accountable to the Board for the development and delivery of the fundraising, marketing and communications strategy, as well as keeping the investment strategy under regular review and monitoring the performance of the investment manager.

The Governance and Nominations Committee is responsible for monitoring the governance arrangements of the Foundation and leads on the recruitment and selection for appointments to the Board and Committees.

To find out more about our governance and our Board of Trustees please visit the [Governance](#) section on our website.

Our income

A significant proportion of the Foundation's income is generated from returns from its investment portfolio. In addition, the Foundation also generates income from a range of fundraising activities throughout the year. You can view our latest accounts on the Foundation's website.

Equity, diversity and inclusion

The RCN Foundation is committed to ensuring that principles of equity, diversity and inclusion underpin our approach to our governance, activities, staff and beneficiaries. We know that equity, diversity and inclusion strengthen the work that we do and lead to better outcomes for our beneficiaries, and greater societal impact. We actively encourage applicants from diverse backgrounds and from all sections of the community to apply for these Trustee roles.

The RCN Group

The RCN Foundation is part of the RCN Group of organisations, which includes:

- The Royal College of Nursing: a membership organisation, trade union and professional body.
- RCN HoldCo Limited: a company that provides personal injury and other legal services.

Each organisation has distinct aims and activities, but have a common thread – supporting, championing and developing the nursing profession – and work together to:

- Promote excellence in all aspects of nursing across health and social care.
- Share best practice.
- Act as the trusted voice of the profession.

The Foundation has a Memorandum of Agreement with the Royal College of Nursing which sets out how the two organisations will work together to support nursing and midwifery and improve care.

Our work to date

Since the Foundation was established, we have made significant progress in the three areas of our work.

Hardship grants

The Foundation's Benevolent Service provides grants, signposting and benefits advice through Entitledto, a partner organisation and regulated debt advice through a second partner organisation called PayPlan. The Service makes a tangible and positive impact on those who receive its support. In 2025, we made over 600 hardship grants totalling £230,628 which had a significant and direct impact on some of the most vulnerable members of the profession. Those that took up advice on benefits were, on average, better off by £6,168.

Importantly, the Service enables individuals to increase their financial independence and get back to work.

Education and career development grants

The RCN Foundation provides grants for education and career development opportunities to nurses, midwives and Health Care/Maternity Support Workers across the UK. Grants ranged from a one-off course in a wide range of clinical areas, to funding to support PhDs. Funding is awarded following a competitive application process so that the very best applicants are supported to develop and enhance their careers. In 2025, the Foundation provided grants of around £189,682 to over 150 individuals.

Nursing- and midwifery-led projects that improve patient care

Since 2010, the Foundation has funded a wide range of projects. These include:

- The refurbishment of the RCN Library and Heritage Centre, the largest nursing specific resource in Europe.
- The establishment of the first Chair in Adult Social Care Nursing in the UK.
- The development of a toolkit to support children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing, aimed at nurses who are not specialists in mental health.
- The RCN Foundation Quality Improvement programme for Nursing and Midwifery which funded eight nursing and midwifery led projects that aimed to tackle real world challenges in health and social care, from improving dementia care to enhancing maternity pathways.
- The RCN Foundation Postdoctoral Research Bridging Fellowship which aims to develop a research career pathway for early career nursing and midwifery researchers from the global majority focusing on the post-doctoral space.

Further information about our current and previous research projects can be found on the Foundation's website.



Trustee role description

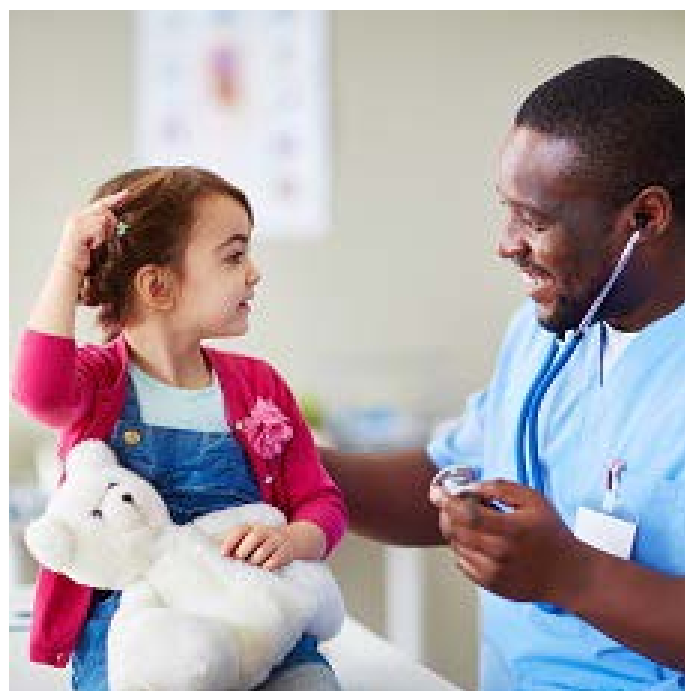
The Board of Trustees sets the strategic direction and priorities of the charity.

The Trustees have a legal duty to ensure the Foundation delivers on its charitable objects and complies with all legal, constitutional and regulatory requirements. They have a legal duty to govern the charity so as to help it achieve its charitable objectives and, in doing so, to act reasonably, prudently and selflessly.

The specific duties of the Board of Trustees are to:

- Ensure the Foundation is meeting its charitable objectives and complies with all legal, constitutional and regulatory requirements.
- Ensure the Foundation has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction.
- Be responsible for the performance of the Foundation, reviewing major risks and monitoring controls and systems.
- Act in the best interest of the Foundation at all times, exercising due care, skill and diligence.
- Hold the Foundation 'in trust' for current and future beneficiaries, acting as guardians of its assets and taking due care over their security, deployment and proper application.
- Ensure the income of the Foundation is managed effectively and applied for the purposes set out in the governing document with complete fairness between people who are properly qualified to benefit.
- Actively engage with the work of the Foundation, including attending regular meetings, reading relevant papers, leading on key activities, networking and promoting the Foundation's work.
- Be prepared to act as a spokesperson for the Foundation if asked to do so and to work within an agreed brief.
- Safeguard the reputation and values of the Foundation.

As well as sitting on the Board, a successful candidate will also sit on our Income Generation and Investment Committee. Support and/or training relating to the work of the Committee will be provided as needed.



Trustee person specification

Trustees should have the following knowledge, skills, experience and qualities:

- A commitment to the mission of the Foundation.
- An understanding of charity governance and how this relates in particular to the Foundation.
- An understanding of the key issues facing nursing, midwifery and healthcare.
- Proven success and a track record in their own area of expertise.
- Experience of strong leadership and management, and of making sound strategic decisions.
- Experience of engaging with partners and stakeholders from a range of organisations.
- The intellectual capacity to grasp issues outside personal experience and communicate opinions and contribute to discussions around such issues.
- Numerate with the ability to understand budgets and charity finance.
- An understanding of key principles of equality, diversity and inclusion, and a commitment to applying these principles in your role as a Trustee.
- The willingness to act in the best interests of the charity and comply with the Nolan Principles of Public Life (Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty, and Leadership).
- The ability to work well as a member of the team.
- An energy, passion and drive for the role, and the desire to want to make a real difference to our work and through that, to our beneficiaries.
- An ability to commit the necessary time to be an effective member of the Board of Trustees.

In order to ensure the Board functions effectively as a whole, the Foundation aims to have the best balance of skills, knowledge, expertise and experience on its Board to help achieve its purpose.

Individual Trustees should have specialist knowledge and skills in one or more of the following areas:

- Midwifery/Nursing and nurse education
- Health and social care policy
- Charity governance
- Financial and business management including investment expertise
- Strategic planning
- Equality issues
- Media, marketing and communications
- Income generation including fundraising and social investment
- Grant-making
- Digital strategy
- Impact measurement

Income Generation and Investment Committee Chair

In addition, a role description for the Trustee who will Chair the IGI Committee is provided below.

Committee chairs are appointed by the Board. They hold office concurrent with their trustee membership. They are expected to commit approximately 8-10 days a year to the work of the Foundation, including attending meetings, approving paperwork, liaising with staff and committee members and making any necessary decisions outside of meetings within the remit of the committee's terms of reference.

The IGI Committee has oversight of the Foundation's income generation activities.

Role description

As well as the functions outlined in the role description for trustees, each Committee Chair is required to:

- Chair formal and informal meetings connected with the work of the committee in accordance with the terms of reference of the committee.
- Ensure meetings keep to time.
- Facilitate the contribution of all members of the committee.
- Work with the Director of the Foundation to set the agenda for the committee meetings and to establish the tone and pace of the committee's work.
- Assign work to committee members and ensure that they have the information they need to carry out their roles.
- Work closely with the staff supporting the committee.
- Work with the Director of the Foundation and the Head of Fundraising and Communications on urgent committee matters that may arise between meetings.
- Approve the minutes of the committee's meetings.
- Report to the Board on the work of the committee, the decisions it takes and recommendations it makes.
- Liaise with the Foundation's Investment Managers alongside the Director of the Foundation as required.
- Act as a spokesperson for the Foundation as required within agreed guidelines i.e. at conferences and similar.

- Liaise with the Governance and Nominations Committee as required to ensure the membership of the committee is regularly reviewed.
- Take part in the recruitment process, managed by the Governance and Nominations Committee, for External Advisers to the committee.
- Be a member of the Urgent Management Group which meets on an ad hoc basis.
- Sit on the RCN Group Audit Committee as the Foundation's Trustee representative.
- To undertake such training as may be appropriate in performing the role.

Person specification

As well as the knowledge, skills, experience and qualities outlined in the person specification for trustees, the Committee Chairs are required to have:

- Expertise and experience in the area of work covered by the committee.
- Proven leadership skills and the ability to chair meetings.
- Tact and diplomacy with the ability to listen and engage effectively.
- Ability to guide discussion in a positive and pragmatic manner, ensuring that conclusions are reached, and decisions taken.
- Ability to foster and promote a collaborative team environment.
- Excellent time-management skills.
- Strong inter-personal relationships at all levels and be comfortable in an ambassadorial role.
- Ability to commit time to conduct the role well.
- An understanding and commitment to EDI.



Board meeting dates

Board of Trustees Meeting Dates

- Tuesday 2 February on MS Teams
- Tuesday 27 April in person (in London)
- Tuesday 13 July in person (in London)
- Tuesday 12 October on MS Teams

All the Board meetings take place from 4pm to 7pm.

Board of Trustees Away Day

- Tuesday 21 September, all day in person (in London).

Income Generation & Investment Committee Meetings

- Tuesday 2 March
- Tuesday 8 June
- Tuesday 14 September
- Tuesday 30 November

All the IGI Committee meetings take place on MS Teams from 4pm to 6pm/6.15pm.

Who we are looking for

We are seeking two outstanding individuals to join the Board from 1 April 2027.

You will have:

- Senior level experience in finance, accounting or strategic financial oversight including investment governance.
- Experience of charity finances and fundraising.
- Proven ability to communicate and explain complex financial information to the Board and other stakeholders.
- Ability to support the Board in assessing financial sustainability, reserves, cost pressures and longer-term planning.
- A broad understanding of the key issues facing healthcare and/or nursing/midwifery.
- An understanding of good charity governance, and proven success in your own area of expertise, strong leadership, management and strategic skills, and the willingness to act in the best interests of the Foundation.
- An ability to commit a minimum 15 days a year to the work of the RCN Foundation, including attending meetings of the Board and a Committee, reviewing papers, responding to requests for support from staff leading on project development, fundraising and networking.
- An energy, passion and drive for the role, and want to make a real difference to our work and through that, our beneficiaries.

In addition to the above the Trustee who will Chair the IGI Committee will also have:

- Experience of Chairing committee meetings or similar.
- An ability to commit an additional 3-4 days a year to attend and participate in the RCN Group Audit Committee.

Applications from a wide range of backgrounds are welcome.

Before applying, you may wish to read about the duties and responsibilities of charity trustees on the [Charity Commission's website](#).

What is involved?

Trustees must have a willingness to commit around 15 days per year to the charity in order to:

- Attend and participate in four Board meetings per year, usually from 4pm to 7pm. Two meetings per year take place on MS Teams; two meetings take place in person, usually in London.
- Attend the Annual Away Day, held in person, usually in London.
- Attend and participate in four meetings of the Income Generation and Investment Committee per year. These usually take place on MS Teams from 4pm to 6pm/6.15pm.
- Attend the Foundation's Annual Impact Awards, usually held in London.

In addition to the above, the Trustee who will Chair the IGI Committee must also have a willingness to commit an additional 3-4 days in order to:

- Attend and participate in four meetings of the RCN Group Audit Committee per year. These usually take place from 9.30am to 12.30pm. Two meetings per year take place on MS Teams; two meetings take place in person, usually in London.

Trustees may also be required to serve on one or more of the RCN Group Committees.

Remuneration

The Trustee role is a voluntary position so is not accompanied by any financial remuneration, but reasonable expenses may be claimed.

Terms of Office

Trustees normally serve a minimum term of three years. Two further terms of three years can be served subject to review. A maximum of three terms can be served in total.

Legal Status

The RCN Foundation is incorporated, and as such Trustees also serve as Company Directors. Nominees are required to sign a declaration as to non-disqualification from acting as a Trustee or Director.

How to apply

To apply in confidence to become a Trustee of the RCN Foundation, please submit a copy of your CV together with a supporting statement (maximum of 1,000 words).

It is important to ensure that your application fully addresses the requirements for the role.

Prospectus is committed to supporting our clients to build more inclusive boards. To understand how we are performing, we ask that you kindly complete the brief equal opportunities questionnaire when you submit your application via our website. Please be assured that your responses are kept confidential, separate from your candidate record and are not part of any application you make.

Finally, please ensure that you have included your contact number and email address, as well as any dates when you will not be available or might have difficulty with the indicative timetable.

Applications should be made via the Prospectus website at:

<https://www.prospect-us.co.uk/job/194377>

Eligibility criteria

- You must be at least 18 years old to be a charity Trustee.
- Former employees of the entities within the RCN Group (Royal College of Nursing, Hold Co Ltd and the RCN Foundation) are eligible to apply one full year after their employment has ceased.
- Former members of the RCN Council, its Country Boards or its Committees are eligible to apply one full year after their tenure has ended.
- You are not eligible to apply if you are currently:
 - An employee of one of the entities within the RCN Group (Royal College of Nursing, Hold Co Ltd or the RCN Foundation).
 - A member of the Royal College of Nursing's Council, Country Boards or Committees.

Recruitment timetable

Deadline for applications:

6 September 2026

Panel interviews with RCN Foundation:

Monday 19th October 2026, in London

Queries

If you wish to have an informal discussion about the opportunities, please contact James Rice at Prospectus:

James.Rice@prospect-us.co.uk



**Created by the Prospectus
Advertising team.**

Prospectus Ltd
20-22 Stukeley Street
London, WC2B 5LR

