

# RCN Foundation Trustee



## Candidate Information Pack Summer 2026



# Introduction

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Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the RCN Foundation. I am delighted that you have chosen to find out more about this key role for the charity. Please find in this pack an introduction to the Foundation, a Trustee role description and person specification, and an equalities monitoring form.

We are recruiting as part of a proactive succession planning process to replace a Trustee who will be retiring from the Board in 2027. We are seeking a Trustee with a background in nursing or midwifery to join our Board from 1 June 2027. Four of our Trustees must be RCN members. For this particular vacancy, you must be an RCN member. We are particularly keen to hear from candidates from ethnically diverse backgrounds, as these groups are currently under-represented on our Board.

This is an opportunity to help strengthen the clinical insight on our Board, and to help make a tangible difference to the nursing and midwifery workforce. This role would also contribute towards the revalidation requirements as set out by the NMC.

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 public.

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. Over the next five years we will increase our support in the three core areas of our work - hardship, education and learning, 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](#).

I joined the Board of Trustees in 2019 because I am passionate about the positive difference that the Foundation makes to nursing, midwifery and healthcare. This is a particularly important time to be joining the RCN Foundation's Board, as we embark upon a new ambitious strategy and seek to increase our impact. We have ambitious 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 CBE RN

# Overview of the RCN Foundation

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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](#).

## **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**

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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.

This 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 funding**

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/Ethnic Minority, focusing on the post-doctoral space

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

# About the role

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## **RCN Foundation 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:

1. Ensure the Foundation is meeting its charitable objectives and complies with all legal, constitutional and regulatory requirements
2. Ensure the Foundation has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction
3. Be responsible for the performance of the Foundation, reviewing major risks and monitoring controls and systems
4. Act in the best interest of the Foundation and all times, exercising due care, skill and diligence
5. 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
6. 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
7. 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
8. Be prepared to act as a spokesperson for the Foundation if asked to do so and to work within an agreed brief
9. Safeguard the reputation and values of the Foundation

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

## **Person Specification**

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

1. A commitment to the mission of the Foundation
2. An understanding of charity governance and how this relates in particular to the Foundation
3. An understanding of the key issues facing nursing, midwifery and healthcare
4. Proven success and a track record in their own area of expertise
5. Experience of strong leadership and management, and of making sound strategic decisions
6. Experience of engaging with partners and stakeholders from a range of organisations
7. The intellectual capacity to grasp issues outside personal experience and communicate opinions and contribute to discussions around such issues
8. Numerate with the ability to understand budgets and charity finance
9. An understanding of key principles of equality, diversity and inclusion, and a commitment to applying these principles in your role as a Trustee
10. 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)
11. The ability to work well as a member of the team
12. 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
13. 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

## What is involved

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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 solely on MS Teams, two meetings per year take place in person usually in London
- Attend the Annual Away Day, held in person usually in London
- Attend and participate in four Committee meetings per year. These usually take place on MS Teams from 4pm to 6pm
- Attend the Foundation's Annual Impact Awards, usually held 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, which can be renewed following review for a second three-year term. The maximum is a total of three terms.

### **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.

# Who we are looking for

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We are seeking an outstanding nurse or midwife, who is also an RCN member, to join the Board from 1 June 2027. You will have:

- An excellent understanding of the key issues facing healthcare and/or nursing/midwifery
- An understanding of good charity governance
- 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

Applications from a wide range of backgrounds are welcome. As part of our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, and in line with positive action provisions under the Equality Act 2010, we particularly welcome applications from Global Majority/Ethnic Minority nurses or midwives.

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

This role would contribute towards the revalidation requirements as set out by the NMC.

## How to apply

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To apply in confidence to become a Trustee of the RCN Foundation, please email the following to Angela Flanagan, Governance Manager, at [rcnfoundationgovernance@rcnfoundation.org.uk](mailto:rcnfoundationgovernance@rcnfoundation.org.uk):

- A current CV

- A covering letter (maximum 2 sides of A4) outlining, with examples, how you meet the person specification and taking into account the role description and any specialist skills you have
- A completed equalities monitoring form

The closing date for applications is midnight on **Sunday 13 September 2026**.

We expect interviews to take place in person in London on Monday 26 October 2026. If you require any special provision as a result of any disability, should you be called for interview, please do let us know.

If you would like to have an informal conversation about the role, [please contact Deepa Korea](#), Director of the RCN Foundation.

### **Eligibility criteria**

- You **must** be at least 18 years old to be a charity Trustee
- You **must** be an RCN member to apply for this particular vacancy
- 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