

Here for humanity



Letter from our Chair

Dear candidate,

Thank you for your interest in joining the board of trustees of the British Red Cross.

This is a unique opportunity to help shape the future of one of the UK's most respected and trusted charities, and to contribute to the work of the world's largest humanitarian network, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. At a time when humanitarian need continues to grow, both in the UK and around the world, the role of the British Red Cross has never been more important.

Every day we work alongside people facing some of life's most difficult circumstances. Whether responding to emergencies and extreme weather, supporting people with complex health and care needs, helping refugees and people seeking asylum rebuild their lives, or working through our global network to assist communities affected by conflict and disaster, we are guided by a simple belief: everyone should get the help they need in a crisis.

The scale and complexity of the challenges facing the world continue to increase. Conflict, displacement, inequality, climate-related emergencies and growing pressures on public services are affecting millions of people. At the same time, charities must operate in an increasingly demanding financial, political and technological environment. Against this backdrop, the British Red Cross remains focused on delivering meaningful impact, strengthening resilience in communities and ensuring we are equipped to meet the humanitarian challenges of the future.

Over the past year we have refreshed our Strategy 2030, sharpened our priorities and strengthened our organisational resilience. We have supported people affected by crises across the UK and around the world, continued to advocate for positive change on behalf of those we serve, invested in our people and volunteers, and begun a significant programme of digital and organisational transformation. We are ambitious about the difference we can make and determined to ensure that our resources, influence and expertise are directed where they are needed most.

The board plays a vital role in stewarding the organisation through this complex environment. Trustees provide constructive challenge, strategic oversight and collective leadership, while ensuring that the charity remains true to its mission, values and fundamental principles. We work closely with the executive leadership team to support long-term sustainability, maximise our impact and maintain the trust placed in us by those we serve, our supporters and the wider public.

We are seeking an exceptional individual who can make a significant contribution at board level through their personal impact, presence and ability to influence. You will have led at scale, whether in a senior role in a major organisation in the commercial, public or not-for-profit sector, or by building an enterprise or movement. You will bring sound judgement, strategic insight and the confidence to contribute meaningfully to board discussions on the most important issues facing the organisation.

We are particularly interested in candidates who can act as a credible ambassador for the British Red Cross and who can bring strong networks that open doors to the businesses, philanthropists and decision makers whose support will shape our next chapter, and the ability to connect people, ideas and opportunities as we grow our income, accelerate our digital transformation and strengthen our voice with government. Equally important is a genuine commitment to our charitable purpose and fundamental Principles, with motivation rooted in the impact you wish to achieve for people in crisis. The experience the board is looking for is set out in more detail in the person specification.

As a board, we are committed to ensuring that our leadership reflects the diverse communities we serve. We warmly encourage applications from candidates from a broad range of backgrounds, experiences and perspectives, recognising that senior leadership and influence are built in many different ways and that diversity on the board is important.

The role of trustee is voluntary and unremunerated, requiring time, commitment and a willingness to engage fully in the life of the organisation. In return, it offers the opportunity to contribute to an extraordinary humanitarian mission and to work alongside a committed and talented board, executive team, staff and volunteers who are united by a shared belief in the power of humanity.

I have been continually inspired by the dedication, professionalism and compassion of the people who make up the British Red Cross. Together, they help ensure that we are there for people before, during and after crisis, whether close to home or across the world.

If you are excited by the opportunity to help shape the future of the British Red Cross and believe you can make a meaningful contribution to our work, I very much hope you will consider applying.

Yours sincerely,

Sir John Holmes

Chair of the Board of Trustees



The organisation

The British Red Cross stands for humanity. We support people living through a crisis, we'll listen to what they need and get them the right help, whether that's food, first aid, cash, healthcare, or emotional support. And we're committed to making life better for people in crisis in the UK and across the world. The emergencies might be different, from dealing with floods or drought due to climate change, to leaving your country to find safety, to suffering alone with poor health, but we remain here for those who most need our help, without discrimination and with kindness. We are the British Red Cross, the world's emergency responders.

The British Red Cross works in the UK and internationally, with a focus on three key areas.

Disasters and Emergencies

We support individuals and communities, in the UK and internationally, to survive and recover whenever disaster strikes.

Health and Care

We support people to receive the care and support they need without falling through gaps in health and care systems.

Displacement and Migration

We support people experiencing displacement and migration to feel safe, live with dignity and have voice and opportunity along their entire journey.



Our values and principles

Our values point the way to how we behave in our daily work. They sit alongside our fundamental principles, which underpin everything the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement does.

Our values

Compassionate, Courageous, Inclusive and Dynamic.

The seven fundamental principles

As a member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement the British Red Cross is committed to, and bound by, its fundamental principles.

Proclaimed in Vienna in 1965, the seven fundamental principles bind together the National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. They guarantee the consistency of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and its humanitarian work.

1. Humanity

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, co-operation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

2. Impartiality

It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

3. Neutrality

In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

4. Independence

The Movement is independent. The National Societies, whilst auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

5. Voluntary service

It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

6. Unity

There can only be one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

7. Universality

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all Societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.

Structure and governance

Incorporated by Royal Charter 1908, British Red Cross is a charity registered in England and Wales (220949), Scotland (SC037738), Isle of Man (0752) and Jersey (430).

The board is the governing body and highest decision-making authority within British Red Cross. It sets the direction of the organisation ensuring we continue to achieve our mission and meet our goals, while using our resources to maximum effect and upholding our core ethos and values.

The board comprises up to seven elected members and up to six members appointed by the board. Trustees acting individually and collectively have an overall stewardship responsibility for the British Red Cross, ensuring that it works effectively towards its vision and mission. The board is also responsible for upholding the fundamental principles as well as our core ethos and values. The board approves policies for the organisation and works closely with the chief executive and executive leadership team, which is charged with the implementation of our strategy and policy.

The membership of the current board is available on our website at redcross.org.uk/our-trustees.

The British Red Cross is a member of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the world's largest humanitarian network. Our volunteers and staff contribute to a number of initiatives in both the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, our 191 other National Societies, and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Role description

Purpose of the role

As members of the board, trustees share collective responsibility for the governance and strategic direction of the British Red Cross, ensuring that it fulfils its humanitarian mission in line with its Royal Charter, the fundamental principles and its legal and regulatory obligations.

Key responsibilities

- Contribute to setting the strategic direction of the British Red Cross, including the delivery of Strategy 2030, and hold the executive leadership team to account for its implementation.
- Uphold the fundamental principles and the values of the British Red Cross in all aspects of the board's work.
- Ensure the organisation complies with its Royal Charter, charity law and the regulatory requirements of each jurisdiction in which it is registered.
- Ensure the effective and efficient use of resources, safeguarding the financial sustainability and reputation of the organisation.
- Contribute to effective oversight of risk, safeguarding and organisational performance.
- Provide constructive challenge and support to the chief executive and executive leadership team.
- Bring specialist knowledge and experience to board discussions and, where appropriate, contribute to the work of a board committee.
- Act as an ambassador for the British Red Cross, using networks and influence to connect people, ideas and opportunities in support of the mission.
- Maintain high standards of conduct, acting in the best interests of the charity, managing any conflicts of interest and observing the Seven Principles of Public Life (the Nolan Principles).
- Take part in induction, ongoing development and regular reviews of the board's effectiveness.



Person specification

The successful candidate will be able to demonstrate the following:

Essential

- A strong commitment to the purpose of the British Red Cross and its fundamental principles, with motivation rooted in the impact you wish to achieve for people in crisis.
- Experience of leading at the most senior level of a large and complex organisation, with the personal presence and networks to influence at the highest level.
- Sound judgement and strategic insight, with the confidence to engage with complex issues and offer constructive challenge.
- The ability to act as a credible ambassador, with strong networks and the ability to connect people, ideas and opportunities.
- An understanding of the role and responsibilities of a trustee, or the ability to develop this quickly.
- A collaborative approach and the ability to work effectively as part of a board.
- A commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.
- The ability to uphold the principles of neutrality and impartiality, including in public and online.
- The time and commitment to engage fully in the life of the organisation.

The contribution we are looking for

This appointment will strengthen the board's ability to open doors and extend the reach of the British Red Cross. We would ideally prefer someone who has built their standing in one or more of the areas below.

- Technology, digital and data, having led or overseen transformation at scale.
- Philanthropy, partnerships and business development, with experience and relationships that could unlock significant new income.
- Public affairs and influencing, with access to senior decision makers in government and beyond.

We warmly encourage applications from people from a broad range of backgrounds, experiences and perspectives.

Terms of appointment

Type of appointment

This is an appointed trustee appointment. The board can comprise up to seven elected members, chosen from the active volunteer base of the British Red Cross, and up to six appointed members appointed by the board for their expertise.

Remuneration

The role of trustee is voluntary and unremunerated. Reasonable out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed in line with British Red Cross policy.

Term of office

Four years, renewable once by mutual consent.

Time commitment

Around 20 days per year.

This includes attendance at board meetings and the time to prepare for meetings i.e. reading papers. Six board meetings are held each year, usually four in person at various locations around the UK and two virtually. Of these, two meetings are usually over two days to allow deeper engagement with both services and strategy. In addition to these meetings, trustees usually join at least one committee or working group and attend a few organisational events during the year.

Location

UK wide

Eligibility and checks

Candidates must not be disqualified from acting as a charity trustee. The appointment will be subject to satisfactory references and due diligence checks including an appropriate enhanced criminal record check.

Additional requirements

- Trustees should serve in an individual capacity and avoid conflicts of interest.
- British Red Cross officials, including staff and volunteers, must not have a high public profile in the political sphere or in other fields which might reflect adversely on our organisation or on the fundamental principles.



How to apply

To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/brc-trustee/> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared.

- Your CV (no more than three sides).
- A covering letter that sets out your motivation for the role and describes the specific experience you can bring to the appointment.

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.

Deadline for applications is Friday 11th December 2026.

For an informal and confidential conversation about the role, please contact:

Katy Giddens, Director, m: 07395 887 562 e: katy.giddens@starfishsearch.com

Recruitment timetable

Closing date	Friday 11th December 2026
Preliminary interviews with Starfish Search	w/c 4th January 2027
Final Panel interviews	w/c 25th January 2027
Appointment ratified by the board	February 2027

**Together,
we are the
world's
emergency
responders**