

# External Adviser RCN Foundation Governance and Nominations Committee



## Recruitment Pack November 2024



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, an External Adviser role description and person specification, and an equalities monitoring form.

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.

At the start of the year, we launched our strategy for 2024-2028, entitled Ignite, Inspire, Aspire: Our Vision to Transform Lives, the aim of which is 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](#).

We are seeking an outstanding individual with a background in charity governance to join our Governance and Nominations Committee at the earliest opportunity subject to all the necessary administrative processes being completed.

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.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane Cummings', written in a cursive style.

Professor 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 and trade union activities.

Our purpose is to support and strengthen nursing and midwifery, to improve the health and wellbeing of the public. The charity supports nurses, midwives, nursing associates, healthcare support workers, student nurses and midwives, and retired nurses, midwives and healthcare support workers by:

- Supporting individual members of the nursing and midwifery teams by providing grants for financial hardship and education activities
- Investing in the future of the professions by funding projects in our key priority areas of care home nursing; supporting children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing, and learning disability nursing
- Championing nursing and midwifery by supporting projects that raise the profile of the professions and help the public to better understand the contribution made by nursing and midwifery staff to improving the nation's health.

The RCN Foundation supports staff across all of the nations of the UK, in both health and care settings. Our help is available to any nurse, midwife or healthcare/maternity support worker who needs it, and they do not need to be a member of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) to receive support from the Foundation.

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. 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.

# 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 2023, 99% of grant recipients reported that they were more in control of their situation following support from the Foundation.

Furthermore, individuals who contacted the service were, on average, £10,631 better off per year as a result of the advice they were given.

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 healthcare/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 2023, the Foundation provided grants of around £157,000 to 111 individuals.

## **Nursing and midwifery-led projects that improve patient care**

Since 2010, the Foundation has funded a wide range of projects. These include:

- A major project to develop and evaluate the principles that underpin good care for dementia patients in both acute hospital and a care home settings where health care professionals shared their experiences of dementia care

- The refurbishment of the RCN Library and Heritage Centre, the largest nursing specific resource in Europe
- A Public Lecture series that aims to focus on key health issues, whilst increasing public understanding of the role and contribution of nursing.

In 2023, the Foundation funded a number of nursing-and midwifery-led projects in our two priority areas: Children and Young People's Mental Health and Learning Disability Nursing. Further information about our current and previous research projects can be found on the Foundation's website.

Our Board has recently approved our grant-making strategy for 2024-2028 which supports our organisational strategy and sets out how we will strive to continue and grow our grant-making activities across the three areas of: hardship, education and learning, and research and innovation. The aim is to support nurses, midwives, nursing associates and healthcare support workers to continue to develop their knowledge skills and expertise to deliver safe, evidence-based nursing and midwifery care to improve the health and wellbeing of the public.

## **Governance Review**

In 2022, in line with good practice, an independent governance review was commissioned by the Foundation. The focus of the review was Board and Committee effectiveness. The resulting report was presented to the Board in January 2023. It found that the Foundation was "very well governed...that it strongly demonstrates all seven elements of the Charity Governance Code... and that the Board is unusually and impressively diverse in terms of both protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and career backgrounds."

The review made a series of recommendations to further improve some areas of governance, most of which were completed in 2023.

Another key recommendation was that the Foundation should review and make changes to its Articles of Association to better reflect current best practice. Discussion on these proposed changes are taking place with the RCN, in its capacity as the Foundation's sole member.

# About the role

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## **RCN Foundation External Adviser Role Description**

### **Duties**

- 1.To provide independent and objective specialist advice to the Governance and Nominations Committee.
- 2.To actively promote good governance and participate in committee discussion providing independent challenge and scrutiny
- 3.To support the development and delivery of the work of the RCN Foundation through the Committee.
- 4.To ensure that the Committee is aware of best practice.
- 5.To take full part in the work of the Committee, including reading papers for each meeting so that effective contributions can be made.
- 6.To provide advice and guidance to the RCN Foundation Director and relevant staff members on wider issues within your area of expertise.
- 7.To enable the charity to achieve its strategic objectives.

### **Person Specification**

An External Adviser should have the following knowledge, skills, experience and qualities:

- 1.Knowledge of, and commitment to, the charitable objects, mission and priorities of the Foundation.
- 2.An excellent understanding of good governance in charities
- 3.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).
- 4.The ability to work well as a member of the team.
- 5.An ability to commit the necessary time to be an effective member of the committee.
- 6.Sound analytical skills and good judgement.
- 7.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.
- 8.An understanding of key principles of equality, diversity and inclusion, and a commitment to applying these principles in your role as an External Adviser.

# What is involved

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External Advisers must have a willingness to commit around 6 to 10 days per year, to:

- Attend and participate in 3-4 meetings per year of the Governance and Nominations Committee, usually held virtually from 4pm to 6pm
- Review meeting papers and respond to requests from the Chair
- Attend the Annual External Adviser Event, usually held virtually from 12pm to 2pm.

There is also an opportunity to take part in Foundation events during the year, such as our Annual Impact Awards and Dinner.

## **Remuneration**

The role of an External Adviser is a voluntary position and not accompanied by any financial remuneration. However, reasonable out of pocket expenses such as travel costs or childcare will be reimbursed.

## **Terms of Office**

External Advisers normally serve a minimum term of three years, which can be renewed for a further three-year term. The maximum is a total of three terms.

# Who we are looking for

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We are seeking an outstanding individual to join our Governance and Nominations Committee at the earliest opportunity (in agreement with the successful candidate). You will have:

- A broad understanding of the key issues facing healthcare and/or nursing/midwifery
- An excellent understanding of good charity governance
- An ability to understand and contribute to the role and work of the Committee



- Experience of appointing Non-Executive Directors
- An ability to commit a minimum of 6-10 days a year to the work of the RCN Foundation, including attending meetings of the Committee, reviewing papers, responding to requests for support from staff
- 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.

## How to apply

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To apply in confidence to become an External Adviser of the RCN Foundation's Governance and Nominations Committee, please [email the following to Angela Flanagan, Clerk to the Trustees](#):

- 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 9 February 2025**. We expect interviews to be held virtually. 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 do not need to be an RCN member to apply
- You are not eligible to apply if you are an employee of one of the entities within the RCN Group (Royal College of Nursing, RCNi, Hold Co Ltd or the RCN Foundation).