

Trustee recruitment pack



March 2026


Helen & Douglas House
your local children's hospice

Message from David Whittingham, Chief Executive



Thank you for your interest in becoming a Trustee of Helen & Douglas House. The Board of Trustees has an important role in the leadership and strategic oversight of our charity.

As the world's first children's hospice, we have a proud history of providing exceptional, compassionate care for children with life-limiting conditions and their families.

Today, we support families across the Thames Valley region, in our hospice, in hospital and in their own homes, ensuring they receive the right care, in the right place, whenever they need it. Our mission is centred on people, and everything we do is shaped by the voices and experiences of the families we serve.

Every family we support reminds us why our mission matters so deeply, and why strong, sustainable foundations are essential to our future.

We are governed and supported by a dedicated Board of Trustees, who give their time voluntarily to ensure that Helen & Douglas House is run in line with its legal, moral and ethical responsibilities. Our Trustees generously serve as company directors and charity trustees, upholding all legal and statutory obligations.

Each Trustee brings valuable expertise and insight to our organisation, using their knowledge, skills and experience to strengthen and support our charitable purpose.

If you would like to become a Trustee, and are motivated by the opportunity to help shape the future of a pioneering children's hospice we would be delighted to hear from you.

Thank you once again for considering this role and for your interest in our mission.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Whittingham".

David Whittingham
Chief Executive

Leon enjoying playing on the roundabout with nurse Kath



About Helen & Douglas House



Sister Frances Dominica, HRH The Duchess of Kent and Catherine and Jacqueline Worswick

Helen & Douglas House is the world's first children's hospice, co-founded in 1982 by Sister Frances Dominica and the Worswick family.

The inspiration for Helen House was a little girl called Helen who was left with severe and irreversible brain damage after an emergency operation to remove a brain tumour.

Helen's parents took her home from hospital to care for her in their family home.

A friendship developed between Sister Frances and Helen's parents and on occasions Sister Frances looked after Helen for short periods to give her parents a break.

From this friendship the idea of a small, homely hospice for children was created.

Our hospice improves the lives of local terminally ill children and their families living in Oxfordshire and the surrounding counties.

We are a home-from-home for local terminally ill children and their families. We provide round-the-clock care in a warm, loving environment. We are a comforting cocoon filled with laughter; a peaceful place where families can create happy memories in their last days, weeks, months, or years together.

We offer supportive stays, pain relief, symptom management, fun and memory-making activities, holistic therapies, end of life care and bereavement support for parents and siblings. Our amazing team, including doctors, nurses, and carers, provide exceptional tailored care.

We help children living with a huge variety of complex conditions which will end their lives prematurely.

Our experienced team helps reduce the fear and pain felt by families facing an uncertain future and, when life comes to an end, we are there to help them survive the loss of their child.

Helen & Douglas House is a local charity which needs to raise around £6m every year, to care for local terminally ill children and most of our income comes from public support.

Our hospice relies on volunteers and donations such as regular or individual gifts, gifts in Wills, local hospice lottery, community fundraising and income that we generate from the donations kindly given to our retail stores. We can only continue to help local families with public support.



Playworker, Chloe and Edith enjoying bubbles in the hospice garden

Our mission, vision, values and strategic aims



Vision
Every life a good life,
every death a dignified death

Mission
To pioneer, deliver, and champion exceptional palliative clinical services that adapt to the ever-evolving needs of children and families, through compassionate, high-quality care

STRATEGIC AIMS

Ensure children and their families receive seamless, integrated palliative care in their preferred settings

Establish a leading role in advancing impactful research and education within the paediatric hospice sector, driving innovation and evidence-based practices to improve care for children and their families

Collaboratively transform the landscape of paediatric palliative, and end-of-life care, setting new standards to meet the unique needs of children and families with compassion, innovation and excellence

FOUNDATION PILLARS

Ensure financial stability

Invest in physical and digital infrastructure

Develop the right teams in the right place with the right skills and culture

ENABLERS - BUILD OUR STRENGTH



"Families like mine rely on the excellent care and support Helen & Douglas House provide which is a lifeline. Never in a million years did we expect to be a family that needed a children's hospice. No family imagines it will be them. But it was for us, twice over. For me it is a home-from-home, somewhere I can relax knowing Rayyan is in the best of hands. I trust them to do a wonderful job and I can never thank them enough."

Nadia, Rayyan and Zayn's mum

Our values



We are creative and resourceful



We are open and honest



We are caring



We lead by example



We are committed to partnership

These values are core to the charity, and every staff member and volunteer should strive to always embody them when representing the Hospice.



Nathan with nurse Ellen



Alessia having a Physio session

Governance and Inclusion

Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

One of the things that matters most at Helen & Douglas House is that everyone feels they belong. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion are part of how we work every day.

We have built a strong culture of awareness and inclusion, so we have a solid base to continue our journey towards greater diversity.

At Helen & Douglas House, whatever your background or lived experience, we want you to feel respected, valued and able to be yourself.

FREDIE

F **Fairness** for all is a reality

R **Respect** for all is the norm

E **Equality** of opportunity for all is embedded

D **Diverse** employees feel that they belong

I **Inclusion** is widely understood, where all colleagues are committed to inclusive behaviours and where leaders connect the link between an inclusive culture and business performance

E **Engaged**

- where there is a positive emotional attachment between colleagues, their work, managers and leaders
- where everyone lives and breathes the values and goals of the organisation

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Here is a link to our Governance website where you will find our Annual report and other reports of interest

<https://www.helenanddouglas.org.uk/about-us/governance/>



Job details

We are currently recruiting four volunteer Trustee roles. The specific responsibilities of each role are:

Clinical (Nursing)

To provide strategic oversight and Board-level assurance of the charity's clinical governance as well as offer advice, support and constructive challenge to the Director of Clinical services and Medical Director in the further development of the organisation's clinical services.

Digital & Information Systems

To maintain effective governance of the organisation's digital and IS affairs, ensuring its data management policies, processes and procedures are compliant with all relevant legislation and ensuring that the charity has an effective strategy for the use and management of data and information systems.

Human Resources

To maintain effective governance of the organisation's people & organisational culture affairs, ensuring its human resources management policies, processes and procedures are compliant with all relevant legislation.

Treasurer

To maintain effective governance of the organisation's financial affairs, ensuring its financial viability and ensuring that proper processes and procedures exist for ensuring all financial records, decisions and delegations are maintained.



Elliot at an Easter party at Helen & Douglas House

Trustee key responsibilities

We are governed by a Board of Trustees responsible for leadership, strategic oversight, and ensuring that the organisation delivers its mission. Helen & Douglas House is registered as a company limited by guarantee and as a charity. Trustees serve as company directors and charity trustees, upholding all legal and statutory obligations.

We operate within a regulated environment as charitable providers of healthcare services, and as such Trustees have clearly defined accountabilities within this context to ensure safe, high-quality care.

Key Responsibilities:

Strategic Leadership & Governance

- Shape and approve the charity's strategic direction, priorities, and annual plan in line with its Memorandum & Articles of Association.
- Ensure compliance with charity and company law, the governing document, safeguarding regulations, and professional standards.
- Support transparent and effective oversight through Board and Committee participation.

Financial Oversight

- Confirm the charity's financial stability by reviewing budgets, accounts, and reserves, balancing current service needs with long-term sustainability.
- Uphold fiduciary duty in managing assets, investments, risks, and financial controls.

Service Quality & Risk Management

- Oversee service quality, regulatory compliance (e.g., CQC), and safeguarding standards.
- Monitor performance via KPIs, quality accounts, and strategic risk registers.

Executive Leadership & Relationship

- Appoint and support the Chief Executive, regularly reviewing performance.
- Maintain a productive relationship with leadership, offering guidance rooted in your expertise.

Advocacy & Stakeholder Engagement

- Serve as an ambassador - fostering the charity's reputation and engaging networks to broaden support, fundraising, and impact.
- Represent Helen & Douglas House at public functions, events, and strategic partnerships.

Board Development & Succession

- Participate in board recruitment, induction, and performance review processes.
- Encourage continuous learning within the board, including diversity, equity, and inclusion training.

Trustee key responsibilities

Person Specification:

Core Competencies

- Strong commitment to children's palliative care and the organisation's mission.
- Awareness of legal duties, safeguarding responsibilities, and ethical governance.
- Strategic thinker with the ability to analyse complex information and make balanced decisions.
- Integrity, objectivity, and impartiality in all Board actions.

Desired Skills & Experience

Trustees are recruited and appointed to the Board based upon identified requirements for qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience within the board and the organisation's mission and strategy. Trustees are expected to utilise their knowledge, skills and experience diligently within their competence for the benefit for the organisation and its charitable purpose.

Personal Qualities

- Team player with excellent interpersonal and communication skills.
- Independent, confident, supportive yet able to challenge constructively.
- Willingness to advocate and champion the charity across their networks.
- Ability to maintain confidentiality and manage conflicts of interest.

Time Commitment & Term

- Equivalent of 12 working days per year at a minimum, to read papers, to attend board meetings (quarterly typically 3 hours), to attend subcommittees (quarterly typically 2 hours) and additional strategy sessions as required.
- All Trustees are required to attend at least 75% of board meetings annually and 75% of subcommittee meetings.
- Participation in at least one Board sub-committee or working group.
- Engagement in 1–2 public-facing or community outreach events per year.
- The standard Trustee term is three years, with possible reappointment for two further terms, as set by the governing documents.

Eligibility & Safeguards

- Trustees must be at least 16 years old, not disqualified by law (e.g., no unspent criminal convictions or bankruptcy), and not removed from prior trusteeship for misconduct.
- Enhanced DBS check required; alignment with HMRC's Fit and Proper Person criteria.

Remuneration

This post is unremunerated however essential travel and subsistence expenses are payable on completion of the organisation's expenses form.

**For more information on any of these roles, please email
recruitment@helenanddouglas.org.uk**