

Role:	Trustee
Contract:	Trustees serve for 3 year terms
Pay rate:	Voluntary, with reasonable expenses reimbursed
Location:	Remote, but with one in-person meeting per year. Must be based in the UK.
Interviews:	Joining the HMF board will be a process that include telephone interviews, observation of board meetings, in person visits to the Hearts Milk Bank, and discussions with the other trustees, with a mutually suitable start date as soon as possible thereafter.

Role summary

The Human Milk Foundation charity provides donor human milk to sick, premature babies in hospital neonatal intensive care units and families at home such as mothers with cancer. Much like donated blood, donor human milk can help save lives. Our aim is to scale up and build a national milk bank service so that every baby who could benefit can access donor milk. There's a short video which demonstrates the impact of our work here - Amelia's story: <https://humanmilkfoundation.org/get-involved/heroes/>

We are currently recruiting for new trustees with a diverse range of skills and experience to join our board - we need individuals who can think creatively and strategically, bringing energy and enthusiasm towards our ambitious goal of building a national milk bank service.

Trustees are responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of The Human Milk Foundation, developing the aims, objectives and goals of the organisation, in accordance with the governing document, legal and regulatory guidelines.

Key responsibilities

- To ensure that the organisation complies with its governing document, charity law, and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- To ensure that the organisation pursues its objects as defined in its governing document, using its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects.
- To contribute actively to board meetings in giving strategic direction to the organisation, setting policy, defining goals and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
- To help to identify, recruit and induct new board members and the chair.
- To safeguard the good name and values of the organisation.
- To ensure the financial stability of the organisation.
- To uphold any policies and procedures relevant to the trustee role including confidentiality, safeguarding and data protection.
- To appoint the chief executive officer and through the chair, monitor his/her performance.

Time commitment

We meet formally once every two months with a remote meeting of up to 2 hours, with a one-hour update call on alternative months when required. While most meetings can be conducted virtually, one meeting each year will be held face-to-face.



What skills would I need?

Trustees will possess attention to detail and enjoy working in a team that is driving excellence and innovation in the support of infant and maternal health. Personal integrity, ability to challenge, and good judgement are essential. We are keen to encourage a diverse board who can help the charity to create truly inclusive services that reach those in most need.

The HMF is particularly looking for trustees with experience in the following:

Medicine
Finance
Law
EDI

Campaigning
Health policy
Human rights
Human resources

Support for new trustees will be offered by the charity in the form of training, time with the team and other trustees, visits to the Hearts Milk Bank, and regular opportunities to gain new skills. Trustees are encouraged to take on responsibility for specific areas of governance within the charity. These include but are not limited to the risk register, prioritisation panel, research committee, and assisting the Senior Leadership Team with specific projects.

Conflict of interests

Applicants should declare any personal or professional links which may be perceived as a conflict of interest with the aims of the charity. This includes, but is not limited to, an association with a company which does not adhere to the WHO International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes.

Charity overview

The Human Milk Foundation (HMF) charity is based at Gossoms End Health Centre in Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. Our goal is to support more families to feed their babies with human milk, through education, research and the supply of donor human milk.

We operate the UK's first independent, non-profit human milk bank - the Hearts Milk Bank (HMB, www.heartsmilkbank.org) providing donor human milk to over 50 NHS hospital neonatal units across England and Wales. Much like donated human blood, donor human milk can help save lives. Premature babies are very vulnerable and at risk of life-threatening conditions such as necrotising enterocolitis (NEC), a condition which causes some or all of the bowel to die. Parents who have given birth early are sometimes unable to produce their own milk straight away and can be very unwell themselves. In these situations, safe, screened donor human milk can act as a medicine to protect the baby during the first days and weeks after birth; it also allows mothers the time and support to establish their own milk supply, supporting breastfeeding and parental mental health.



Milk banks operate in a similar way to the blood transfusion service. The HMB team recruit milk donors who undergo blood tests and a detailed lifestyle and health questionnaire before donating milk. Donor milk is collected from donors by volunteer SERV (“blood-biker”) volunteers and delivered to the milk bank where it is heat-treated (pasteurised) to destroy potentially harmful bacteria and viruses, checked by microbiologists to make sure that there is no bacterial contamination and stored frozen. The milk is collected and delivered to hospitals and to parents in the community who cannot breastfeed such as those with cancer, HIV or lack of breast tissue.

A key pillar of the charity’s work is to build an evidence base demonstrating the impact of this unique intervention in improving infant health, parental wellbeing and breastfeeding rates. Our work includes research and evaluation, along with training and education for healthcare teams. The HMF also supports a range of research projects in association with universities.

The Human Milk Foundation is a small team of dedicated individuals with a broad set of skills and lived-experience. We all have a great passion to make change to improve the health of parents and their babies, and we look forward to welcoming new members to the board who share this passion.

Application process

Trustees are welcomed from every part of the UK.

Please send a CV and covering letter to trustees@humanmilkfoundation.org.

Applications will close early if sufficient applications are received.

The HMF is committed to promoting equal opportunities. You and any applicants to this role will receive equal treatment regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marital or civil partner status, pregnancy or maternity, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation (Protected Characteristics).