



**Chair of the
Board of Trustees**

**Candidate Pack
January 2026**

HarrisHill
charity recruitment specialists

**THACKRAY
MUSEUM OF
MEDICINE**



Welcome

from **Liz Moss**
Trustee & Chair of People Committee

We are a Museum with a devoted purpose – to help shape a better tomorrow.

Join our Board of Trustees as our new Chair and support our ambitious journey as we look towards an even brighter future.

The Thackray Museum of Medicine is on an upward trajectory, catalysed by a major re-development of our exhibition galleries and public spaces which re-opened in May 2021. Since then, we have embraced new audiences through inspired and unique programming, grown our commitment to our communities and learning programmes, and reached our highest-ever visitor numbers.

As we approach our 30th anniversary year in 2027, we continue to look towards a thriving, bright future, whilst facing sector challenges head on. We have learned to embrace dynamism, agility and an adeptness for change in difficult economic, environmental and societal circumstances. We know the vital power, impact and influence our collections, story-telling and assets – our people, programme and place – can have; our focus is to embrace that and ensure our future resilience and sustainability.

As a finalist at both the ArtFund Museum of the Year (2021) and European Museum of the Year Awards (2023), we have established ourselves as a significant national asset, furthered by our recent strategic developments.

Central to us achieving our ambitions is the support, engagement and participation of a forward-thinking and ambitious Board. We are looking for a new Chair to help us continue to cultivate an engaged, committed group of people, to support and uphold the work of the CEO and staff team, and to continue our trajectory of strategic success.

We are conscious of our ability to best represent our incredibly diverse and culturally-rich local communities; to that end, **we are keen to gain interest from a global majority candidate.**

Aligned with the support from our key funders – Arts Council England, Thackray Medical Research Trust, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Garfield Weston Foundation, Peter Sowerby Foundation, Wellcome and others – you can help us deliver our goals and ensure that we work in an ethical, robust, efficient and effective manner.

Support our Museum in realising our exciting next chapter as we look to the next 30 years ahead, and join us as our new Chair in 2026.



Read our 2024/25
Annual Report >>



Watch our European Museum
Award entry video (2023) >>

We are Thackray



Helping to shape a better tomorrow

The Thackray Museum of Medicine is the UK's largest independent medical museum, a place that inspires people with the passion and purpose of medicine and healthcare – past, present and future.



Thackray is a welcoming, safe space where we share our unique collection to help shape a better tomorrow.

Situated in the bustle of a lively East Leeds inner-city community and adjacent to St James' University Hospital – Europe's largest teaching hospital – the Museum showcases innovation in medical endeavour through its collection of over 50,000 objects and some 25,000 written works, covering all aspects of the history of medicine. A focus on collaboration and shared responsibility for health sets us apart from many more traditional medical museums.



We empower people to understand their own healthcare choices and inspire future generations of change-makers by platforming told and untold stories of medicine and society.

Open to the public, we welcome between 55,000 and 70,000 people through our door every year. Medicine touches the lives of all humankind, and the museum uses its collection as a focal point to share personal stories from all parts of society.

Objects on permanent display are carefully curated to tell the stories of those they impacted, from early pioneers to medical professionals to patients, bringing celebrations and struggles equally to life.



By embracing and representing our community, people will see themselves and better understand each other.

Our exhibitions and programmes are built on the foundation of democratising the collection and co-curating with our community, ensuring that our contemporary collecting programme and the stories we tell feature and represent diverse cultures and experiences.



Our programme

A year-round eclectic and inspiring offer

Our building houses two floors of permanent galleries, taking our visitors on a journey through medical innovation, from the history of healthcare to the advances that have shaped the way we look after ourselves, and each other.

Since reopening in 2021 following a £4 million capital redevelopment of our internal spaces, a core priority has been offering a year-round programme of temporary exhibitions and one-off events that bring the stories in our collection to life.

PROGRAMME SNAPSHOT

Exhibitions

Beneath the Sheets: Anatomy, Art and Power

An intimate look into our extensive anatomical artwork collection, *Beneath the Sheets* asks us to confront the human realities that gave us our understanding of the body, one page at a time.

Community Programming

RHS Community Meal

In our first 'Community Table' event, we invited our local communities to come and have their tea with us, and played a card game to unearth their feelings about plants, gardens and medicine. Their responses formed a jumping-off point for our team of young curators to start building ideas for our summer 2026 exhibition, in collaboration with the Royal Horticultural Society.

Thackray Lates

Sunburn: The Science of Skin

Our series of adult-only (18+) evening events, exploring unusual topics and untold stories through talks, medical experiments, workshops and performances.

School Holiday Activities

Poo, Glorious Poo!

Our holiday activities offer a fantastic mix of theatrical 'Boffins' shows, crafts, games, trails, hands-on activities such as dissections, plus much more to suit all ages and multi-generational families.

In-depth Discussion

Insights

Thackray Insights are informal lectures inviting you to delve deep into eye-opening topics and groundbreaking discoveries with leading academics. A great opportunity to ask questions such as: 'can you smell, touch and taste cancer?', and 'can medicine treat the soul?' in a varied and intriguing set of subjects relating to medicine and healthcare.

Learning

Gothic Literature Day

In partnership with the British Library, we held our first ever Gothic Literature Day in 2025 with partner schools for 100 KS3/4 school children. Bringing context to life, we were joined by writer and rapper Testament plus Leeds-based theatre company Wrongsemble.



Mission & Vision



Our aims and ambitions

Our mission is to inspire people with the passion and purpose of medicine and healthcare in the past, present and future.

We use our unique collections and heritage building as a foundation to:

- inspire people with stories of the motivation, commitment and achievement that drives medical progress.
- promote communities' and individuals' agency in shaping health, wellbeing and the future of medicine and healthcare.
- enable people to participate in a public conversation about medicine and health.
- provide a space in our shared stories for the under-represented and un-heard.
- provide a focus for researchers, people working in medicine, patients, decision-makers and the public to connect, share ideas, imagine and create a better future.

Our long-term vision sees the Thackray establishing itself as the UK's leading medical museum by 2030, with a wish to welcome 100,000 people a year.

We will:

- be recognised as an asset for meaningful change within our community and across the wider region, helping people find ways to make communities healthier and better places to live, supporting economic growth and promoting equity and access.
- have established the museum as a centre of excellence for research for the benefit of all.
- be governed and managed in an open, inclusive and equal way, representing and sharing decision-making with our communities, across the whole range of our operations.
- be a commercially resilient and entrepreneurial museum that delivers excellent value for its public alongside real economic benefits for the region.



Our Thackray promises

Across our work, our team are guided by a set of promises that allow them to distil our mission and values into their everyday work. Designed together, these promises define **what we do**, **what people can expect** from us and **how we behave**.

We'll make you feel seen.

- ▶ Whoever you are, whatever brings you here, you're welcome.

We put humanity first.

- ▶ We tell people's stories with empathy and care.

We've got your back.

- ▶ We make ourselves useful to those who live, work and are cared for locally.

We're gutsy.

- ▶ We'll show you how boldly we think.

We are not the authority.

- ▶ We look outwards, listen and reflect.

We'll keep challenging ourselves.

- ▶ When we need to change, we change.



The Opportunity

Help to shape our future ...

Our next Chair will work alongside our Board and wider team to continue to build a sound platform for the Thackray to allow us to reach new heights and secure a healthy long-term future.

A recent £250,000 project, funded by long-term supporters the National Lottery Heritage Fund, has transformed organisational knowledge of our audiences and of ourselves – alongside our core digital infrastructure – and allowed us to reach for more ambitious long-term goals. Our team have never had access to more knowledge and experience, nor had such passion to share our collections and stories with the world.

However, we cannot hide from the fact that this time of change has been against a backdrop of uncertainty all around us. As we approach our 30th anniversary in 2027, the museum – and our sector – has had to embrace dynamism and agility in difficult economic, environmental and societal circumstances.

Although our work and audiences have grown exponentially in breadth and diversity, like many of our peers our financial reserves have stayed depleted despite strategic investments, diversified income streams and tight financial controls. And in the face of climate change and worsening weather conditions, the external bricks and mortar of our Victorian home are in need of some serious TLC.

We know the vital power, impact and influence our collections, story-telling and assets – our people, programme and place – can have; our focus is to embrace that and ensure our future resilience and sustainability. To do this, we are supported and overseen by a Board of Trustees that represent both our community and business needs, both of which we believe are paramount to our future success. Medical, law and governance, finance, academic and cultural expertise are all represented, supported by an increasingly diverse set of lived experiences.

Leeds is a city with a population that is becoming more ethnically diverse. Across the city, 21% of the population identifies as being Asian, Black, Mixed/Multiple or from other non-White ethnic groups.

In our council ward of Gipton & Harehills, 65% of the population is from non-White ethnic groups.

It is imperative that our Board better represents the make-up of the population around us, and in this role at Thackray – where equity is a primary objective – we particularly welcome applications from individuals from global majority backgrounds.





THACKRAY
MUSEUM OF
MEDICINE

The Role

We are looking for a new Chair to lead our dedicated and skilled Board of Trustees.

Whilst you will have experience of charity governance and leadership, we are open as to what the Chair role might look like and we realise that our next brilliant chair may work differently to how our Board currently operates.

The Board of Trustees is the ultimate governance body for Thackray Museum of Medicine, serving as stewards of our resources, and is ultimately responsible for our strategy, operations, adherence to law and regulation and financial management.

We are looking for an inspiring leader, who genuinely understands and cares about Thackray Museum of Medicine's work, and can align with our positioning (pages 6 & 7) and promises (page 11).

Standard term of office

3 years minimum, up to a maximum of 6.

Remuneration

This, like all our Trustee posts, is a voluntary position. Out of pocket expenses incurred in the course of duties may be claimed.

Time Commitment

We expect this to vary depending on the working situation of the candidate and how the Board co-operatively might manage its commitments. However, our **minimum expectation** is about one day a month.

Your Location

Ideally Leeds, though nationwide considered; a strong connection to Leeds is desirable.

Board Meetings

Four per annum (of which three can be hybrid, though in-person is preferable).

Board Composition

1 Chair and 12 Trustees (though there is no maximum), including 1 Young Trustee.

Sub-committees

The Chair is welcome to attend sub-committees but is not necessarily expected to.

- *People*, which has a focus on EDI, HR and remuneration
- *Collections, research, programming and learning*, which has a focus on activity, research, outcomes and discussion on alignment with Arts Council England's *Let's Create* agenda.
- *Finance, risk and audit*.
- *Trading Board*, which oversees our wholly-owned subsidiary of the Medical Museum Trading Company Ltd, and for which there are two separate non-exec, non-Trustee directors.

Responsibilities



Strategy & Governance

- Ensure the Board operates effectively in the consideration, iteration and approval of the strategy proposed by the CEO in support of Thackray Museum of Medicine's mission and values.
- Ensure, with Trustees, Thackray Museum of Medicine operates efficiently and effectively to fulfil its objectives.
- Ensure high standards of governance and risk management.
- Ensure the Board is as diverse as possible and provides the range of knowledge, skills and experience necessary to deliver the charity's aims.
- Ensure the organisation is accountable and transparent in its activities. Ensure compliance with relevant charitable and company legislation.
- Oversight of the sub-committees of the board.
- Ensure a high performing and effective board by committing to regular reviews of board performance (including managing Trustee retirements, resignations).

Guidance and Support to the CEO

- Line management of and work in partnership with the CEO to support them in achieving the aims of the charity.
- Support and guidance on operations, including personnel management.

Fundraising

- Use personal and professional networks to help the CEO and fundraising team with access to potential donors and supporters.
- Advice and assistance in raising and maintaining the charity's profile.

Financial

- Ensure, with the Board and chair of Finance, Risk and Audit in particular, sound financial oversight including review and approval of the annual budget.
- Oversight of high standards of financial management.

Lead Board Meetings

- Lead on all aspects of meeting chairing including encouraging discussion at Board meetings, summarising key points and ensuring decisions are made and implemented.

How to apply

If you would like to apply, please send the following:

- An up to date CV.
- A completed data capture form (which Harris Hill can share with you).
- A Supporting Statement (no more than 2x A4 pages) outlining why you are interested in becoming Chair of Thackray Museum of Medicine and demonstrating relevant experience for the role.

Please submit your completed application to Jenny Hills (jenny.hills@harrishill.co.uk) 11.59pm on Tuesday 31 March.

Please state in your application if you have any holiday commitments between 13 and 24 April that may coincide with interview dates.

Please could you let us know if you will require any special provision should you be called forward for interview.

The CEO, current chair, and other Trustees welcome opportunities to speak to suitable interested candidates in advance.

The Thackray is actively committed to promoting Equity, Diversity and Inclusion.

We are a Disability Confident employer (registration number DCS036392) and welcome applications from all sections of the community.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Closing date for applications
11.59pm Tuesday 31 March 2026

First stage interviews (online)
w/c 13 April (tbc)

Second stage interviews (in person)
w/c 20 April (tbc)

Anticipated start of tenure
Tuesday 12 May 2026





Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
 ENGLAND**

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 RT** **THACKRAY**
 MEDICAL RESEARCH TRUST



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...here are based on photogrammetry
 ...artistic pieces from the Birmingham
 ...ital collection, including a narwhal
 ...of dentistry, various extraction
 ...a dental key and pliers, a device
 ...and jaws, an impressions plate,
 ...human teeth, false teeth
 ...tooth from an



**THACKRAY
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 MEDICINE**

141 Beckett Street
 Harehills, Leeds LS9 7LN

thackraymuseum.co.uk

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