



Candidate brief for the position of
CEO
Helen & Douglas House

March 2025



Berwick Partners
an Odgers Berndtson company


Helen & Douglas House
your local children's hospice

Introduction from Jennie Younger, Chair of Trustees

Dear Candidate,

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I am delighted to introduce Helen & Douglas House, a pioneering charity hospice providing world-class palliative care to life-limited children and support to their families. We were thrilled to receive an Outstanding rating from the Care Quality Commission in 2023, reflecting the dedication and passion of our staff and volunteers.

At Helen & Douglas House we take pride in the quality of care and support we offer to children and families in need. Our team of over 200 colleagues and 600 volunteers combines professionalism with compassion and empathy. Our mission is to provide exceptional care and support in a warm, loving environment, ensuring that every moment counts for these families. We are an innovative and entrepreneurial charity with a clear strategic focus on our mission and a deep commitment to quality and accountability.

As the CEO, you will lead an organisation recognised for its outstanding care. You will shape the strategic direction, drive innovation, and lead a dedicated team of professionals and volunteers. You will make a profound difference to the lives of the families we support, ensuring they receive the best possible care during challenging times. Leading such a respected organisation offers significant personal and professional growth. The CEO will possess skills in high-level strategic planning, team leadership, and stakeholder management. While the role presents challenges, such as navigating funding constraints, the unparalleled rewards of witnessing the positive impact on families and the community make it incredibly fulfilling.

We are seeking a visionary and compassionate leader to join us as our next CEO. This role is pivotal in driving our strategic goals, enhancing our services, expanding our reach to support even more families in need and establishing a leading role in advancing research and education. We are looking for someone who shares our commitment to excellence, innovation, and inclusivity. We look forward to learning more about you and how you can contribute to the future of Helen & Douglas House.

Jennie Younger
Chair of Trustees



About Helen & Douglas House

Helen & Douglas House helps local families cope with the challenges of looking after babies and children who are terminally ill or who will die prematurely.

Based in Oxford, Helen & Douglas House cares for babies and children up to the age of 18 with life-limiting and terminal conditions, and provides support to their families. We provide our services at the hospice and in the community, in the counties of Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Northamptonshire and Gloucestershire.

Helen & Douglas House is a warm, homely place where we provide round-the-clock, 24/7 medical and nursing care in a comforting, supportive environment. Our hospice is filled with laughter, whilst also being a peaceful place where families can create happy memories in their last days, weeks, months or years together, confident that their child will receive the very best palliative care. When a child dies, we are there to support the whole family. Parents, brothers, sisters, and grandparents are all part of the Helen & Douglas House family. At the toughest time of their lives, we give families the time and space to enjoy the precious moments they have left with each other and help them to cope with their child's final days.

The world's first children's hospice

Helen & Douglas House started life in November 1982, when Helen House and the children's hospice movement was founded by Sister Frances Dominica.

For over 40 years we have pioneered and championed the very best children's hospice care in the UK and have been the first to stand up and say that every child should be able to live their life to the full, even when life is short, and that they have a human right to a dignified, comfortable death.

This remains our core purpose today – it's at the heart of everything we do.

Our Patron, Her Majesty The Queen

Her Majesty The Queen became Patron of Helen & Douglas House in 2007, in her former role as The Duchess of Cornwall. Her Majesty's continued patronage was confirmed in 2024 following a review of patronages to mark the 1st anniversary of Their Majesties' Coronation. Every year Her Majesty has invited families and our staff to visit Clarence House to decorate the Christmas tree. This is a magical event which creates such precious memories for the families. Her Majesty has also visited the hospice many times, meeting both bereaved families and those who come for supportive stays, as well as staff and volunteers.



Our Impact

The care which has been delivered has evolved so much since the hospice first opened its doors 40 years ago, but we are now facing new opportunities and challenges which need to be addressed:

- Thanks to advancements in medical care and expertise, children with terminal illnesses are living longer from infancy into childhood and beyond, often with **complex conditions**. This extended lifespan requires more complex care, making it challenging to predict how their symptoms and pain will develop. The physical and emotional toll on these children and their families is significant. At **Helen & Douglas House, we care for around 200 children and their families** at any one time, primarily across **Buckinghamshire, Berkshire, and Oxfordshire**.
- **More children than ever before need our support.** We are reaching more families through the relationships we have built with other healthcare providers, supporting more children and families than ever before. In response to this increased demand, we have worked hard to expand various aspects of our services. We have also implemented important organisational changes to support the delivery of these services.
- Our experienced medical and nursing teams work in partnership with community services and other local hospice services to ensure that **we provide the best quality and safe care in our hospice at home or in hospital**. In 2023 we were delighted to have been rated '**Outstanding**' by the Care Quality Commission.
- **Families' needs are changing.** More and more families tell us they want their child to be cared for at home. At present we are unable to reach every family in our region who needs our care.
- At the same time, we remain a **central voice in regional and national forums relevant to palliative and supportive care** helping to **educate and improve practice**.
- Our highly experienced medical and nursing team plays a leading role in **advancing impactful research and education both nationally and internationally**. We aim to continue to play our part in transforming the landscape of paediatric palliative and end-of-life care.
- **Helen & Douglas House is in good financial shape** through prudent cost management, so more income can be spent on care. **But the cost of delivering our services has increased significantly** (as it has for all hospices). This means we are having to look at how we spend every penny, alongside how we can increase our income.
- **Only 10% of our total annual income is received from statutory sources** (NHS 4.4% and NHSE Grant 5.6%). **So, to deliver our outstanding services, we rely on generating our income from the general public** through donations, fundraising events, corporate support, gifts in Wills and through our 24 Helen & Douglas House charity shops.

Key Strategic Messages

Delivering world-class palliative and end-of-life care remains our overriding ambition. But today we must do more to give every child and family who needs us the highest quality care and wraparound support. This means focusing on where we provide care, how we provide it, and what we provide, at every stage listening closely to what families tell us they need. All of these priorities are aimed at making our services, already rated outstanding, into something which improves care for all children nationally.

Our Board of Trustees is working with the senior executive team to create the next phase of our strategy with the mission to pioneer, deliver, and champion exceptional palliative care and clinical services which adapt to the ever-evolving needs of children and families, through compassionate, high-quality care.

- Underpinning this mission are **three pillars**:
 1. To ensure that **children and their families receive seamless, integrated palliative care services in their preferred settings**.
 2. To establish a **leading role in advancing impactful research and education**.
 3. To transform **the landscape of paediatric palliative and end-of-life care**.
We will use the enhancements to services alongside the transformational **research** and education to continue to be pioneers in this space.

Impact Report

Helen & Douglas House has produced an Impact Report for 2023-24 which shows the impact we have made to improve the lives of local families with terminally ill and life-limited children in Oxfordshire, the Thames Valley and beyond. [Download Impact Report 2023-2024](#)

Annual Report

Helen & Douglas House has produced an Annual Report for the financial year 2023/24. The document, along with further information on the performance of the Charity can be found on the [Charity Commission website](#) or [Here](#)



Quality Accounts

The pursuit of excellence in the delivery of care, and in the support services underpinning them, is a strategic aim of Helen & Douglas House. Performance against this aim is regularly reviewed by the Charity's Trustees.

The Quality Account is a means by which we are able to share information publicly about the quality of care we provide.

[Download Quality Account 2023-2024](#)

[Download Quality Account 2022-2023](#)

Our Commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

We celebrate diversity and aim for an equitable, diverse, and inclusive organisation.

Learn about our commitment to diversity, including governance and progress measurement. We are working to gain level 1 accreditation in Investors in Diversity and provide Diversity and Inclusion training to staff.

[Download EDI Statement](#)



The Role

Job title:	Chief Executive Officer
Reports to:	The Chair of the Board of Trustees, Helen & Douglas House
Direct reports:	Deputy CEO/Finance Director, Medical Director, Director of Nursing & Care, Director of Retail & Trading, Director of Income Generation and Head of HR
Location:	Oxford
Salary:	c£110,000 (negotiable)

As the world's first children's hospice, we have pioneered, delivered and championed world class, compassionate children's palliative and end-of-life care and clinical services in the UK for over 40 years. Our vision is that every child should live their life to the full, even when life is short, and that they have a human right to a dignified and comfortable death. Our strategy adapts to the ever-evolving needs of children and families.



Job Purpose

Staff at Helen & Douglas House (HDH) have a passion for and commitment to the outstanding care that we provide to children and their families. We are looking for a CEO who has a strong alignment with the vision and values of HDH, with a demonstrable commitment to our work and a passion for children and end-of-life care.

- Champion and deliver the next phase of our ambitious strategy.
- Provide inspirational leadership, strategic direction, and financial sustainability to the organisation, staff, and volunteers in line with our aims and objectives.
- Be accountable for our performance and delivery of strategic aims and objectives as approved by the Board of Trustees.
- Represent and promote HDH with key external stakeholders, including donors (existing and potential), partners, and representatives of other relevant organisations.
- Ensure the Board of Trustees receives appropriate advice and information on all relevant matters to fulfil its governance, legal, and constitutional responsibilities.

Key Responsibilities

Leadership

- Provide visible, inspiring, considered and effective senior leadership, direction, and oversight to HDH in delivering its vision, strategic direction, and implementation of plans, managing any divergence of these plans.
- Inspire the Executive Team, ensuring each individual performs at the optimum level and the Team functions effectively.
- Inspire all staff with the caring purpose of HDH and represent it to stakeholders, including the families and children we care for and support.
- Ensure a high-performing environment and a leadership culture that is challenging yet empowering and supportive.
- Translate the overall strategy into exciting and meaningful business plans.
- Foster an effective culture based on consistent principles and values, role modelling these values both internally and externally.

Governance

- Be responsible to the Trustees for the overall financial health of the Charity, ensuring diverse income is secured and expenditure controlled in line with budgets for long-term sustainability.
- Ensure risk management processes are in place and operated effectively, providing regular assurance and updates to the Board of Trustees via the sub-committees and directly as appropriate.



- Build effective working relationships with Trustees through appropriate presentation and reporting to ensure good governance while fulfilling our legal and constitutional responsibilities.
- Lead the Charity to be dynamic, fit for purpose, and use resources as effectively and efficiently as possible.
- Inspire fundraising, retail and other income generation activities from established sources and develop new avenues of income.
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of developments in palliative and end-of-life care and the wider healthcare context to provide appropriate guidance to the Executive and the Board of Trustees.
- Ensure hospice data is optimised and effectively integrated across the organisation, leveraging IT systems as required.

Commercial and Financial Sustainability

- Preserve the overall financial health of HDH by ensuring diverse income streams are in place and expenditure is controlled in line with budgets for long-term sustainability.
- Oversee fundraising, retail, and other income generation activities from established sources, exploring and developing new avenues to increase income generation and long-term financial sustainability.
- Ensure all accounting and financial management systems meet the standards required by regulators and reflect best practice.
- Ensure all service delivery operates on a financially sustainable basis.

Ambassadorial & Networking

- Engage appropriately with HDH's Patron, Her Majesty The Queen.
- Raise HDH's profile through speaking engagements, networking, publicity, marketing, and membership of relevant charitable organisations.
- Promote and enhance our position externally, developing and maintaining good relations and effective networks with relevant stakeholders, including Government, children, young people, their families, celebrities, the public, media, and major donors, corporates, finding innovative methods of engaging and involving them in our work.
- Build constructive partnerships and strategic alliances with appropriate organisations in the private, statutory, and voluntary sectors to address matters of joint concern, e.g., Oxford University, NHS networks (Pain Clinic), Integrated Care Boards (ICBs), Together for Short Lives, Hospice UK, etc.
- Represent the Charity at high-profile events and with the media.
- Act as the chief spokesperson for HDH.

Person Specification

Essential Experience

- Substantial senior leadership experience in similarly scaled, highly regulated and complex environments.
- An exceptional people leader with a proven ability to inspire and galvanise multi-disciplinary teams of staff and volunteers.
- Demonstrable experience of organisational change management with a proven ability to effectively engage and bring people along on the journey.
- A successful track record of designing, implementing, and delivering strategy.
- Strong ambassador with the gravitas and presence to confidently champion our mission to diverse stakeholders.
- Experience of building, developing and maintaining exceptional relationships and partnerships in multi-stakeholder environments.
- Substantial commercial acumen and experience in income generation, cost management, and budget delivery.
- Experienced in working with Boards, fostering an open, transparent and collaborative governance culture.
- Demonstrated risk management expertise and an understanding of good data governance.
- Evidence of developing and implementing a robust Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (ED&I) agenda across the organisation.

Desirable Experience

- An understanding and/or experience of clinical services, modern NHS systems, health services, and children's hospice funding.
- Knowledge of the hospice sector and end-of-life care.
- Experience gained in a relevant not-for-profit, public sector, or health/social care organisation.

Personal Skills and Abilities

- Committed to the vision, mission, and values of HDH.
- An inspirational, visionary, motivational, and facilitative leadership style.
- A calm, considered and measured approach under pressure with an ability to foster a productive, supportive and friendly work environment.
- Unwavering dedication, adaptability and resilience in the face of challenges.
- Empathetic, compassionate, and authentic.
- Ability to think creatively and innovatively.
- High levels of emotional intelligence.
- Strong financial and commercial acumen.
- Effective decision-maker.
- A demonstrable commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion.



Benefits

Annual Leave

- On appointment - 27 days
- Following 3 years' service - 28 days
- Following 5 years' service - 29 days
- Plus 8 UK Bank holidays
- Option to buy or sell up to 5 days

Pension

Group Personal Pension scheme ('opt out' system) for which the employer contribution is set at 7%, which will be paid conditional upon the employee contributing 6%. Option available to contribute any amount above the conditional 6%, with the employer contribution remaining capped at 7%.

Membership to the NHS pension scheme is available to employees who have contributed to the NHS pension scheme in the previous 12 months.

Occupational Sick Pay

- From the date of your appointment up to 1 year – 1 month's full pay and one month's half pay
- After 1 year of service – 2 months' full pay and 2 months' half pay
- After 2 years' service – 3 months' full pay and 3 months' half pay
- After 3 years' service – 4 months' full pay and 4 months' half pay
- After 4 years' service – 5 months' full pay and 5 months' half pay
- After 5 years' service – 6 months' full pay and 6 months' half pay

Life Assurance

4 times annual salary

Employee Assistance Programme

- Run through Health Assured
- Counselling – up to 6 session in a 12-month period through WorkRelated

Octopus EV Salary Sacrifice Scheme

- Available after passing probation to lease a new EV

Enhanced Maternity and Family Friendly Policies



IMPORTANT DATES

Closing date for applications	9am on Wednesday 16 th April
Preliminary interviews with Berwick Partners	w/c 28th April and w/c 5th May
Initial Interviews with Helen & Douglas House	w/c 19 th May
Final Panel interviews with Helen & Douglas House	w/c 26 th May



How to Apply

To apply, please submit a CV along with a covering letter setting out your interest in the role and briefly summarising how you meet the **Essential and Desirable Experience** criteria as outlined in the Person Specification.

The preferred method of application is online at www.berwickpartners.co.uk/93258

If you are unable to apply online please email your application to response.manager@berwickpartners.co.uk

All applications will receive an automated response.

All candidates are also requested to complete an online Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form which will be found at the end of the application process.

For **detailed information** on how we process your personal data, please review our privacy policy on our website <https://berwickpartners.co.uk/privacy-and-cookie-policy/>

In line with GDPR, we ask that you **do NOT send us** any information that can identify children or any of your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, data concerning health or sex life and sexual orientation, genetic and/or biometric data) in your CV and application documentation. Following this notice, any inclusion of your Sensitive Personal Data in your CV/application documentation will be understood by us as your express consent to process this information going forward. Please also remember to not mention anyone's information or details (e.g. referees) who have not previously agreed to their inclusion.

If you have any queries or would like more information in regard to this document, please contact:

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