



Governor
(background in government and politics)
Brief for applicants
July 2026

Welcome

Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in joining the Health Foundation as Governor.

As an independent charitable organisation committed to building a healthier UK, we shine a light on what needs to be done to improve health and care for the UK population.

Through our role as a philanthropic endowed foundation, we improve health and care in the UK through research and analysis, grant making, capacity building, social impact investing and partnerships. Our endowment enables us to take a long-term approach, supporting change over time and building the evidence, ideas and capability needed for lasting impact.



We believe we can have the greatest impact by combining action to inform policy and decision making with practical support to make change happen on the ground in health systems, regional and local government, and communities. Our recently launched Strategy 2030 reflects this approach, with clear goals and routes to impact.

The Foundation benefits from an endowment of more than £1.2bn which enables us to spend around £50m a year on our work. We have grown from an organisation of around 150 people in 2017, to over 200 employees today.

Over the next 15 months three of our governors will be stepping down and we would like to recruit four new governors, people who share our goal of better health and care for people in the UK. One of the areas of expertise we are looking to replace on the Board is knowledge of the operations of the political system and government.

We recognise the value that diversity of experience and thought bring to leadership and governance, particularly with respect to our mission to build a healthier UK. The more diverse the professional and lived expertise of our governors, the better able to understand and navigate the nuance and complexities within health and social care for different communities.

We have identified three groups where we would like to encourage applications – in alignment with our recently published EDI Strategy. We want to maintain the balance between men and women amongst our governor community. We also want to increase representation of people from Black and ethnic minority backgrounds and recruit more people with disabilities across our broad leadership community. As part of this commitment, we particularly welcome applications from these groups.

We would also encourage applications from those who have the skills and experience to support the Foundation governor level and are at a developing stage of their career to apply.

All of our governors demonstrate an open and engaging communication style with an attention to detail and willingness to work alongside other members of the board and committees in pursuing our shared objectives.

This is a particularly rewarding time to join us, as we embark on our new strategy. With the NHS and social care system under pressure to meet people's needs, improvements in life expectancy stalling and deep inequalities in health holding back potential, the need for our work has never been greater. Your personal contribution will help shape the future of health and care across the nation. I very much look forward to hearing from you.

Sir David Behan
Chair of the Board of Governors

About the Health Foundation

We are an independent charitable organisation committed to building a healthier UK. We currently employ over 200 people, with offices in Blackfriars, Central London.

Health is our most precious asset. A healthier UK means improved health and reduced health inequalities. To make this happen, we need the building blocks of good health – like decent housing and good jobs – in place for more people across society. And we need high-quality and equitable health and care services now and in the future.

Health and care systems across the world are facing huge challenges with ageing populations, increasing demand for services and chronic labour shortages. In the UK, the population's health is fraying with more people living longer with major illness and deep inequalities in health between different parts of the country, the NHS is under unprecedented pressure with many people struggling to get the care they need, and the adult social care system is in crisis.

The Foundation can play an important role in helping to build a healthier population.

Our independence, expertise and ability to work for the long term puts us in a unique position to respond to the major health challenges facing the UK.

Our mission is to build a healthier UK.

We do this by influencing policy and enabling systemic change through our three goals:

- Put health and inequalities at the heart of decision making.
- Shape the future of the health and care system to ensure the best care for all
- Build new approaches to testing innovation that could transform health care

We have a strong reputation for producing high-quality research and analysis, enjoy a high national profile and work closely with a wide range of stakeholders at a national level and in the health and care system.

Across our goals we will use a variety of approaches to drive change – building on our existing skills while shifting how we work in key areas. We will use four main approaches to deliver impact.

- Generating research and analysis
- Testing practical solutions
- Engagement, convening and partnerships
- Networks and long-term capability

As well as evolving what we focus on externally we will also continually improve how we work as an organisation, this is guided by our organisational values: **Impact, Evidence, Integrity and Collaboration.**

In line with these values, we will prioritise action to become a more diverse, inclusive and equitable organisation. Improving health equity in the UK is at the heart of our mission. And achieving our mission is only possible by being a flourishing and fair organisation – one that values equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) and builds these principles into how we work. Our EDI strategy sets the direction for this work over the coming years and our priorities for action.

We will also continue our work to embed sustainability into what we do – including by working to become a net-zero organisation and ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of the Foundation.

Read more

Our current strategy is published at <https://www.health.org.uk/about-the-Health-Foundation/corporate-publications/building-a-healthier-uk>

More information about our Governor team can be found at <https://www.health.org.uk/about-the-health-foundation/our-people/board-of-governors>

Our 2024 annual report and financial statements are published at <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/2024-annual-report-and-financial-statements>

Our values and how we work can be found here: <https://www.health.org.uk/about-the-health-foundation>

Our EDI strategy can be found here: <https://www.health.org.uk/our-commitment-to-equity-diversity-and-inclusion>



Role description

Role title Governor (trustee) with relevant senior experience of the operations of the political system and government

Reporting to Chair of Governors

Role purpose:

The Board of Governors is responsible for shaping the work of the charity, for the benefit of the public.

The board currently comprises 12 governors, including the Chair. You can read about them [here](#). The executive (Directors') team is led by Dr Jennifer Dixon DBE. You can read about them [here](#). We are in the process of completing a board effectiveness review, which will turn into a board development programme with the aim of supporting the Foundation in the delivery of its 2030 Strategy.

Governors, in their role as trustees of the Foundation, have and must accept ultimate legal responsibility for the affairs of the Foundation, ensuring that it is well-run, efficient, operating in accordance with all relevant laws and regulations, financially stable and sustainable and delivering the charitable outcomes for the benefit of the public for which it has been set up. Governors have a number of duties which they must exercise. The full list of trustee duties are set out by the Charity Commission [here](#):

Governors should:

- Contribute actively to the Board's role in giving strategic direction to the charity, setting overall policy, defining goals, setting targets, and evaluating performance against agreed objectives and targets.
- Use their specific skills, knowledge, experience, and perspectives to help the board reach sound decisions.
- Ensure the charitable objectives of the Foundation are carried out for the public benefit in compliance with Charity Commission guidance.
- Act as a positive ambassador for the work of the Foundation, both internally across our organisation and externally through networks and partners.
- Safeguard the assets of the Foundation and ensure that the major risks to which the charity is exposed are identified and reviewed regularly with systems in place to mitigate or minimise these.
- Commit to giving a minimum of fifteen full working days per annum for Foundation work (including preparation time for meetings of the Board, its committees and any other sub-groups that may be formed from time to time).
- Stay informed of our work and matters relating to the work of the Foundation; prepare well for meetings and take an active and engaged role in discussions.
- Be willing to chair or participate in Board committees and / or sub-groups.
- Demonstrate an ongoing commitment to the charity, acting in its best interests at all times.
- Volunteer for and willingly accept opportunities to further own understanding of the Foundation's work.
- Comply with the policies of the charity.
- Support equity, diversity and inclusion throughout the Foundation.
- Seek to resolve any concerns about the performance of the Board, its compliance with its governing documents and / or the welfare of the Foundation.
- Comply with the Nolan principles of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Person specification

Candidates must be legally eligible to be appointed as a registered company director and charity trustee and must have no conflicts of interest that would create a reputational risk for the Foundation.

Part One

Knowledge and Experience

The following experience is **essential** for this appointment:

- Expertise of the operations of the political system and Government, with deep working knowledge of how to influence and navigate central government and complex policy environments, gained through senior experience such as a central government advisory role, a think tank, parliamentary affairs, or equivalent national level work.
- The personal presence, stature and authority to engage in debate with colleagues on the board outside their area of expertise, be able to listen, contribute, constructively challenge and accept the principle of collective responsibility.
- Experience at board level, and of board committees would be desirable.
- Previous experience working on improving diversity and inclusion would be desirable.

Part Two

Skills and Personal Attributes

- An open and engaging communication style with an attention to detail and a willingness to work alongside other members of the board and committees in pursuing shared objectives.
- The personal presence and authority to engage in debate with colleagues on the board outside their area of expertise, be able to listen, contribute, constructively challenge and accept the principle of collective responsibility.
- Strategic thinking and maturity of judgement in decision making.
- Ability to exercise diversity in thought and behaviour through leading by example.
- Empathy with the mission to build a healthier UK and reduce inequalities in health.
- Alignment to the Foundation's values of impact, integrity, evidence and collaboration.



Terms of appointment

Remuneration

This appointment is offered on a voluntary basis, however, we are keen to ensure that no-one should be out of pocket due to Governor business. Governors are encouraged to claim out of pocket expenses in line with organisational policy. As well as expenses for any subsistence, travel or accommodation required to enable meeting attendance, expenses may also be claimed for costs such as childcare and care attendance if these are needed to free up time to carry out Governor duties.

Time Commitment & Location

The expected time commitment would be around 15 days per year.

The board meets quarterly. Currently, Board meetings are typically in-person and take place between 10:00 to 16:00 on weekdays (predominantly Thursdays) in London, near to London Blackfriars station.

Ideally, each Governor would sit on at least one committee. Committees meet usually two to three times per year. These meetings take place either virtually, or as hybrid meetings.

Each Governor will serve for five years in the first instance, taking up the role from October 2026, and may be appointed for a second term of four more years.

Induction and onboarding

A full induction programme will be provided. During the induction period and at regular intervals Governors will be asked to let the Governance team know, confidentially, of any individual support or reasonable adjustments.



How to apply

We hope you will consider making an application. If you have questions about the appointment and would find it helpful to have an informal conversation, please contact Szymon at Szymon.Podgorski@starfishsearch.com and we will be happy to arrange a call.

To make a formal application please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/governor-government-and-politics/> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- Your CV (no more than three sides) or equivalent biographical information.
- A supporting statement (no more than two sides) that sets out why you think this is the right role for you, how you meet the knowledge and experience criteria.

If you have a disability and identify any barriers in the role description or person specification, please tell us. It would also be helpful if you could let us know any special arrangements we should make in the event of an interview.

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.

Please note that these dates are indicative and subject to change with alternative options potentially being published later in the month of August:

Closing date:	Friday 28 th August 2026
Preliminary interviews:	w/c 7 th September
Stakeholder conversations:	Following confirmation of the shortlist, w/c 14 th September 2026
Final Panel interviews:	Monday 21 st September 2026

Forward board meeting dates

The Board Meetings below are scheduled to take place during the daytime in London. We would like new governors to start from our December 2026 board meeting

2026

- 17 September
- 3 December

2027

- 18 March (board dinner the evening before)
- 15 July (board dinner the evening before)
- 16 September
- 2 December