



# **A Guide to Volunteering with the Nuclear Institute**

Trustee Roles - 2024

# Introduction

The Nuclear Institute has a proud tradition of active and engaged volunteers donating their time and energy to carrying out tasks that help the Institute meet its core objectives.

Many of these roles involve direct contact with other members and even the public via branch and community activities as well as outreach events and STEM engagement.

The Institute operates a very small staff team focused on running the charity as a successful business so the involvement of members is critical in delivering our charitable objectives and fulfilling our mission of facilitating the knowledge, skills and good practice in nuclear for a low carbon future. Our members are also the repository of a vast range of nuclear knowledge and experience which is fundamental to delivering local events, seminars, schools, university and other outreach activities as practical or web-based resources. Their knowledge also supports the learning and professional development of those at early career stages through the provision of content for *Nuclear Future*, assessment of their growing professionalism and career support in general.

The staff provide their own skillsets around the needs of a professional membership body and contract in those that they don't have to hand. The elected members of the board of trustees are the ones who oversee the objectives and direction of the Institute over time and ensure the Institute is well run, financially solvent and provided with sufficient resource to meet the needs of its strategy and business plans. Trustees are members of the Institute and their membership is both their 'stake' in the organisation as well as an indicator of their commitment to the health and wellbeing of the Institute.

Although there may be exceptional circumstances or skills requirements that require non-members to be co-opted as Trustees or Committee members, the general rule is that someone asked to be a Champion of the Institute (or any of its constituent parts) is able to demonstrate that commitment through membership.

We have few restrictions on the grade of member (although some roles require specific grades and registrations to meet our licensing requirements) and actively seek a diverse range of members to take on these important governance roles. No single volunteer will bring all the skills and knowledge required so even those who have a modest contribution to make at the start will learn a great deal and learn on the job. Volunteering for governance roles often appeals to those who may have limited time to devote or not wish to be in outward-facing volunteer roles.

Mostly though, it is not about your seniority or qualifications and much more about your interest in and enthusiasm for the Institute and its work. Wanting to get fully involved and being a champion and ambassador for the Institute are the main prerequisites for being a successful member volunteer.

The key benefits to volunteers are:

- Gaining experience in business-related settings and activities
- The chance to develop business and leadership skills
- The satisfaction of contributing to the development of the profession and your fellow professionals by 'giving something back'
- Activities that contribute to your own continuing professional development
- Developing your own network of professionals within the industry but outside of your own organisation.

In addition, by getting involved from your early days of membership, you will have great preparation for higher roles in the organisation later in your career. Trustees with experience of working in other parts of the Institute will find themselves in a good position to understand the needs of other members like themselves.

## Time commitment

Many would-be volunteers worry about the time commitment they may have to make. This is an increasing worry with the levels of activity in most jobs these days, as well as our own personal lives. We work closely with companies in the industry, and particularly our own Company Members, in encouraging the release of time for members to contribute to their professional body and we also ensure that there are volunteer roles with differing requirements around the time that is needed to be contributed.

For example, whilst some committees which meet four times a year might require 8-10 days per year to fully carry out the duties required such as reading papers and ad hoc sub-committees, other roles might only require a couple of hours per month, for example, being an assessor or interviewing members for their professional grades. Attending a careers fair might only require one day a year whilst being the social media lead on a branch or YGN committee might require an hour a week.

We know from our current volunteers that the time invested by them is anything from 45 minutes to 10 hours per week (the latter being very much on the high side!) but we can give you a valuable role with however much time you have to offer.

## Remuneration

Unsurprisingly, volunteers are not remunerated but we are sometimes able to support your costs in specific circumstances and where your employer is unable to support you. Such decisions are on an ad hoc basis and you are encouraged to enquire if this is something that would be a barrier to you taking part.

In circumstances where you were subsequently employed by the NI, either as staff or a contractor, then you would need to resign your volunteer position for the duration. Appointment as a contractor would be subject to the usual requirements of competitive tender and declarations of potential conflict of interest prior to appointment.

# Trustees

The NI's Trustees are those who hold a legally-defined role as Directors within the charity and oversee the long-term direction and objectives of the Institute. They hold ultimate financial responsibility for the performance of the Institute although their liability is limited by the legal status of the NI which is as a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital.

## Key legal requirements

These are all set out in the guidance set out by the Charities Commission in their document [Charity trustee: what's involved \(CC3a\)](#)

Other useful guidance includes:

- [The six main duties of a trustee](#)
- [The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do](#)
- [Charity Commission guidance](#)
- [Trustee role and board: detailed information](#)

Trustees usually hold office for three years. They may extend their time on the board for a second term if agreed/elected.

## Key characteristics

We have no set requirements of trustees and overwhelmingly an interest in and commitment to the Nuclear Institute are the fundamentals. However, we do seek a balance of skills, sector background, as well as ensuring a balance of diversity characteristics as far as possible. We have anything from 10-15 trustees (and usually around 12) so it is almost impossible to be fully representative of any group/sector/skillset but where we have more applications to be a trustee than we have places then we will be guided by these requirements.

Here are some of the types of skills that we will ask you to assess yourself on:

- Governance
- Marketing and promotion
- Events management
- Public relations and media
- Human resources
- Legal
- Policy and advocacy
- Accounting and finance
- Monitoring, evaluation and audit
- IT, digital and data protection

- NI community development
- Public speaking
- Skills, careers and education
- Training and development
- Quality assurance and professional standards
- Industry familiarity

We do not expect trustees to be expert in all these fields, or even to have knowledge of all of them but expertise in a few areas would be useful, especially if there are gaps in the current overall trustee skillset.

You can find out more information in the Trustee Role Profile (Appendix A)

## Diversity and inclusion

We are particularly keen to broaden the diversity of all our committees and our trustee board. If you feel that you could add value as a member of an under-represented community in the NI in addition to any of the skills above, please add this to the opening paragraphs of your completed skills application. If you wish to discuss any aspect of your application in confidence in advance of applying please contact the [CEO](#) or [President](#) for an informal discussion.

## The process

The Nominations Committee is responsible for the process by which new Trustees are recruited/elected to ensure that it is independent of the current Board of Trustees and that we are therefore not enabling any unconscious bias or undue influence to recruit from similar pools/networks.

The Nominations Committee have identified potentially three new trustee roles required over the next six months. They will also be identifying a President Elect for 2026-27 who will be in addition to these three.

These roles can be filled by co-opted or elected positions to ensure that we are both filling key skills gaps and ensuring good democratic governance. Co-option is often required to fill specific key roles or to ensure representation from particular parts of the industry. However we try to ensure a good overall balance of types of trustee. The Nominations Committee is keen to include an election as part of the recruitment process, which begins with members nominating themselves as candidates for election. In a break with tradition, this could include self-nomination for the role of President Elect in addition to the usual route of the Committee identifying potential candidates to recommend to the Trustees.

# Current requirements

Our current trustees as at April 2024 are:

Fiona Rayment (President)	CEng FNucl
Jasbir Sidhu (Immediate Past President)	
Gwen Parry-Jones	HonFNucl
John Clarke	CEng FNucl
Nicola O’Keeffe (Hon Treasurer)	
Mark Salisbury	FNucl
Jennifer Nugent	
Sasha Wynn Davies	
Catherine Hedger	CSci MNucl
Richard Deakin	FNucl
Saralyn Thomas	MNucl
Linda Aylmore	

Up to four trustees are due to stand down during 2024 and we will be particularly short of trustees with professional membership and registration titles (particularly CEng/IEng). Having reassessed the skills of current trustees, we will also be short of these skills specifically:

- Marketing and communications
- Events management
- Legal
- Policy and advocacy
- Skills, careers and education
- IT, digital and data protection
- QA and professional standards

It will be particularly valuable to have Trustees who are able to chair and sit on other Committees (particularly Outreach, Events and EDI Board) so ideally a minimum time contribution would be around 10-12 days per year. Trustees should aim for a minimum attendance rate at meetings of around 75% (typically 3 out of 4 meetings) and allow a reasonable amount of reading time prior to meetings.

Some of the [Committees](#) needing new members include:

- Assurance Committee
- Editorial Committee – particularly from Defence and New Build sectors
- Events Committee
- Membership Committee – Fellows and Members, especially those with registration titles – **we are particularly keen to see more diverse applicants join this committee, particularly women**

- [Special Interest Group](#) Chairs – needed for these SIGs: Requirements Management, Radioactive Waste
- Branch Committees – [North East](#), [Scotland](#), [Wales](#) – all are short of committee members. [Central England](#) branch is in need of a new Chair.

## Hear from our existing Trustees

We are building a library of videos from existing Trustees on their experience of being a Trustee and you may find these of use in deciding whether to apply.

[Watch](#): Jasbir Sidhu on why he would recommend becoming a Trustee.

## Training for Trustees and Committee members

Our annual Volunteer Forum gives volunteers the opportunity to learn new skills and learn about other ways to volunteer. We recorded the sessions from the 2022 Volunteer Forum and you can find them below (use the password 'VForum2022' to view the videos):

- [Welcome and introduction](#) – Member value, elevator pitch:
- [Mentoring](#)
- [Outreach](#)
- [Universities and Education Affiliate membership](#)
- [Afternoon plenary](#) - NI governance – what it takes to become a trustee:
- [Communications Forum](#) - Social media, newsletters, websites:
- [Chairs Forum](#)
- [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion](#)

Our 2023 Volunteer Forum took place in Crewe in September and the next one will be on 13 September this year.

We also arrange additional training where there is an identified need for training beyond learning from experience. Our new mentoring scheme will also help members develop relevant skills.

## Ready to Apply?

If you are interested in applying to be a Trustee please visit [this page](#) for the documentation required. The closing date for applications is 1 July 2024. See the full timetable in Appendix B.



If you feel you might not be ready to apply as a Trustee but interested in getting more experience through other Committee roles then please complete the relevant form on the web page.

## **Appendix A – Trustee role profile**

Trustees have a fiduciary duty to take collective responsibility for the good governance of the organisation and the appointment of a CEO to run the organisation on a day-to-day basis. Although they may also be on the Board to represent other interests/sub-groups, their primary responsibility as a trustee is to the long-term health of the NI.

Potential trustees are advised to become familiar with useful documents produced by a number of organisations including:

- [Charity Commission](#)
- [NCVO](#)
- [NI Memorandum and Articles of Association](#).

It is also advisable to ask friends and colleagues who may have experience of carrying out such roles.

Finally, being a trustee is a position of considerable commitment. It is a good idea to consider the amount of time that you have to devote to the role.

Although the NI's Board of Trustees meets only four times a year there is a substantial amount of paperwork and trustees are often called upon to take an active part in the life of the Institute as well as offer advice and guidance to other volunteers. You should be sure that your employer is able to support the time commitment that may be required of you.

### **General person specification**

Like all professional body charities, the NI is essentially a people organisation and is dependent on both its staff and volunteers. The ideal candidate for a trustee role will have the following abilities:

- listen to others' viewpoints.
- listen to, absorb and analyse a variety of data/information.
- present a thoughtful and considered view.
- express yourself succinctly.
- accept majority decisions.
- support your fellow trustees and staff and volunteers.
- see the bigger picture.
- think long-term.
- put the Institute's needs first.

Knowledge and understanding that would be useful include:

- A knowledge of the nuclear industry in general and specialist knowledge of at least one specific sector/sub-sector.
- Understanding of charity finance.
- Knowledge of the products, services and objectives of the Nuclear Institute.

In order to ensure a representative balance of the NI membership and key skills and specialist knowledge across the trustees, the Board will undertake regular skills audits amongst trustees when drawing up a specification for any new trustee positions.

## Appendix B – Trustee election procedure and Timetable for election

This is the procedure to be followed:

- Date for election to be advised – ideally 12 weeks ahead. The election period should be open for two weeks.
- Role profile to be updated to reflect specific skills required (see Appendix A and ‘Current Requirements’ above).
- Role to be advertised through membership newsletter and *Nuclear Future* as a minimum.
- Members wishing to stand should complete the skills audit application form at least two weeks before the election.
- Members to be sent a link to the nominees’ profiles and the voting form (by SurveyMonkey) by the open date.
- Members have up to two weeks to vote for their first and second choice candidates.
- The winner will be declared as the person with most votes at the end of the two week voting period. In the event of a tie, the second choice votes will be taken into account.
- The winner (or winners if more than one place available) is eligible to take up their place as soon as the vacancy becomes available. The election result will be ratified at the next AGM.

Timetable for election

Advertise vacancies – NI Connect	Early June
Advertise vacancies – <i>Nuclear Future</i>	Early June
Reminder – NI newsletter	c. 12 June
Closing date for applications	1 July
Voting begins (advised by email)	8 July
Voting closes	22 July