



Role profile: Trustee

The Science Media Centre (SMC) is looking for three new Trustees to join our governing board.

Deadline: Monday 3rd August 2026

Location: Although we are a London-based organisation we welcome applications for Trustees from across the UK. Hybrid options are available for all meetings, with the expectation that trustees can travel for some face-to-face meetings (travel expenses provided).

Salary: Unpaid voluntary role

Interviews: mid-August, date TBC

Start date: Tuesday 13th October 2026

About the Science Media Centre

The SMC is a charity that acts as an independent press office for science. It was established in 2002 as a division of the Royal Institution of Great Britain and became an independent charity in 2011.

The SMC's mission is to promote and disseminate accurate, reliable and evidence-based information about science through the media. Its activities centre on topical and controversial scientific issues, in particular when they become part of the news agenda.

The SMC operates by bringing together scientists, journalists and communications teams to help ensure that the reporting of science is evidence-based and responsible. It maintains a database of more than 4,000 scientists, and encourages and enables them to engage with the media; it works with science journalists to connect them as fast as possible with the best expertise available on science stories in the news; and it supports press officers working on controversial and difficult science stories.

The SMC has a staff of nine, headed by a Chief Executive. The board of Trustees is the principal decision-making body of the SMC and meets three times a year. Trustees are distinguished in the fields of science, media and communications amongst others, and the overall make-up of the board is intended to reflect this broad range of activity. The current board consists of a Chair, a Treasurer and eight Trustees. The Trustees are themselves guided by an advisory group, whose members are also drawn from the fields of science, media and communications. All non-staff roles are voluntary and unpaid.

As a charity, the SMC is dependent on donations from a wide variety of scientific institutions and others – more than 100 in all. A full list can be found on the SMC's website. To protect the SMC's independence, no single donation can exceed five per cent of annual income (currently in the region of £800,000), unless agreed by Trustees.

More information about the SMC, its activities and its governance, can be found on the SMC website: <https://www.sciencemediacentre.org/>.

Trustee role

The SMC is seeking to recruit three new Trustees, following retirements from the current Board. Trustees will normally serve for 3 years in the first instance.

Trustees are not involved in the day-to-day running of the SMC. The role is instead about providing the SMC with the overarching governance we need to achieve our goals, helping to set overall strategic direction, keeping the SMC on track with its unique mission and charitable aims and, on occasion, being called on for advice and support on how the SMC should respond to controversial, challenging or sensitive issues.

The principal duties of Trustees are as follows:

1. Set the overall direction for the Charity and approve plans for how it will deliver its purposes for the public benefit, including the resources it needs.
2. Keep track of performance and monitor whether the Charity is delivering its mission within the resources it has.
3. Assess risks to the Charity and make sure actions are put in place to reduce the likelihood of these occurring and their impact.
4. Ensure that the people involved with the Charity are supported and equipped to deliver what the Charity needs from them. This includes staff, volunteers, independent advisors, donors and others that the Charity works with.
5. Make sure the Charity has the right framework in place to meet legal requirements, good practice and the provisions of the Charity's articles of association.

Who we are looking for

The Trustee role is wide and can be adapted to an individual's strengths. Whilst we welcome applications from anyone with the right capabilities and an interest in the role, we are particularly interested in receiving applications from people at an earlier stage in their careers, to help us to maintain a balance of experience on the board.

In addition, for this round of recruitment we are looking for the below specialisms to ensure we have the right skills across our Board:

- people working in science journalism or;
- CEOs, COOs, or equivalent who have experience running a small organisation or;
- people with an understanding of and experience in how social media and/or AI are changing the landscape of science journalism and science in the media

The successful candidate must demonstrate a supportive interest in the work of the Science Media Centre. They must also display a willingness to commit the necessary time to carry out the role's responsibilities, which can sometimes mean a concentrated burst of activity at short notice.

We know that some demographics are less likely to apply for Trustee roles. You do not need to be the most senior person at your organisation to qualify, and we welcome applications from first-time Trustees. If you're passionate about supporting a charity dedicated to improving science in the headlines, and you think you have the skills to help, we'd love to hear from you!

Application Process

Applicants for the role of Trustee are invited to apply via email to applications@sciencemediacentre.org. Please send your CV and cover letter setting out in no more than 500 words your reasons for wishing to undertake the role, and relevant experience.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an interview with a Senior Press Manager, the Head of Operations and existing Trustees. Interviews will take place in early August at the SMC offices on Euston Rd, London NW1 2BE. We would really value meeting candidates in-person for interview, but will be able to provide an online option if needed.

If you would like to hear more about the SMC or speak to one of our Trustees before applying, please contact Louise Maxwell, Head of Operations and Governance at louise@sciencemediacentre.org or 020 7611 8307.