

Case Study:

Our Trusted Recruitment Partnership with Helen & Douglas House



Executive Summary

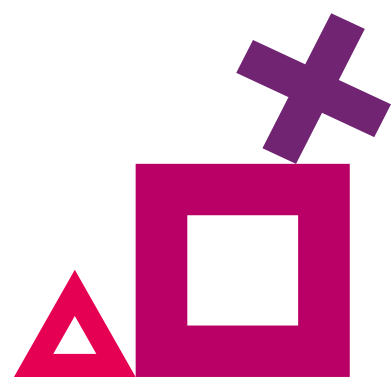
When Helen & Douglas House, the children's hospice in East Oxford needed an exceptional interim leader, it once again turned to Allen Associates.

As the organisation's trusted recruitment partner for over 20 years, we were engaged exclusively to fill a highly specialised, strategically important role. Within a tight timeframe, we delivered a standout shortlist and secured a candidate who not only brought the right blend of financial and operational expertise but was inspired by the hospice's mission. The appointed candidate, sourced through application and rigorously assessed, has already made a strong start, and early client feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. This assignment underscores the depth of the relationship, Allen Associates' specialist expertise and our ability to deliver quality outcomes in the face of complex recruitment scenarios.

Introduction

Helen & Douglas House approached Allen Associates with an urgent, strategically significant interim requirement during a period of leadership change. The organisation required a senior leader who could stabilise operations during a new CEO's transition while supporting its continued commitment to exceptional care. Having worked together since 2003 to support its recruitment needs across temporary and permanent roles, the charity had confidence that Allen Associates understood its organisational culture, operational structure and sector-specific challenges.

We responded quickly and confidently to a challenging brief.



Client Background

Helen & Douglas House is the world's first children's hospice and is renowned for providing hospice care for babies and children living with life-limiting and terminal conditions, and their families, across the Oxfordshire and surrounding counties. Its services are deeply valued by the community and a blend of clinical excellence, compassionate care and operational complexity characterises the organisation. With a broad footprint spanning clinical care, finance, operations fundraising, marketing, HR and retail, Helen & Douglas House requires leaders who can operate with empathy, clarity and resilience.

Allen Associates has been a trusted partner to the hospice since 2003, placing numerous temporary staff and supporting selective permanent hires. The relationship is built on trust, consistent delivery and a shared commitment to supporting an organisation that makes a profound difference in the community.

Objectives

The charity required an Interim Director of Finance and Operations on a nine-month, fixed-term contract, with the potential to become permanent.

The role required an individual who could:

- Provide senior leadership across both finance and operations
- Support the newly appointed CEO during a period of strategic review
- Maintain continuity in budgeting, year-end processes and operational insight
- Bring relevant charity or hospice sector experience
- Operate strategically, while stabilising a wide range of internal teams.

The brief required a rare blend of expertise and alignment of values.



Challenges

Several factors made this assignment particularly nuanced:

- **Highly niche skill set**
the candidate required full financial qualifications and substantial operational leadership experience, limiting the talent pool
- **Specialist sector requirements**
A preference for hospice or charity experience added further complexity
- **Organisational transition**
The new CEO needed an interim leader capable of providing stability and clarity from day one.

The client's decision to partner exclusively with Allen Associates reflects its confidence in our expertise and ability to meet highly specialised recruitment needs.

Approach

Leveraging the full strength of our networks, sector knowledge and collaborative recruitment model, Allen Associates:

1. Conducted a comprehensive database and network search, drawing on a pool of candidates that we had previously met and assessed
2. Reviewed new applicants, identifying a particularly strong candidate whose profile aligned closely with the hospice's requirements and values
3. Delivered a focused list of three exceptional candidates, all of whom were invited to interview, demonstrating the precision of the search
4. Supported a robust and transparent interview process involving the CEO, Head of People and Director of Retail Trading.
5. Managed communications and expectations throughout, supporting both client and candidates at every stage to ensure a smooth and positive experience for everyone.

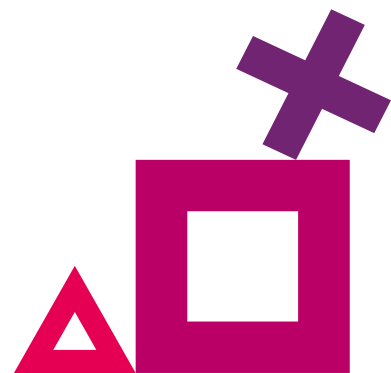


Two candidates progressed to the second interview stage, resulting in the appointment of a candidate who brought extensive operational and financial leadership experience as well as a strong personal motivation to contribute to a purpose-driven organisation.

Results

- The Interim Director of Finance and Operations has now started and is already making a substantial impact
- The candidate has integrated quickly and brings a wealth of experience across finance, estates, operations and support services

The successful appointment reinforces the strength, depth and reliability of the 20-year relationship between Helen & Douglas House and Allen Associates. It highlights our ability to deliver quickly, accurately and with a deep understanding of the client's culture and needs and demonstrates our ability to deliver exceptional, high-quality candidates for niche, mission-critical roles.



Conclusion

This assignment demonstrates the value of long-term, trusted partnerships in achieving outstanding recruitment outcomes in the not-for-profit sector. By combining sector insight, a robust candidate network and a detailed understanding of the hospice's evolving needs, we ensured a successful appointment that provides stability during a critical period of change.

Our relationship with Helen & Douglas House is built on trust, collaboration and a shared commitment to supporting an organisation that touches so many lives. We're proud to continue playing a role in its success and look forward to supporting its future growth.

If you'd like to learn more about how we can help you find exceptional talent across HR, Finance, Marketing or Administration, we'd love to hear from you.

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