

Becoming an MRF Trustee



Thank you for taking the time to find out more about our work and how you could help by becoming a new Trustee of Meningitis Research Foundation (MRF).

I joined MRF as a new Trustee and Chair in 2022. What drew me in was seeing an organisation committed to drive real change for people around the world, whilst having its feet planted firmly on the ground, listening to people and families affected daily by this dreadful disease.

From answering a single call to a newly bereaved family, to sitting on a global technical task force run by the World Health Organization, our expertise and insights are needed and heard. Through our Confederation of Meningitis Organisations network of 130 like-minded individuals and organisations in more than 50 countries, we are leading a movement globally to defeat meningitis by 2030.

As a Trustee you could play a pivotal role in defeating a disease within a decade. We're not making that up – we know how to get there, and [this is the plan](#).

We have an amazing Board of committed volunteers already. With two Trustees stepping down this year after incredible years of support, we now need new people on Board. And that could be you.

We're particularly interested in new Board members in two areas:

- **Financial expertise** to fill vacancies arising within our Finance & Risk and Audit Committees. A CIMA or accountancy qualification would be ideal.
- With fast-changing technology creating both opportunities and challenges, we would welcome applications from people with suitable experience in **knowledge management, digital transformation, information technology and/or AI**.

A commitment to seeing health outcomes improved in the UK and globally is a must, as is a passionate commitment to our values (see later in this pack).

We meet four times each year during the UK working day (typically 10am-2pm) so this is only for you if you can free up that time. Four meetings take place remotely each year via MS Teams and we also hold an annual in-person strategy day in Bristol, UK.

We're committed to diversity and inclusion and have made great strides in that direction over the past 5 years. Our Board is now majority female, and our Scientific Panel also has a female majority and Chair. But we still need more representatives from different ethnicities, geographies, life experiences, disability and neurodiversity perspectives. We'll be even stronger if you can help build on a good platform in this regard.

Please do enjoy reading the information in this pack and if you would like to ask any questions do let us know. I hope what you read attracts you to apply.



Claire Leigh
Chair of Trustees



Join an incredible team working together to defeat meningitis

Why apply for this role?

You should apply to become a Trustee if you want to share your experience and expertise to help to defeat meningitis by joining the governing board of the world's leading meningitis charity.

Why does defeating meningitis matter?

Meningitis is the swelling of the meninges, which is the lining around the brain and spinal cord, caused mainly by germs entering the body. Septicaemia is blood poisoning caused by the same germs that can cause meningitis and this blood poisoning causes sepsis. Meningitis and septicaemia are illnesses that can kill in hours.

Anyone, anywhere, of any age, can get meningitis and septicaemia, although some people are at higher risk than others.

Together meningitis and neonatal sepsis are the world's second biggest infectious killer of under 5's globally.

They can kill in a matter of hours and one in five who survive are left with life changing disabilities.

There are over 2 million new cases of meningitis in the world each year and over 200,000 people die from the disease.

The impact of the disease can be devastating for individuals and families. When we ask them what they want us to do on their behalf, families commonly say "Please make sure no one else has to go through what we have".

We need passionate, committed, and determined people to join us on that journey on their behalf.

Why join MRF?

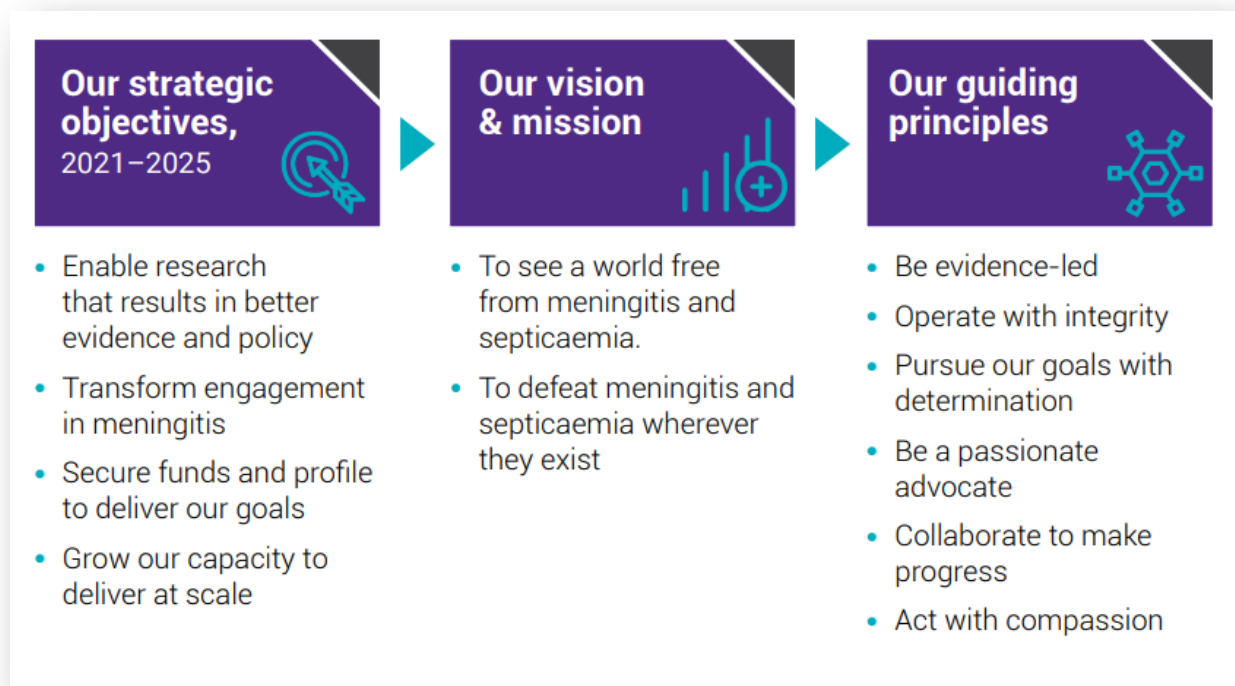
We are a values-led organisation with a 30-year history of impact that helps saves lives. And now we are committed to defeating meningitis by 2030.



We've supported those affected by this devastating disease, we've campaigned for the introduction of vaccinations *and* funded vital research. Now, the experience gained from our close and ongoing connection with patients and their families, our success in advocating for change on their behalf and our strong reputation for evidencing the case for change is enabling us to play a significant role on the global stage.

We have played an important part in helping develop the World Health Organization's (WHO) road map to Defeat Meningitis by 2030 and we serve as one of six members of the road map's Technical Task Force alongside UNICEF.

People impacted by meningitis in the UK and, now, across the world depend on MRF for support and rely on us to make sure their voices are heard. Amplifying their voices is critical if we are to stop millions of individuals and families having to go through the trauma and loss which meningitis brings.



We are currently in the process of agreeing our new strategy from 2025-2030 and will launch this in April next year.

What types of work do we do?

Our flagship work includes:

- Being a member of the WHO Technical Task Force to [defeat meningitis by 2030](#).

- Running the [Confederation of Meningitis Organisations](#) which represents over 130 like-minded members in more than 50 countries.
- Hosting a one-stop-shop for the best data for modelled estimates on burden of meningitis called the [Meningitis Progress Tracker](#) , a critical tracking mechanism for the new global roadmap. This has now been used more than 50,000 times in over 100 countries.
- Co-leading on the advocacy and engagement pillar of the new global roadmap with UNICEF.
- Providing a secretariat support function for the [Global Meningitis Genome Partnership](#) building on the establishment of the Global Meningitis Genome Library.
- Delivering an internationally renowned [research conference](#) every 2 years showcasing latest cutting-edge research on meningitis from around the world.
- [Funding research](#) into meningitis, especially related to genomics and the lifetime impact of meningitis.
- Providing a world class website and support service that has over 2 million uses each year.

Meningitis Research Foundation and UNICEF renew their partnership in support of the World Health Organization's Defeating Meningitis by 2030 Global Road Map

22 May 2023



unicef 
for every child

What would you do?

Our trustees play a vital role in making sure we achieve our core purpose. They oversee the overall management and administration of the charity. They also ensure we have a clear strategy and that our work and goals are in line with our vision. Just as importantly, they support and challenge the executive team to enable us to grow and thrive, and through this, defeat meningitis wherever it exists.

Board members have a collective responsibility. This means that trustees always act as a group and not as individuals.

The duties of a trustee are as follows:

- Ensuring that the organisation pursues its stated objects (purposes), as defined in its governing document, by developing and agreeing a long-term strategy.
- Ensuring that the organisation complies with our Articles of Association, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- Ensuring that the organisation applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its charitable objects (ie the charity must not spend money on activities that are not included in its own objects, however worthwhile or charitable those activities are) for the benefit of the public.
- Ensuring that the organisation defines its goals and evaluates performance against agreed targets.
- Safeguarding the good name and values of the organisation.
- Ensuring the effective and efficient administration of the organisation, including having appropriate policies and procedures in place.
- Ensuring the financial stability of the organisation.
- Protecting and managing the property of the charity and ensuring the proper investment of the charity's funds.
- Following proper and formal arrangements for the appointment, supervision, support, appraisal and remuneration of the chief executive (if the charity employs staff).

In addition to the above statutory duties, each trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the Board of Trustees reach sound decisions. This may involve scrutinising board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, or other issues in which the trustee has special expertise.

Person specification

- A commitment to the organisation and/or our cause
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort
- Strategic vision
- Good, independent judgement
- An ability to think creatively
- A willingness to speak their mind
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship

- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team.
- A commitment to Nolan’s seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
- Willingness to lead according to [our values](#)

How much of a commitment is it?

The MRF Board meets four times each year (usually February, May, October and November/December) at a four-hour meeting that takes place during UK working hours, typically 10am-2pm. Board Meetings are held remotely. We also have one annual Strategy Day in person at the Charity’s Bristol head office (usually in November/December each year). Papers for meetings are distributed one week in advance and take approximately two hours to read and prepare for each meeting. Trustees are requested to attend all Board meetings. Where this is not possible, Trustees are asked not to miss more than two meetings consecutively.

For Trustees outside the UK, or for those who may have difficulty travelling, remote attendance at all meetings is possible (via MS Teams or similar) and this can be arranged in advance.

The MRF Board is supported by four committees: Finance and Risk; Confederation of Meningitis Organisations Advisory Council; a Remunerations Committee; and an Audit Committee.

Committees are made up of a smaller group of Trustees. Committee meetings take place two weeks before each full Board meeting and last 2 hours each, except for the Audit and Remunerations Committees, which meet annually. Papers are circulated in advance where possible no later than 48 hours before meeting. Committee meetings take place by MS Teams to reduce time and cost on travel.

Where necessary, travel expenses for UK participants to meetings are covered by the Charity, including to the Strategy Day. If Trustees are based outside the UK, the charity is unable to cover travel expenses for international travel.



Safeguarding

MRF is committed to safeguarding and this role will require references and confirmation of your identity will be undertaken. In addition to this you will be required to undergo criminal record checks relevant to the region. Screening will be via the Disclosure and Barring Service (England & Wales) Access NI (Northern Ireland), Garda Vetting (Ireland) or Protecting Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scotland. You will also be checked against the following: Individual Insolvency Register, Companies House Disqualified Directors Register and the Register of Removed Trustees. For Trustees based outside the UK, police checks or clearances from respective countries will be requested.

Ideal candidates will be able to demonstrate how they are personally motivated by the work of MRF and how their characteristics, experience and skills can contribute to the development of the Board and the organisation.

Where can I get more information?

- Our strategy 2021-2025 can be [found here](#).
- Details of our current Board can be [found here](#).
- Our latest annual accounts can be [found here](#).

How do I apply?

Applications should consist of:

1. A concise covering letter (ideally no longer than two pages), addressing the criteria in in this pack.
2. An up-to-date curriculum vitae.

Names and contact details of two referees (although referees will only be approached at the final stage of the process, and only with your express permission).

The deadline for receipt of applications is midday on Friday, 1st November 2024.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview w/c 11th Nov 2024 . Interviews will be held online.

If you would like an informal discussion before applying, please email MRF Chair Claire Leigh on clairesuzanneleigh@gmail.com

Applications should be sent to Vinny Smith, CEO on vinnys@meningitis.org

Appointments will be made subject to receipt of satisfactory references.