

Independent Chair of Trustees



Charity People
BOARD & LEADERSHIP



December 2024



**Royal College
of Physicians**



Welcome

Dear candidate

I am delighted that you are interested in becoming the chair of the Board of Trustees of the Royal College of Physicians (RCP).

Since its foundation in 1518 under a charter from King Henry VIII, the RCP has played a major strategic role in representing physicians and driving improvement in the diagnosis and treatment of disease, the care of individual patients and the health of whole populations, both in the UK and across the globe.

Becoming chair of the RCP's Board of Trustees will provide a rare and fascinating insight into the workings of a 500-year-old professional membership body and an opportunity to work alongside a group of skilled, enthusiastic and committed individuals, both medical and non-medical. The past few years have been particularly challenging for the RCP as we continue to support our members and fellows in the post-pandemic healthcare environment, influencing the work of government in areas such as NHS workforce planning, health inequalities and representing the next generation of physicians in the UK.

During 2024 we have also responded to the publication of the RCP-commissioned The King's Fund independent learning review, following an extraordinary general meeting held in March 2024 on the role of physician associates in the NHS. The review made ten key recommendations focusing on improving leadership, management and culture, and structure and processes at the RCP, including a governance review that considers board effectiveness, college bye-laws and how RCP Council operates.

The RCP has accepted the review and recommendations in full and the leadership team has pledged to learn and, more importantly, to act, improve and rebuild for fellows and members. The chair of the Board of Trustees will have a key role to play in this work.

You will join the RCP at a pivotal moment in its history and have the opportunity to work with college fellows and the executive team to shape a modern governance structure and foster collaborative and supportive working relationships in line with the values of the RCP. The RCP is a vibrant yet complex organisation, and a key role of our new chair will be to seamlessly manage our commitment to being a first class membership organisation alongside our responsibilities under charity law.

We are looking for an exceptional individual who will provide leadership to the trustees, command respect from RCP Council and our elected representatives, while supporting the CEO and executive team to deliver the RCP's vision, mission and strategy. They will have demonstrable experience of chairing inclusive and collaborative boards and have operated effectively within complex organisations, successfully navigating internal and external pressures and significant change.

I hope you will consider joining us at this exciting time.

Dr Mumtaz Patel
Acting as president
Senior censor and vice president
for education and training

About the Royal College of Physicians

The Royal College of Physicians (RCP) is a professional membership body for physicians, with 40,000 members and fellows around the globe working in hospitals and communities across 30 medical specialties. Physicians diagnose and treat illness, and promote good health. They care for millions of medical patients with a broad range of conditions, from asthma and diabetes to stroke and dengue fever.

Everything that we do at the RCP aims to improve patient care and reduce illness. Our work is patient centred and clinically led. We drive improvement in the diagnosis of disease, the care of individual patients and the health of the whole population, both in the UK and across the globe. We work to ensure that physicians are educated and trained to provide high-quality care. We also develop doctors to become leaders, providing advice and expertise to deliver service improvements across the NHS and more broadly.

The RCP employs 350 staff, works with doctors released from clinical duties into officer, senior officer and advisory roles as well as many volunteers, and has an operating budget of around £40 million per annum. Our activities and services are provided from two main bases in London and Liverpool, in addition to smaller regional offices. The original charter and bye-laws established the college in 1518 and it was granted charitable status as a professional membership organisation in the 1960s. This means that we have specific responsibilities to our members and fellows and an obligation to fulfil our charitable objectives for wider public benefit. The RCP is governed by a Board of Trustees, which is responsible for ensuring effective modern corporate governance and management. Their work is guided by a set of standing orders that clarify the relationships between the Board of Trustees and the RCP Council, which has delegated authority to lead on all matters of professional policy and practice, advising the trustees accordingly.





RCP delivery in 2024

Our membership is a global community of over 40,000 members and fellows, spanning every career stage from medical student to emeritus consultant. The RCP brings together doctors of all backgrounds, ethnicities and ages who work in a diverse range of roles and specialties. We are united by our ambition to deliver the very best care for our patients, alongside a thirst for knowledge and the desire to advocate for each other.

This has formed the heart of recent RCP activities under our three strategic pillars of educating, improving and influencing. The voice of our membership is key to delivering our mission to drive improvements for the profession and healthcare through advocacy, education and research. We have a fundraising strategy in place to help us achieve our widest ambitions, including maximising access to and learning from the RCP's 500-year-old history.

Our popular conferences, regional updates and webinars continue to provide key opportunities to come together, learn new skills and debate fresh ideas. By fostering a culture of learning, leadership and collaboration, the RCP contributes to shaping the future of medical education and maintaining the highest standards of clinical practice by delivering postgraduate training, assessments and continuous professional development (CPD) programmes. In 2024 we have continued to develop our suite of longer leadership programmes targeted to all stages of a doctor's career, launching our SAS leadership development programme and assistant medical director programme as part of this.

In the area of improving care, we have hosted four summits in partnership with NHS England to shape the future of outpatient care. To help standardise care for inpatients with diabetes, we collaboratively developed a new Diabetes Care Accreditation

Programme to our suite of successful accreditation programmes. Our online hub, Medical Care – driving change, showcases best practice and real-world examples of quality improvement.

With a strong focus on health inequalities and prevention, we have celebrated the key milestone of over 250 organisations signing up to the RCP-led Inequalities in Health Alliance. We have a proud history of campaigning for better public health and were delighted to see the government answer our call for a smoke-free generation with recent progress on the Tobacco and Vapes Bill. The launch of the NHS England Long Term Workforce Plan (LTWP), which committed to doubling the number of medical students, answered a significant RCP campaign call to grow the medical workforce. The LTWP is now under review and we are also encouraging more focus on workforce retention, a review of postgraduate training and an increase in training numbers.

In terms of our financial position, we have weathered some challenging years recovering from the pandemic, but will be back into a balanced budget position in 2024.

We are responding to the voices of our fellows and members on the role of physician associates, whose concerns led to an extraordinary general meeting. This includes ensuring that there is more clarity on the role of physician associates as dependent healthcare professionals in secondary care, supervisory arrangements and scope of practice. We are also committed to implementing the recommendations of The King's Fund learning review, which focused on our governance and culture.

Supporting and empowering the next generation of physicians and improving working conditions for all is a major focus for next year. This will lie at the heart of our new strategy in 2025.

Our structure, governance and management

Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is the RCP's governing body. It is responsible for:

- > ensuring the RCP operates within its charitable objectives, and its standing orders in terms of matters reserved for the Board and those delegated to the CEO and college officers
- > providing direction
- > agreeing the RCP annual operations plan and monitoring the progress of performance against this plan
- > ensuring the effective management and custody of all RCP assets.

The Board meets five times a year – four main quarterly meetings plus a November budget review meeting.

RCP Council

The function of Council is to develop RCP policy in relation to professional and clinical matters. Council also considers and acts on current issues affecting professional practice and standards. Its membership includes senior officers, directly elected councillors, and other representatives of those involved in the RCP's work. The RCP Medical Specialties Board and Strategy Executive report directly to Council. Council meets six times a year.

RCP senior officers

The senior officers of the RCP (president, vice presidents, treasurer and registrar) are all trustees of the charity. Their involvement in all of the main boards and committees of the RCP ensures that due consideration is given to the RCP's charter and bye-laws on every occasion

Annual general meeting

There is an annual general meeting (AGM) of fellows, known as Comitia, which is held on a date set by Council. The annual presidential election is held on the first Monday after Palm Sunday by act of parliament.

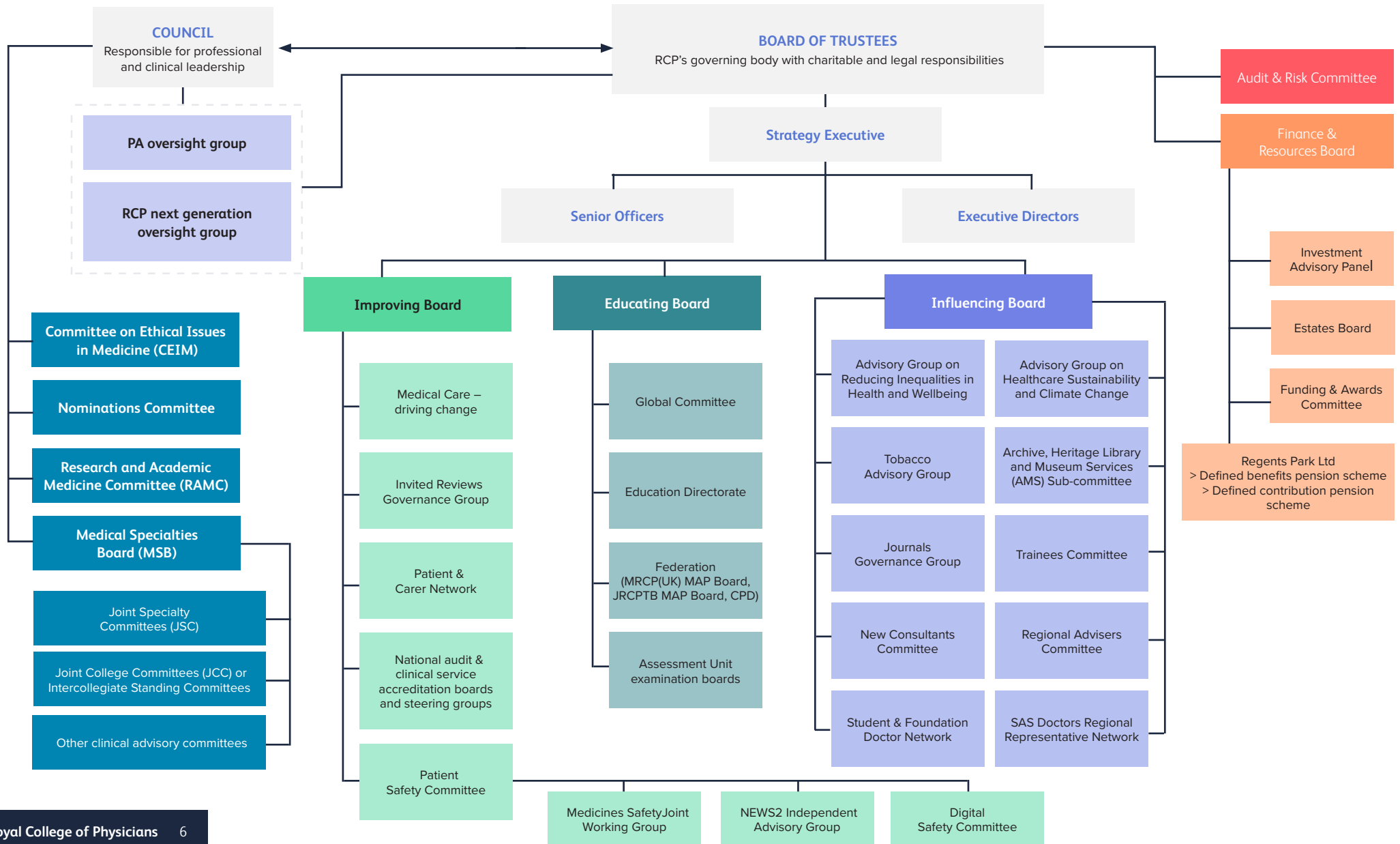
Day-to-day management

The day-to-day operation of the RCP is delegated to the chief executive, who is accountable to the Board of Trustees. The management and staff are ultimately accountable to the chief executive, and each RCP directorate is overseen by a designated senior officer and a senior manager known as an executive director.

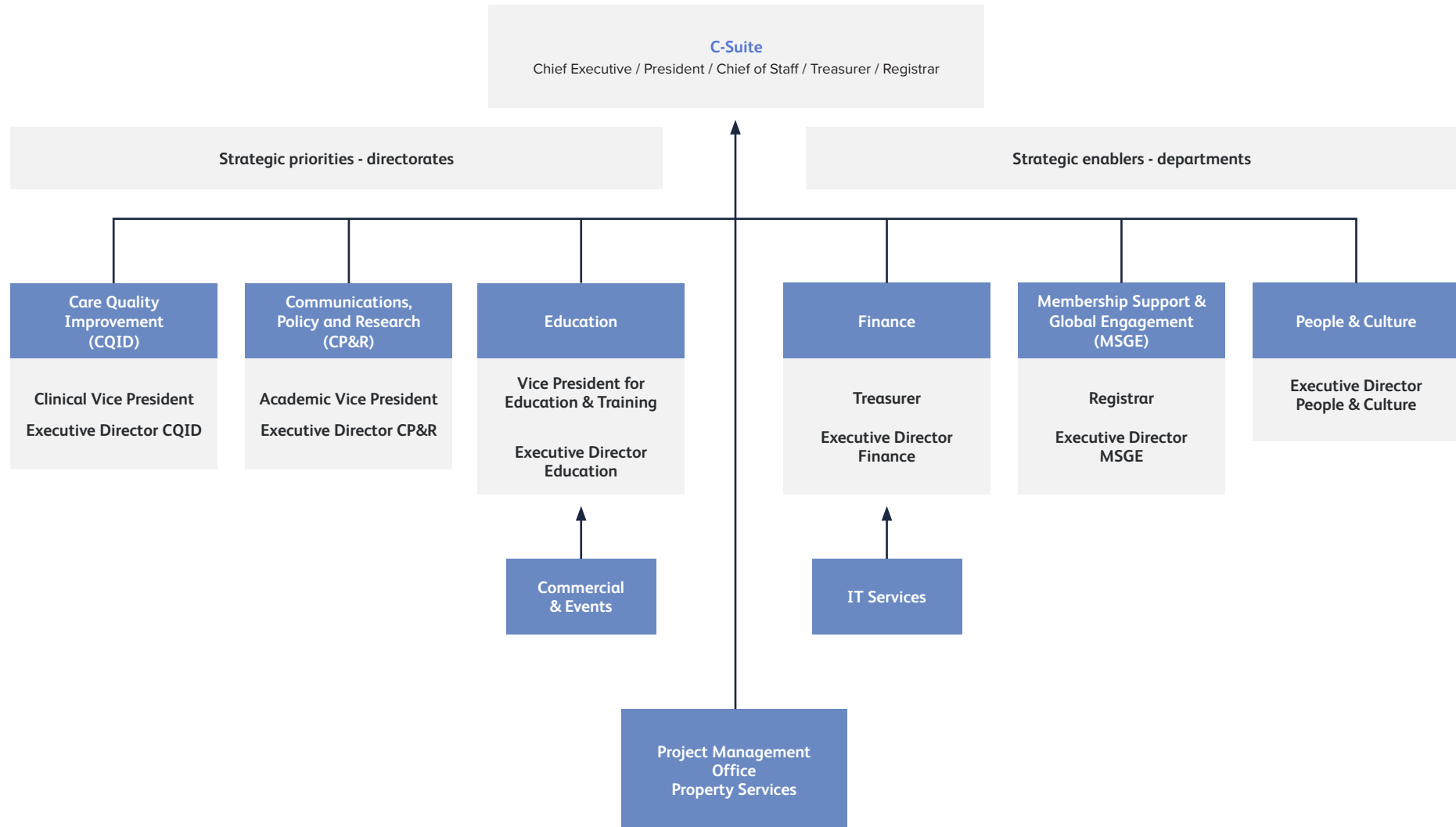
The organograms on the following pages will give visual representation of how the various boards and committees interact.



Governance structure



Day-to-day management structure



The role

Accountable to:

The Board of Trustees (as a whole)

Commitment:

The Board of Trustees meets 5 times a year: four full board meetings and one budget meeting. In addition, the chair will be expected to spend time meeting with senior officers and executive team members to ensure good working relationships are maintained and the responsibilities of the role are fulfilled. Trustees are also invited to the annual general meeting of fellows (Comitia), as observers. Whilst the time commitment may be irregularly spaced, on average, it is estimated that the time commitment will equate to one day a month. Most meetings are held virtually but some travel to London, and less frequently, Liverpool, will be required.

Term:

An initial term of 3 years, with the option to extend by 1 further year subject to consultation with the Council and agreement by the full board.

Remuneration:

The role of chair is not accompanied by any financial remuneration, although expenses incurred while travelling to meetings can be claimed in accordance with the RCP travel policy.





Current context

In September 2024 The King's Fund published an [independent learning review](#) commissioned by the RCP, following an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) held in March 2024 on the role of physician associates (PAs). The review made ten key recommendations focusing on improving leadership, management and culture, and structure and processes at the college, including a governance review that considers board effectiveness, college bye-laws and how RCP Council operates.

The RCP has accepted the review and recommendations in full and the leadership team has pledged to learn and, more importantly, to act, improve and rebuild for fellows and members. With publication of the report, the appointment of a new registrar and a presidential election underway, this is a pivotal moment for the RCP and requires us to review, reset and refocus. In close collaboration with the senior officers and executive team at the RCP, our new board chair will be key in shaping the role that the Board of Trustees will play. Key objectives include developing a strong and effective board of trustees, developing and supporting modern governance processes in line with charity law, enhancing engagement and connection with the RCP membership, and supporting the college's ambition to be the leading voice in medicine.

The role of the chair of the Board of Trustees

The chair will work with the Board of Trustees (the board) in supporting the CEO and executive team to deliver the RCP's vision, mission and strategy. They will provide leadership to the trustees, enabling them to bring their expert knowledge in advising the executive team, and helping them to fulfil their duties and responsibilities in promoting good governance. The chair will also support and, where appropriate, challenge the president and CEO, and ensure that the board functions as a unit and works closely with Council and the executive team to achieve agreed objectives.

General duties of a trustee

The Charity Commission of England and Wales and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator require that trustees must:

- > be willing to act as a trustee of the organisation and accept ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of a charity, and ensuring that it is solvent, well-run, and delivering the charitable outcomes for which it has been set up
- > understand the RCP's purposes (objects and rules set out in its governing document)



Principal responsibilities

Board leadership

- > Chair board meetings, including scrutinising papers and leading discussions, fostering a culture of inclusiveness, transparency and collaboration
- > Ensure that meetings are effective and the best use of trustee time, and that decisions made advance the purpose and values of the RCP
- > Ensure high-quality, evidence-based, collective decision-making with appropriate follow-through
- > Create an environment for a high-performing board team, ensuring that systems and processes are effective while enabling any relevant modernisation
- > Support trustees to fulfil their Board of Trustees responsibilities by creating productive relationships with and among individual board members and the executive and clinical leadership teams
- > Manage any potential conflicts of interest to ensure that probity is maintained and there is appropriate transparency
- > Declare and manage any potential conflict of interests in a timely manner throughout the entire term as a trustee, ensuring that other trustees do the same

Strategic leadership

- > Provide strategic leadership to the board, supporting the setting of goals and targets and evaluating performance against the organisation's strategy
- > Ensure that the board operates within the RCP's charitable objective and its standing orders, and provides clear strategic direction to the RCP
- > Ensure that the board is able to regularly review major

organisational risks and associated opportunities, and satisfy itself that systems are in place to take advantage of opportunities, and manage and mitigate the risks

- > Ensure that the board fulfils its duties to ensure sound financial health of the charity, with systems in place to ensure financial accountability

Compliance

- > Ensure that the RCP complies with charity law, and with the requirements of the Charity Commission as regulator; in particular, that the RCP prepares reports on what it has achieved, and annual returns and accounts as required by law
- > Ensure that the RCP does not breach any of the requirements or rules set out in its governing document and that it remains true to the charitable purpose and objects set out there
- > Comply with the requirements of other legislation and other regulators (if any) that govern the activities of the RCP
- > Develop the knowledge and capability of the board
- > Encourage positive change and modernisation
- > Where necessary, address and resolve any conflicts within the board
- > Appraise the performance of the trustees and the board on an annual basis
- > Ensure that the board membership is refreshed on a regular basis in line with the standing orders, incorporating the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to support the RCP to deliver its strategy and address risks
- > Work within any agreed policies adopted by the RCP

Duty of prudence

- > Ensure that the RCP as a charity is, and will remain, solvent
- > Use charitable funds and assets reasonably, and only in furtherance of the objects of the RCP as a charity
- > Avoid undertaking activities that might place the endowment, funds, assets or reputation of the RCP as a charity at undue risk
- > Take special care when investing the funds of the RCP as a charity, or borrowing funds for the RCP as a charity to use

Duty of care

- > Use reasonable care and skill in their work as a trustee, using their personal skills and experience as needed to ensure that the RCP is well-run and efficient
- > Consider obtaining external professional advice on all matters where there may be material risk to the RCP as a charity, or where the trustees may be in breach of their duties

Additional duties

- > Be responsible, as part of the full Board of Trustees, for appointing or removing the CEO as provided for under Bye-law 23.1
- > Be involved in the appointment of senior staff as and when required
- > Show an active and current interest in all aspects of the RCP
- > Attend College functions, at the request of the president

Personal specification

In addition to the qualities required of a trustee of the RCP, the chair must also meet the following requirements:

Knowledge and skills

- > Broad knowledge and understanding of the healthcare landscape and current issues affecting it
- > Strong leadership skills; ability to motivate and bring people together
- > Financial management expertise and a broad understanding of charity finance issues
- > Good understanding of charity governance issues
- > Confident and effective communicator
- > Reflective and effective listener
- > Chairs meetings effectively, ensuring that business is carried out and that all voices are heard, and opinions considered
- > Manages change effectively and handles varying opinions with fairness, seeking clarity to enable decision making
- > Fosters a culture of values-based leadership
- > Encourages collaborative working, shared decision-making and innovation

Personal qualities

- > Demonstrates a strong and visible passion and commitment to the RCP and its strategic objectives
- > Personal gravitas to lead a board representing an influential and leading membership organisation
- > Strong interpersonal and relationship-building abilities and comfortable in an ambassadorial role
- > A compassionate and strong leader who actively listens and

inspires others towards shared goals, demonstrating tact and diplomacy and enabling consensus

- > A commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, impartiality, fairness and confidentiality
- > Strong networking capabilities that can be utilised to the benefit of the RCP
- > Ability to commit time to conduct the role well, including potential travel and attending events outside office hours

Experience

Essential:

- > Experience of chairing at board level in a complex organisation
- > Experience of working with volunteers at a senior executive level
- > Successful track record of achievement through their career
- > Experience of guiding and directing an organisation through strategic and structural growth during a period of significant external pressures and change
- > Experience of working with risk frameworks and management

Desirable:

- > Experience of charity/membership/healthcare sectors
- > A broad knowledge and understanding of the healthcare landscape and the current issues affecting it

Eligibility

Applicants must meet the Charity Commission's eligibility criteria for the appointment of Trustees, including its automatic disqualification rules. For more information, visit: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/trustee-board-people-and-skills>



Our values

We are committed to taking care, learning, and being collaborative. These values drive the way we behave, how we interact with each other, and how we work together to achieve our vision and improve patient care.

We value taking care

This means we behave respectfully towards people, whatever their role, position, gender or background. It means we act as representatives of the RCP, and take decisions in the interests of the organisation as a whole.

We value learning

This means we continuously improve through active learning and honest reflection, so that we grow personally and as an organisation, while striving for excellence. We support learning and development opportunities.

We value being collaborative

This means we work together towards the RCP's vision in a collaborative and professional way, understanding that individuals bring different strengths and approaches to our work. We value diversity and each other's contributions.

Reference

[The Essential Trustee](#)

The RCP positively encourages applications from suitably qualified and eligible candidates regardless of sex, race, disability, age, sexual orientation, transgender status, religion or belief, marital status or pregnancy and maternity. The RCP is all about our people – our members, staff, volunteers and leaders. We educate, influence and collaborate to improve health and healthcare for everyone and know we can only do this by being inclusive, encouraging and celebrating diverse perspectives. Welcoming into our community people who represent the 21st-century medical workforce and the diverse population of patients we serve is a priority for us. The chair of our Board of Trustees will also be committed to delivering these values in role.

How to apply

Please prepare your supporting statement by submitting your response to the following questions along with your CV in a format that best allows you to shine:

1. Which of your professional skills and/or experience do you feel are most relevant to leading the RCP board of trustees and why (400-500 words or 3–4 minute video)
2. Which of your personal qualities do you feel are most relevant to leading the RCP board of trustees (400 words or 3-minute video)
3. Can you describe a time when you have chaired a challenging board level meeting or group discussion? What approach did you take? How effective was it? (400-500 words or 3-4 minute video)

Invitation to the Webinar

A Q&A webinar session will be hosted by the RCP, where they will share further insights and answer any additional questions you may have. Please register your interest in attending this webinar with your consultant and we will send you a link on Tuesday 21st January, 6pm.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Please also follow this [link](#) to complete our equality and diversity monitoring form as part of your application. We are incredibly passionate and committed to inclusivity and accessibility for all. The information you supply will help us to support our charity partners to work towards greater equity and inclusion in their teams.

To be submitted in Word/PDF, or by video or audio file, directly back to seniorappointments@charitypeople.co.uk

Timeline

Webinar:	Tuesday 21st January 2025, 6–7pm
Closing date:	Monday 3rd February 2025
Round 1 Interviews:	24th February 2025
Round 2 Interviews:	3rd March 2025





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