

CAN YOU HELP US SAVE MORE LIVES?

We have three exciting new vacancies on our Board for people with senior level fundraising, research and financial experience who can help achieve our aim of training more life-saving dogs



About Medical Detection Dogs

Medical Detection Dogs trains dogs to save lives

We are the pioneering organisation for research into canine olfactory diagnostics. We train dogs to detect the odour of disease with the aim of developing faster, more efficient and less invasive diagnostics that lead to better patient outcomes.

Our Bio Detection research includes cancer, neurological disease and bacterial infections, and now COVID-19, and has the potential to benefit millions. We already apply what we know about the science of canine olfaction to benefit people by training Medical Alert Assistance Dogs, which help individuals manage complex, life-threatening medical conditions including diabetes, PoTS, Addison's disease, non-epileptic seizures and severe allergies.

In 2004 our co-founders, Dr John Church and Dr Claire Guest published in the BMJ the results of a ground-breaking proof of principle study looking at olfactory detection of human bladder cancer by dogs. This led to the Charity's founding in 2008, since when we have published a further 14 peer reviewed papers including in the BMJ (2004), Cancer Biomarkers (2011), PLOS ONE (2013, 2019 and 2021), Chemical Senses (2014), the Journal of Biosocial Science (2019) and Frontiers in Veterinary Science (twice in 2019), and placed more than 160 medical alert assistance dogs with people who need them. Our research projects are collaborations with NHS Trusts, universities, and researchers, both in the UK and internationally.

Until recently our income has been solely from public donations and grants from charitable trusts. It had grown slowly but steadily, and recently passed the £2 million a year mark. In April 2020 we were successful in an application to the Department of Health & Social Care for funding towards the COVID-19 study, the first we have received from government.

This research has raised our public profile, increasing the number of people who have supported us. We believe there is also potential for significant investment to realise the practical impact of our research.

Our Future

Accelerated by the COVID crisis, the Charity is at the point in its development where there are numerous opportunities we could pursue. Our aim is to be internationally recognised as a centre of excellence in the field of canine diagnostic innovation and to translate our research into practical outcomes that improve health. We know that to capitalise on future opportunities changes to the structure of the organisation may be required.

We responded rapidly to the coronavirus pandemic with a research study looking at the potential for dogs to detect the odour of the COVID-19 disease. Our study presents an opportunity to harness the power of the dogs' nose to help with the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic in a number of practical ways.

Other organisations have started their own activities, but the Medical Detection Dogs collaborative study adopts the same rigorous scientific approach we have brought to all our work and has produced in robust and reliable data. The results from phase 1 of the study have been submitted for peer review and we were delighted to announce last month that our dogs detected the smell of the disease with high levels of accuracy, with the best performing giving a sensitivity of up to 94.3% and specificity of up to 92%, meaning they can reliably identify when people do and don't have the disease.

This study has also provided strong evidence that the use of trained detection dogs to identify individuals with COVID-19 in public places such as transport hubs could be beneficial in the fight against this pandemic, when used in conjunction with traditional testing methods. We are now certain that dogs would be best used as a first, rapid screening tool, followed by a confirmatory PCR test for only those individuals indicated as positive by the dog.

The challenge is to take advantage of the results in a way which has a practical benefit for human health and the global economy, as well as providing a slingshot for Medical Detection Dogs to attract the investment needed to catapult the past 12 years of research into the reality of new diagnostic tools for a range of serious medical conditions which revolutionise the speed and accuracy of disease diagnosis, improve patient outcomes and provide income which will help us increase the number of medical alert assistance dogs we are able to place with people in need.

How You Can Help

We do not underestimate the challenges, which is why we would like to further strengthen our board by appointing up to three new trustees who have the skills and experience to support and advance our work, one of whom would take on the role of Honorary Treasurer.

Honorary Treasurer

Good financial management is essential to the future success of the charity. Since its foundation, the Charity has carefully stewarded its assets and been able to build up a level of reserves which gives us a degree of security and was a great comfort when the coronavirus pandemic first started.

We are looking for someone with good financial management experience, preferably with a knowledge of the specific requirements of charity accounting, who can help us continue to strengthen the Board's financial oversight and play a role in guiding the Charity through its next exciting phase of growth.

Fundraising

We need to deliver a number of significant research projects this year and are seeking a passionate, experienced individual to help us to develop our income streams and ensure funding is secured to reach our ambitious goals for the Charity's growth and development.

Research

We are looking for a senior figure who has a background in research, ideally bio-medical research, with excellent international links who can provide guidance to the Charity regarding the strategic direction of our research

We think that the creation of a new research committee, comprising trustees and external advisers would be beneficial. It is expected that the new trustee would chair that committee.



Trustee Person Specification

We are looking to appoint people who have the following skills, attributes and experience:

Honorary Treasurer

- Qualified accountant with demonstrated commercial awareness and knowledge;
- Experience of financial management and budgeting, including tax matters appropriate to charities and related trading subsidiaries;
- Knowledge of the specific requirements of charity accounting and of the SORP;
- Sound knowledge and experience of risk management;
- Proven ability to communicate and explain financial information clearly and concisely to members of the Board and other stakeholders;
- Analytical and evaluation skills, demonstrating good judgement.

Fundraising

- Extensive fundraising experience, possibly but not necessarily gained by working at a senior level in a national charity, ideally one which grew during your time there;
- Experience of developing fundraising strategies for charities with income requirements in excess of £2.5 million that have delivered their objectives. An understanding of a healthcare charity would be a bonus;
- An excellent understanding of developments and new trends in charity fundraising.

Research

- A well-established network of links with the academic community, preferably including links to a medical school (ideally as part of an institution also with a veterinary school), the NHS, and the healthcare and other relevant industry sectors;
- A deep understanding of the global nature of research collaboration and international relations, and the ability to strengthen existing and build new partnerships;
- Experience of developing research strategy;
- A track record of leadership within your particular field, and of achieving significant impact;
- A demonstrable commitment to innovation and entrepreneurship with a focus on outcomes.

For all roles you should also:

- Have the ability to manage risks with a considered, proportionate and balanced approach;
- Be able to make quick and sound decisions based on an analysis of information presented to you.
- Be committed to the aims of the Charity and have sufficient time and willingness to contribute effectively to board proceedings
- Be able to work effectively as a member of a team
- Be willing to speak up and can remain independent of any influence from another organisation or individual
- Have a reasonable level of understanding of legal, financial, audit and other regulatory requirements of a charity
- Be committed to the Nolan principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.



The role of a trustee

Being a trustee of Medical Detection Dogs will require you to:

- Work with fellow trustees to shape, drive and monitor MDD's strategy
- Prepare for and participate fully in board meetings
- Act reasonably in decision making and leadership of the organisation
- Ensure the proper management and administration of the Charity
- Use your specific skills, knowledge and experience to help the board of trustees reach quick and sound decision by leading discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, or other issues in your special expertise
- Promote the work of the Charity externally
- Support the chief executive and senior leadership team
- Ensure that the Charity's values are upheld in the delivery of its objectives.

The statutory duties of a trustee:

Trustees are responsible for the work that MDD does and how it does it. Trustees have a number of statutory duties, which are:

- To ensure that the Charity complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- To ensure that the Charity pursues its objects as defined in its governing document
- To ensure the Charity uses its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects for the benefit of the public
- To contribute actively to the board of trustees' role by giving firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets
- To safeguard the good name and values of the Charity
- To ensure the effective and efficient administration of the Charity including having appropriate policies and procedures in place
- To ensure the financial stability of the Charity
- To protect and manage the assets of the charity and to ensure the proper investment of the Charity's funds
- To follow proper and formal arrangements for the appointment, supervision, support, appraisal and remuneration of the chief executive.

Board structure

Medical Detection Dogs is governed by a board of, at present, 4 trustees which we are seeking to increase to a total of 7 or 8. Trustees are appointed by the board for a three-year term and can be reappointed.

There is an Audit & Risk sub-committee and the creation of a research sub-committee whose membership would include trustees and external members with the required skills and experiences is under consideration.

Commitment

Board meetings are usually held four times a year and the proposed board sub-committees will meet as required (in person or remotely). Meetings usually take place in Great Horwood, Buckinghamshire, or since last year via Zoom.

Outside of board and committee meetings, staff may seek to consult with trustees on particular subjects and there will be opportunities to attend meetings and events related to the Charity's activities.

The role is unpaid, however reasonable expenses are paid in line with the Charity's expenses policy.





How to apply

Please send a CV together with a covering letter of no more than 2 sides setting out how you meet the specific requirements of the role you are interested in to: emily.richardson@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk

Please use the subject "Trustee Recruitment".

If you would like to have an informal discussion about either role, please contact Emily Richardson in the first instance on the email address.

www.medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk

E: operations@medicaldetectiondogs.org.uk, T: 01296 655888

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Medical 
Detection Dogs

Patron: HRH The Duchess of Cornwall