

NHS Retirement Fellowship

A Guide for Trustees and Staff

This pack is provided mainly for Trustees, staff, Council Members and Branch Office Holders. It provides in one place a glimpse into the NHS Retirement Fellowship and how it is organised.

It offers consistency in the information provided but, of course, it is no substitute for reading the official documents from which much of the information has been obtained. This can be found in the Fellowship website at www.nhsrf.org.uk.

November 2023



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WELCOME



George Kempton
Chairman Board of Trustees



Mike Seaton
Chief Executive

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the NHS Retirement Fellowship. We are a national charity registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales, although you can also find us in Scotland where charities are governed by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

Our Fellowship exists to support one another in retirement, maintain friendships and make new ones. We welcome anyone who has retired from any involvement, paid or voluntary, in health or social care. Partners and friends are also eligible.

Like many organisations, we have a formal structure which helps manage the organisation and ensures we follow the laws which govern charities.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Charity Trustees, almost always unpaid, have a range of responsibilities required by the various Charities Acts. Our Trustees are not paid. They are the people who share ultimate responsibility for governing the charity and directing how it is managed and run. Trustees have independent control over, and legal responsibility for, the charity's management, administration and its funds including those held in Branches.

Its membership comprises the Chair and Vice Chair, Honorary Treasurer, 6 Trustees appointed from the membership and 5 external Trustees. The Board normally meets three times a year. For more information about who is eligible to be a Trustee and the legal responsibilities involved (see pages 7-9)

The Trustees of the Fellowship are committed to building a more diverse and inclusive organisation. We would therefore particularly welcome applications from candidates from black and ethnic minority communities and heritage.

MEMBERS' COUNCIL

The Members' Council is the key source of advice to the Trustees, representing the views of the membership. It normally meets three times a year and supports Fellowship activities.

Its membership comprises 2 members from Scotland, 2 from Wales, 1 member from each of the English Regions, 2 National/Postal members, and all elected by the Membership. The Chair and/or Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees attend as observers with a right to speak but not to vote.

From amongst its membership, the Members' Council elects its own Chair and Vice Chair. The Chair and/or Vice Chair attends meetings of the Board of Trustees as an observer with a right to speak but not to vote.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Like most organisations, we hold an annual general meeting. This is usually held in October in different places around the countries. It is attended by Trustees, members of the Members'

Council, voting delegates from the branches, national/postal members and any other members who wish to attend.

Whilst the AGM handles the business required by charity and other laws, there are also speakers, exhibitions, visits and social events.

MEMBERSHIP

When new members join the Fellowship they can either join as a national/postal member or are linked to a local branch. In the Appendix there is a diagram which illustrates these choices.

Both membership types receive regular letters from our Chief Executive and are able to take advantage of the discounts and benefits offered to our members, as well as being informed about events such as the annual AGM and conference. Branch members enjoy the additional benefit of attending branch meetings and enjoying the fellowship and activities provided by branches.

This focus is about belonging to the Fellowship, strengthening the relationship between members and the wider organisation without detracting from fellowship locally.

BRANCHES

Local branches form the backbone of the Fellowship. They exist to maintain friendships, make new friends and to support each other. Within the context of the charity as a whole, branches manage their own affairs and offer wide ranging programmes of activities, visits and talks. These are organised by the members themselves.

Members elect a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Welfare Officer. Between them,

they make sure the branch works properly within the Constitution, guidelines and procedures determined by the Trustees, and meets the needs of members. The Fellowship provides a range of resources to support branches manage their affairs.

There are also some national interest groups including the Book Club, and Photography Group.

It is at the local level that contacts can be maintained with the local health and social care providers. These relationships can often be created and supported by the Member Representatives.

MEMBER REPRESENTATION

Members in each English region, and in Scotland and Wales, elect/select one of their number to represent the region as a member of the Members' Council. All these posts are voluntary and part-time. Their role is to maintain contact with members, keeping them in touch with developments and consulting where necessary. They may also hold region-wide events.

Two National/Postal Member Representatives are elected from the National/Postal members. They also sit on the Members' Council to represent the views of those members.

SAFEGUARDING OUR MEMBERS, STAFF AND TRUSTEES

Safeguarding is about taking reasonable steps to protect from harm anyone who comes into contact with the charity. Our policy applies equally to members, volunteers, staff and Trustees.

Safeguarding is a key governance priority, not only for those working with groups traditionally considered at risk. The Charity Commission for England and Wales expects Trustees to:

- provide a safe and trusted environment which includes a duty of care to everyone
- set an organisational culture that prioritises safeguarding
- have adequate policies and procedures to protect people
- handle incidents as they arise, learn from mistakes and put in place measures to stop them happening again.

FUNDING

The cost of the Fellowship is met by subscriptions from members and may receive grants from different parts of the NHS and other grant-making bodies. The financial year is 1 April to 31 March each year. Subscriptions are collected annually to support the organisation as a whole and local activities in particular.

Charity law requires Trustees to prepare accounts for their charity and the Trustees of registered charities must also prepare a Trustees' annual report. That report and accounts tell donors and others interested in our charity what the charity is set up to do, what it has done in the year and how it raised and spent its money.

Our income is currently below the level required for a full financial audit. However, we are required to obtain an Independent Examination of the charity's accounts. The role of the Independent Examiner is to provide an independent scrutiny of the accounts. The Examiner plays a part in maintaining public trust and confidence in charities.

STAFF

There is a small network of paid part-time staff across England, Scotland and Wales. The Central Office is in the Weymouth Community Hospital, Melcombe Avenue, Weymouth, Dorset, DT4 7TB Tel: 01305 361317. It provides support to the Board of Trustees, the Chief Executive, Members' Council and branch officers and members.

APPENDIX

Board of Trustees

- Main duties
- Appointment
- Code of Conduct

Members are at the heart of the organisation

Regional Member Representatives

National/Postal Member Representatives

Policies

New Members Diagram

Benefits

Miscellaneous

- Independent Examiner
- Bankers
- Legal Advisor
- Website
- Charity Registration Number

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The main duties of Trustees are:

To make sure that the charity is carrying out the purposes for which it was set up. This means:

- ensuring an understanding of the charity's purposes
- planning what the charity will do, and what is to be achieved
- being able to explain how all the charity's activities are intended to further or support its purposes
- understanding how the charity benefits the public by carrying out those purposes.

Comply with the charity's governing document and the law

- make sure that the charity complies with its governing document
- comply with charity law requirements and other laws that apply to the charity
- take reasonable steps to find out about legal requirements.

Act in the charity's best interests

- do what the Trustees (and no one else) decide will best enable the charity to carry out its purposes
- make balanced and adequately informed decisions, thinking about the long term as well as the short term
- avoid putting a Trustee in a position where the duty to the charity conflicts with personal interests or loyalty to any other person or body
- not receive any benefit from the charity unless it is properly authorised and is clearly in the charity's interests; this also includes anyone who is financially connected such as a partner, dependent child or business partner.

Manage the charity's resources responsibly

Trustees must act responsibly, reasonably and honestly. This is sometimes called the duty of

prudence. Prudence is about exercising sound judgement. Trustees must:

- make sure the charity's assets are only used to support or carry out its purposes
- avoid exposing the charity's assets, beneficiaries or reputation to undue risk
- not over-commit the charity
- take special care when investing or borrowing
- comply with any restrictions on spending funds or selling land.

Trustees should put appropriate procedures and safeguards in place and take reasonable steps to ensure that these are followed. Otherwise the charity may be vulnerable to fraud or theft, or other kinds of abuse, and being in breach of the Trustees' duty.

Act with reasonable care and skill

As someone responsible for governing a charity, Trustees:

- must use reasonable care and skill, making use of their skills and experience and taking appropriate advice when necessary
- should give enough time, thought and energy to the role, for example by preparing for, attending and actively participating in all Trustees' meetings.

Ensure the charity is accountable

Trustees must comply with statutory accounting and reporting requirements and:

- be able to demonstrate that the charity is complying with the law, well run and effective
- ensure appropriate accountability to members, if the charity has a membership separate from the Trustees
- ensure accountability within the charity, particularly where responsibility is delegated for particular tasks or decisions to staff or volunteers.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES Appointment

Anyone can be appointed a Trustee provided they are 18 years or older unless automatically disqualified from being a Trustee. Before being nominated or appointed, Trustees need to complete a Trustee Eligibility Declaration.

This states that:

You declare that you...

- are willing to act as a Trustee
- understand your organisation's purposes and rules
- are not prevented from acting as a Trustee because you are disqualified for one of the reasons below...

You also declare that...

- the information you provide is true, complete and correct
- you understand it is an offence to provide false/misleading information
- funds are held in a bank/building society in England or Wales
- you will comply with your responsibilities as a Trustee
- there will be no personal benefit (some exceptions).

Reasons for disqualification

Any unspent conviction for:

- an offence involving dishonesty or deception
- specified terrorism offences
- a specified money laundering offence
- specified bribery offences
- the offence of contravening a Charity Commission Order or Direction
- offences of misconduct in public office, perjury, or perverting the course of justice
- aiding attempting or abetting the above offences

and for...

- being on the sex offenders register
- having an unspent sanction for contempt of court
- disobeying a Commission Order
- being a designated person (under specific anti-terrorist legislation)
- being a person who has been removed from a relevant office
- having a Director disqualification
- being an undischarged bankrupt or subject to being under various other financial orders.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Code of conduct for its members

Selflessness

The Trustees of NHS Retirement Fellowship have a general duty to act in the best interests of the Charity as a whole. They should not do so to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their friends or any organisation they represent, if applicable.

In using the following principles the Trustees:

Integrity

- should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their role.
- should, as well as avoiding actual impropriety, avoid any appearance of improper behaviour.
- should avoid accepting gifts and hospitality that might reasonably be thought to influence their judgement.

Objectivity

In carrying out their role, including making staff and Trustee appointments, awarding contracts or transacting other business, should ensure that decisions are made solely on merit and conform to the Fellowship's equality and diversity policy.

Accountability

- have a duty to comply with the law on all occasions in accordance with the trust placed in them and in such a way as to preserve public confidence in the charity.

- are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public, funders and members and must submit themselves to scrutiny as appropriate to their role.

Openness

- should ensure that confidential material, including that about individuals, is handled with due care.
- should be as open as possible about their decisions and the action they take and give reasons for their decisions, restricting access to information only when the wider interest clearly demands it.

Honesty

- have a duty to declare any interests relating to their Trustee role and to take steps to resolve any conflicts that may arise.
- must resolve any conflict between his/her private interests and his/her Trustee duties in favour of the Trustee role .
- must make relevant declarations of interest in their different roles both within and outside the charity.

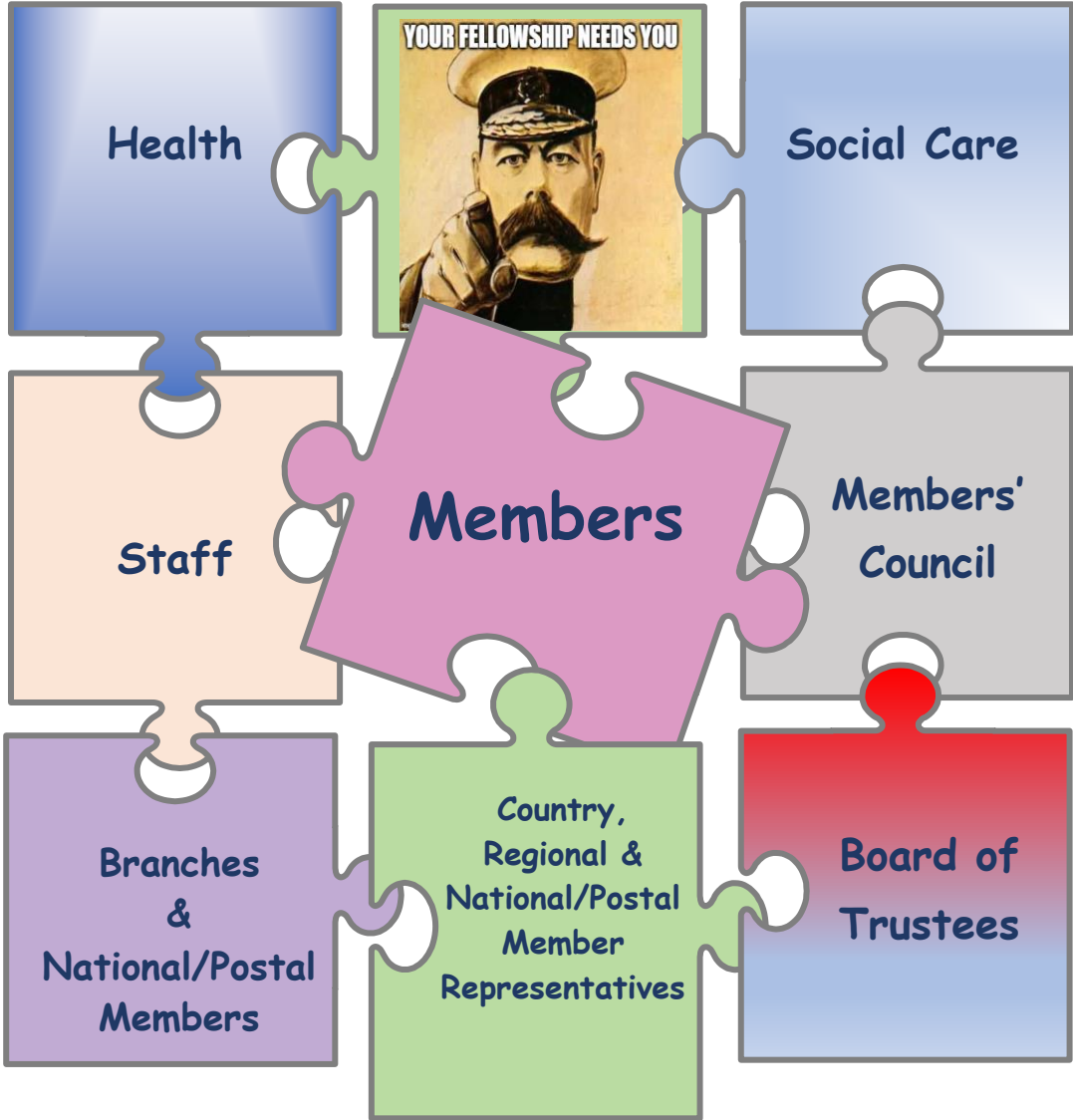
Leadership

- should promote and support the principles of leadership by example.
- must respect the role of staff and volunteers.

Attendance

Any member who, without just cause, fails to attend three consecutive meetings will be disqualified from their appointment as a Trustee.

MEMBERS ARE AT THE HEART OF THE ORGANISATION



REGIONAL MEMBER REPRESENTATIVE

Purpose

- **Support** branches in their development and sustainability
- **Represent** the Membership across your region
- As part of the Members' Council to **give advice** to the Board of Trustees

This role is a conduit for 2-way communication. The Member Representative needs to understand the needs of the members, actively seek out their views, and co-ordinate information and advice to the Members' Council.

You will do this by:

- Occasional visits, electronic contact and by telephone with branches and members
- Circulating electronically news and information to members, including those not linked to branches, explaining central guidance and instructions
- Developing opportunities for members and branch office holders to exchange views and ideas
- Acting corporately to develop the organisation in accordance with its Strategy.

Specification

- Be self-motivated and able to work alone
- Have good interpersonal skills and be an effective communicator

- Demonstrate an ability to promote the organisation and work to guidelines and procedures
- Be a team builder and player with a capacity to work cooperatively
- Based at home, possess a telephone, be able and prepared to travel, have access to and be capable of using a computer for e-mailing and the creation and distribution of documents
- Be discreet and sensitive, able to maintain information in a confidential manner.

Other matters

This appointment is for an initial period of two years and could be extended by one year at a time subject to the agreed voting system.

As an existing Member of the Fellowship you would be:

- reimbursed for your travel and other agreed reasonable expenses
- supported by:
 - a national Induction Programme comprising an Induction Pack, branch visits, introduction to the supporting role of the staff
 - either the Chair or Vice-Chair of Trustees
- encouraged to attend the Annual General Meeting and National Conference.

Appointment:

The Regional Member Representative is selected/elected by the branches in the region or country and becomes a member of the Members' Council, the key advisory body to the Board of Trustees.

You will be:

- mentored and supported by the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees.
- expected to regularly attend meetings as a member of the Members' Council and the Annual Conference and AGM.

NATIONAL/POSTAL MEMBER REPRESENTATIVE

This is a Voluntary Appointment for which reasonable out-of-pocket expenses will be paid.

Purpose

- **Represent** the views of National/Postal Members
- **Support** developments within the Fellowship
- **Work with** the Regional Member Representatives to increase membership.

You will do this by:

- contacting National/Postal Members electronically and by telephone
- circulating news and developing opportunities for National/Postal Members to exchange views and ideas
- working in partnership with Regional Member Representatives
- acting corporately to develop the organisation in accordance with its strategy.

Specification

- Be self-motivated and able to work alone
- Have good interpersonal skills and be an effective communicator
- Demonstrate an ability to promote the organisation and work to guidelines and procedures
- Be a team player with a capacity to work cooperatively
- Based at home, possess a telephone, be able and prepared to travel if necessary*
- Have access to and be capable of using a computer for e-mailing and the creation and distribution of documents
- Be discreet and sensitive, able to maintain information in a confidential manner.

Other matters

This is one of two identical appointments and will be for an initial period of two years and could be extended for up to two further years, then one year at a time thereafter – subject to an agreed voting system.

As an existing National/Postal Member of the Fellowship you would be:

- reimbursed for your travel and other agreed reasonable expenses
- supported by a national Induction Programme comprising an Induction Pack, introduction to the supporting role of the staff and other office holders
- encouraged to attend the Annual General Meeting and National Conference.

As a National/Postal Member Representative, you would be elected from amongst all the National/Postal members in England, Scotland and Wales to become a member of the Members' Council, the key body to the Board of Trustees. Details about that role are explained separately.

You would be mentored and supported by the Chair or Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees and be responsible to your electorate.

**If using a car, you need to inform your insurance company that you are travelling in a voluntary capacity for which a mileage allowance is paid within the HRMC limits.*

POLICIES

There is a wide range of policies and guidance which govern the organisation. Their content can be viewed in the Members section of the website www.nhsrf.org.uk. They include...

- Appointment of Staff
- Benevolent Fund
- Branch constitution & Other guidance
- Complaints
- Confidentiality
- Conflicts of interest
- Delegation scheme
- Discipline
- Equality and Diversity
- Expenses
- Facebook
- Finance and Accounts
- Fraud
- General Data Protection
- Gift Aid
- Grievance
- Harassment and Bullying
- Health & Safety
- Insurance
- Personal safety & Cash handling
- Safeguarding
- Untoward incident reporting
- Website & Social Media
- Whistleblowing

NEW MEMBERS



- You will benefit from...**
- regular letters from the Chief Executive
 - dedicated website & occasional e-mailings
 - discount purchasing
 - travel insurance
 - Facebook contact
 - discounted holidays
 - benevolent fund
 - opportunity to join the Civil Service Club (Associate Member)
 - interest groups (Book Club & Photographic Group)
- You could also...**
- attend Annual Conference & AGM
 - contribute to Regional & other meetings
 - offer your skills and experience
 - become a Regional or National/Postal Member Representative
 - be considered as a Trustee.

MISCELLANEOUS

Our Independent Examiner

S J Frost,
Frost & Company, Chartered Accountants
Unit C, Regent House
9 Crown Square
Poundbury
Dorchester
Dorset
DT1 3DY

Our Bankers

CAF Bank
25 Kings Hill Avenue,
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent
ME19 4JQ

Our Legal Advisor

Rosie Parr
Lancasterparr
Pear Tree House
Wanstrow
Somerset
BA4 4TF

Our web site

www.nhsrf.org.uk

Charity Registration Number in England and
Wales: 287936