



# Candidate Pack for Fundraising Trustee



# Welcome

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Dear candidate,

Thank you for your interest in joining the Board of the Medical Research Foundation at this pivotal moment in our development.

We are a charity research funder with a century-long legacy which is entering its next exciting transformative chapter of continued growth, innovation and even greater impact.

The Medical Research Foundation holds a unique place in the UK's research ecosystem. As the charitable foundation of the Medical Research Council, we are a broad-based research funding, fundraising charity with the rare freedom to support work on any health condition, anywhere in the world. Thanks to the generosity of the public and strength of our strategic partnerships, we lay the foundations for ground-breaking new discoveries and life-changing advances by investing in the most promising ideas and the research leaders who will shape tomorrow's breakthroughs.

Our history is long, and our ambition is even longer. We believe passionately in the power of medical research, and the people behind it, to make a lasting difference to health. We want everyone to benefit from scientific breakthroughs, not just today but for generations to come.

This is an exciting time for the Foundation as we enter the third year of our five-year Organisational strategy: Giving hope through life-changing medical research and we are on target to spend around £25 million in new research in areas of health that are overlooked and underfunded. We are focusing on: i) children and young people's health; ii) neglected mental health conditions; iii) the impact of climate change on health; and iv) emerging health threats and research opportunities. Our researchers are making a real difference to the lives of those living with health conditions that would otherwise be ignored.

This is a fantastic opportunity to use your fundraising expertise to champion life-changing research and give hope to people with debilitating, overlooked health conditions. We are looking for an established fundraiser with extensive experience in major gifts and of engaging and stewarding High Net Worth donors to help strengthen the Board and support the Chief Executive and Fundraising Director around high-level advocacy. You don't need to have specific experience of working with research funders, but you will bring significant experience of engaging with industry and philanthropic institutions and will be a strong communicator able to engage with a wide range of audiences at the highest levels.

You will join a charity supported by an engaged and collaborative Board of Trustees, and an outstanding executive team, and a highly professional and committed wider team. We work alongside: independent Expert Review Panels; our parent organisation, the UK Medical Research Council; and an emerging community of lived experience experts and a network of researchers around the world whose work we are proud to fund.

I look forward to welcoming the successful candidate to the Board of Trustees and working with them as we continue pursuing our charitable purpose to promote medical research worldwide, in order to improve human health.

**Professor Paul Moss OBE**

Chair, Medical Research Foundation

# About us

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The Medical Research Foundation is an independent charity dedicated to improving human health through investment in high-quality medical research anywhere in the world. We currently support £34m ongoing research grants primarily based in the UK, but also in equitable partnerships in Africa, and will invest £35m in new research in the five years to 2029.

Originally established as the charitable arm of the Medical Research Council (MRC) over 100 years ago, and taking on a modern governance structure in 2011, we remain deeply connected to the MRC's legacy of excellence, while using our independence to direct funding flexibly, strategically, and in ways that respond to the most pressing health challenges of our time.

## Our vision

Our vision is a world where medical research improves health for everyone.

There are still many health conditions which impose a heavy burden on millions of people, in the UK and around the world. History has shown us, time and again, that the best way to achieve better human health is through medical research. We know that by investing now, we will see life-saving advances in the future and improvements in health for everyone.

## Our mission

Our mission is to lay the foundations for ground-breaking new discoveries and life-changing advances. We give hope to people whose health conditions are overlooked, by supporting research in areas that are underfunded. We invest in the brightest and best researchers, ensuring the next generation of scientists can continue to solve the biggest challenges facing human health.



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## What we fund

Our remit is wide - we can fund anything, anywhere - and the need is great. We focus on funding research that will have the greatest possible impact on people's lives, prioritising new research in our current strategy period that aligns with one or more of our strategic research themes:

- **High-need, low research investment**  
There are too many health conditions which continue to devastate lives. We identify those areas of health that our overlooked, where people's lives see little improvement, and research is underfunded.
- **Emerging research leaders**  
The health problems of the future will be solved by the researchers we invest in today. We structure funding to keep the brightest minds in science, for the benefit of us all.
- **Changing policy and practice**  
Few funding opportunities exist for scientists to ensure that policymakers and practitioners are aware of their research. We provide funding that ensures healthcare policy and practice is based on the latest evidence and medical research has the greatest possible impact, not just in labs, but at bedsides and in communities for people worldwide.

Our health priorities are led by our donors and where we believe that there is the greatest need for attention and research. We currently prioritise:

- Improving the lives of children and young people.
- Addressing neglected areas of mental health
- Tackling the health impacts of climate change
- Responding to emerging health threats and research opportunities

Our research priorities and funding is guided by expert advice from the MRC's boards and panels, as well as the wider scientific, clinical and lived experience communities. This ensures our grants and fellowships go to projects of the highest quality, with the greatest potential for impact.

We are passionate supporters of the next generation of researchers, and we provide opportunities for our emerging research leaders to broaden their skill sets, build their careers and demonstrate their impact.

## Our future

We are in year 3 of our current five-year strategy period. Our current CEO has stepped down to give their successor the time to embed in the charity before developing our next five-year strategy to take us to 2034 and beyond. Our ambition is to build on our solid foundations and create new opportunities for growth, influence and impact. We are actively and purposefully spending down our accumulated assets and increasing our annual income to secure our future for the generations to come. Our new CEO will be key in building our profile and influence, developing new strategic partnerships, pursuing excellence in research, championing research careers and finding innovative ways to support the UK and wider research communities to harness new opportunities to improve health for more people

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## The planet's future

Climate change poses a growing threat to human health, and we are determined to be part of the solution. We fund research into the health impacts of climate change, while also reducing our own environmental footprint, including having divested from fossil fuels and providing a green employer pension scheme. We have embedded sustainability at the heart of our decision-making, aiming to influence the researchers, partners and suppliers we work with.

## How we work

We work collaboratively in multidisciplinary teams across most of our activities. We are supportive and kind, set and work to the highest professional standards, and are a learning organisation keen to reflect, iterate and improve on a continuous cycle.

We are generous with our expertise and knowledge and believe that we can add value to UK research and improve health for more people, by sharing our practices and learnings.

We are committed to embracing diversity, attracting and keeping talent from the widest possible pool, and ensuring our research funding and employment processes are fair, transparent and inclusive. Sex and gender considerations are embedded into our grant application and review processes, and we continue to strengthen equity in our funding both in the UK and internationally.

We work hard to ensure that all of our people can contribute to the best of their abilities, and that no one is inhibited from making their contribution; we have an inclusive, positive and fair and culture where opportunities are open to all.

To learn more about our current five-year organisational strategy, click [here](#).

And for our most recent annual report, click [here](#).

And our latest five-year impact report, click [here](#).

And our first one hundred years, click [here](#).



## Our Board

Our Board includes Trustees with expertise in health, research and research funding, bioethics, fundraising, communications, investments and finance. Two of the Trustees are nominated by the MRC. Trustees are usually appointed for an initial term of three years and are eligible for reappointment. The Board typically meets four times a year. All meetings are held in our offices in Central London. Trustees are also expected to attend various ad hoc events such as our Research Showcases.

## Committee structure

The Board has several committees which supports it with discharging its responsibilities. As part of their appointment, Trustees are expected to sit on committees and ad-hoc panels.

Medical Research Foundation: Board, Committee & Panel Structure

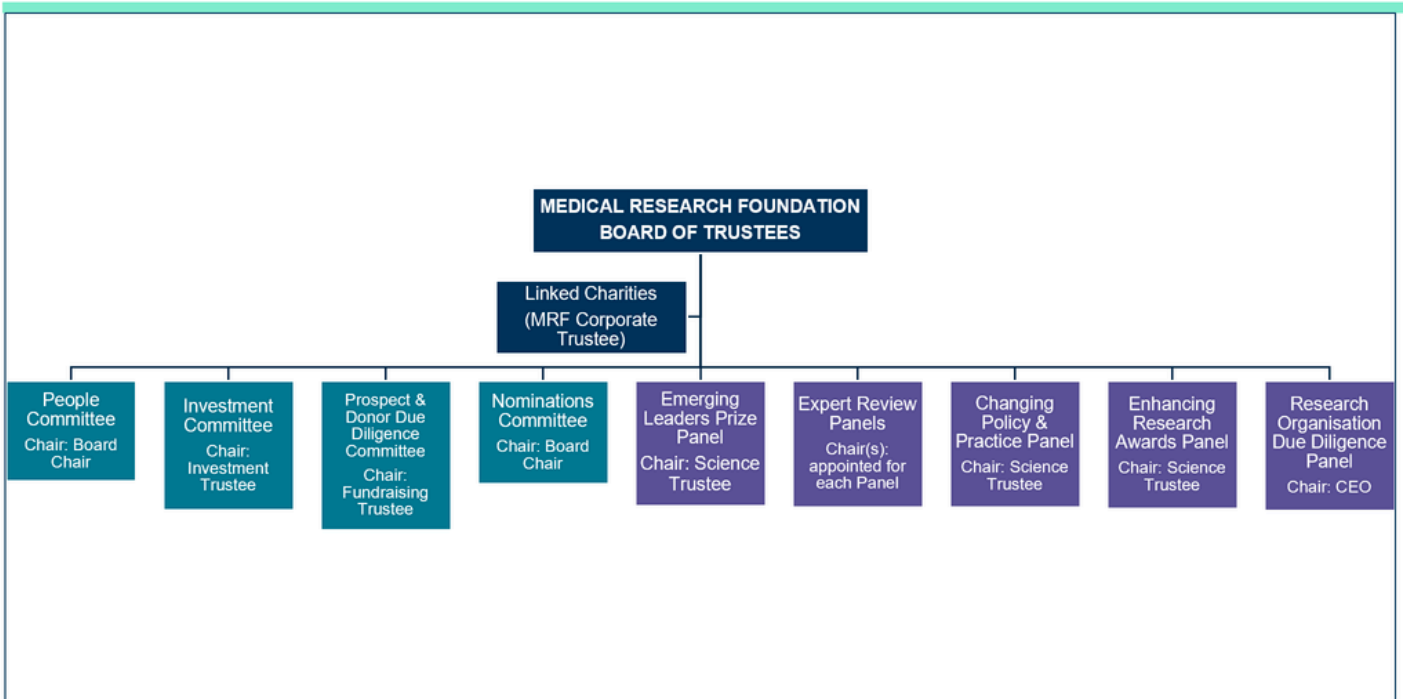
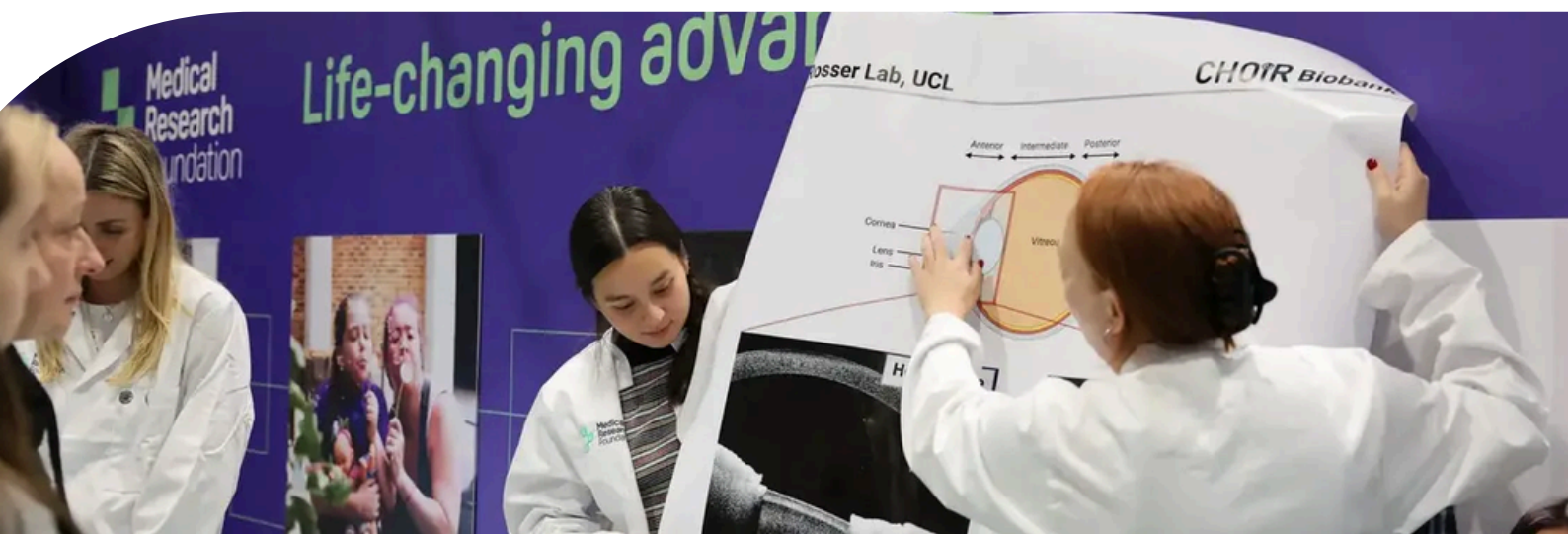


Figure 1: Board, Committee & Panel Structure



# Job description

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**Job title:** Trustee

**Reports to:** Chair of the Board of Trustees

**Role Purpose:** As a member of the Board of Trustees, you will provide strategic leadership and oversight for the Medical Research Foundation and its linked charities as it seeks to fulfil its charitable objects, ensuring it operates in accordance with its governing document and meets its legal and regulatory requirements.

## About us

### Why the role is important to us

Our trustees are jointly and severally responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of the Medical Research Foundation, its financial health, integrity of its activities, and for setting and overseeing the delivery of the organisation's aims and objectives. The Charity Commission's Guidance 'The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do' identifies the main duties of a trustee as to:

- Ensure the charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- Comply with their charity's governing document and the law
- Act in the charity's best interests
- Manage the charity's resources responsibly
- Act with reasonable care and skill
- Ensure the charity is accountable.

In addition to being a registered charity, the Foundation is a company limited by guarantee and, as such, our trustees are also appointed as its company directors. Trustees are supported throughout their appointment with training and development opportunities, especially those who are serving in a trustee role for the first time. The position is voluntary and not remunerated, although reasonable expenses are paid, such as covering the cost of travel, subsistence and childcare, or care of other dependants, while attending the Foundation's meetings and events.

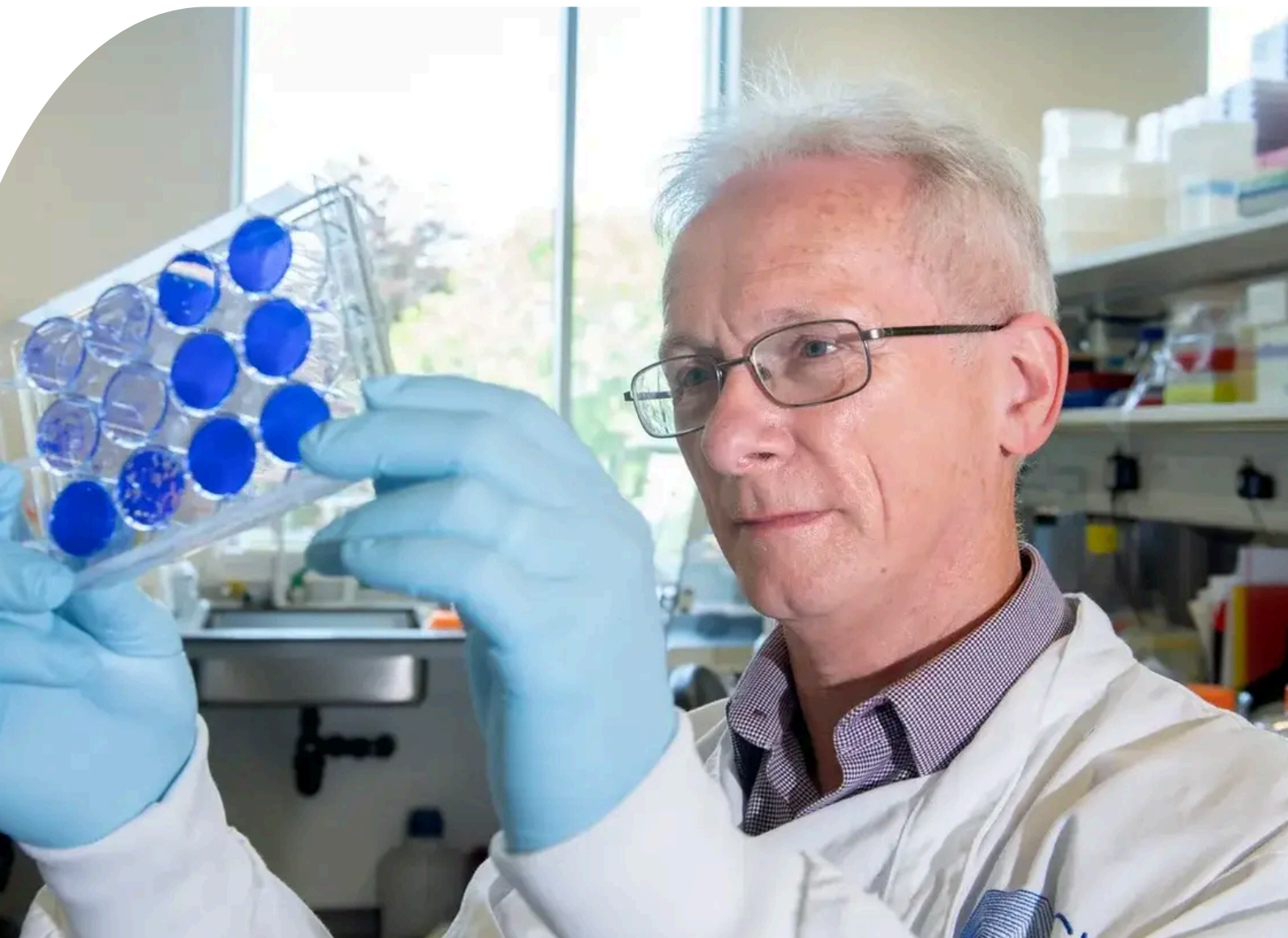
### What you will do

#### As a trustee, you will:

- Ensure that the Foundation pursues its stated charitable objects by developing and overseeing the delivery of its long-term strategy
- Ensure the Foundation functions within all applicable legal and regulatory requirements and in line with its governing document
- Maintain the fiduciary duty invested in the position, undertaking such duties in a way that adds to public confidence and trust in the Foundation
- Promote and develop the Foundation in order for it to grow and maintain its public benefit and recognise the situation when it may be more appropriate to wind the charity up where there is no longer a need to provide the services it does or because the charitable objects are no longer relevant to contemporary social situations
- Take appropriate professional advice in all matters where there may be a material risk to the Foundation, or where the trustees may be in breach of their duties

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- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of the Foundation and its resources, striving for best practice in governance
  - Ensure that robust systems are in place for internal financial control and the protection of the Foundation's funds and assets
  - Ensure the Foundation has the proper arrangements in place for the appointment, supervision, support, appraisal and remuneration of the Chief Executive
  - Maintain oversight of the work of the Chief Executive, including both supporting and holding to account through appropriate challenge
  - Safeguard the good name and values of the Foundation
  - Sit on sub-committees or panels, as required.

All Trustees should be aware of, and understand, their individual and collective responsibilities, and should not be overly reliant on one or more individual Trustee in any particular aspect of the governance of the Foundation.



# About you

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## Who you are

### You possess:

- A commitment to improving health
- Strategic vision and an ability to think creatively
- Sound, independent judgment and a willingness to speak your mind
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- An ability to work effectively as a member of the team
- A commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort (approximately eight days annually, including evening events and meeting preparation time).

## What you will bring to the role

### You will have:

- Senior-level experience preferably in biomedical science and with corporate or high-value gift fundraising
- Strategic leadership and management experience
- An understanding of the UK charity sector
- Sympathy for the issues of public good and donor wishes in funding medical research
- Excellent networking skills, influencing and communication skills.

### You will be:

- Able to provide direction and vision to the Foundation and its staff
- Able to provide strategic oversight, support and challenge to the Executive
- Over the age of 18.
- Eligible to be a trustee (trustees must not be disqualified from acting as a trustee).

### You must not:

- Have an unspent conviction for an offence involving deception or dishonesty (such as fraud)
- Be bankrupt or have entered into a formal arrangement (e.g. an Individual Voluntary Arrangement)
- Have been removed as a company director or a charity trustee because of wrongdoing
- Be subject to financial sanctions (including listing on the UK Sanctions List)
- Have an unspent conviction for: – Specified terrorism offences – A specified money laundering offence – The offence of contravening a Charity Commission Order or Direction – Offences of misconduct in public office, perjury, or perverting the course of justice – For aiding, attempting or abetting the above offences
- Be on the Sex Offenders Register
- Have an unspent sanction for contempt of Court
- Have disobeyed a Commission Order
- Be a designated person (under specific anti-terrorist legislation).

# Terms of appointment

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Term of Appointment is three years.

The role is voluntary although reasonable expenses are paid, such as travel and childcare while attending our meetings and events.

## Board meeting dates for 2026-2027

Board meetings are typically held between 14:00 – 17:00 in central London.

## 2026/2027 Financial Year board dates are:

- 16 June 2026
- 13 October 2026
- 26 November 2026
- 16 March 2027



# How to apply

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We hope you will consider making an application. To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/mrc-trustee/> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- Your CV (no more than three sides).
- A supporting statement (no more than two sides) that sets out why you think this role is right for you and how you meet the brief.

We would also be grateful if you would complete the Equality and Diversity monitoring form on the online application process. This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

Closing date:	Friday 4 <sup>th</sup> September 2026
Preliminary interviews online:	w/c 14 <sup>th</sup> and w/c 21 <sup>st</sup> September 2026
Final Panel interviews in person:	Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> October 2026

