We’re Foothold, and we’re looking for new Trustees with experience in either strategic IT or professional fundraising.

Our Trustees play a big part in helping us to keep our strategic promises and meet the needs of those we’re committed to support: engineers and their families worldwide.

So if you’d like to play your part in boosting the wellbeing of engineers and their families around the globe, we’d love to chat.
We’re supporting engineers and their families to step out of poverty and improve their health and wellbeing.

We’re Foothold, the Institution of Engineering and Technology Benevolent Fund. And we’re really passionate about supporting the wellbeing of past and present members of The IET and their dependents worldwide.

By providing financial support for those most in need, helping to lift them out of poverty and ensure they are in the best place possible to overcome the challenges that life brings, we strive to help engineers and their families to make positive choices that will change their lives for the better.

It’s a big team effort, with donors, Trustees, partner organisations, staff and volunteers all working together to help us achieve our purpose of ensuring no-one in the engineering community has to face life’s challenges alone.
Our direct support programmes do good in all kinds of ways

Financial support

We know that whilst many engineers and their families have a good standard of living, sadly there are some who are struggling to make ends meet.

We provide financial support through one-off grants to fund a range of essential household items, as well as ongoing monthly support for those who really need it to ensure they have enough money to keep a roof over their heads, put food on the table, access transport and keep in touch with friends and family.

Work life support

Giving people the tools to take back control of their lives is vitally important, and our career coaching support helps engineers who are out of work build the skills and confidence they need to get back into employment.
Health and wellbeing

Maintaining and improving the health of our community is at the centre to our work, and our direct support – including counselling grants and support with housing issues, debt advice and sleep problems – help maintain our community's resilience and wellbeing.

Partner organisations

Where we are not able to provide direct support, we signpost to other organisations, charities and support groups who can help – providing a lifeline to engineers and their families, no matter the challenges they face.
Digital support

Our digital health and wellbeing support allows us to reach and support many more people than we can through our direct support alone. In 2020, we began a three-year collaboration with Gattaca Plc, which enabled us to launch our health and wellbeing hub managed by Rightsteps – a social enterprise focused on providing evidence-based mental health and wellbeing solutions – meaning advice, support and interventions are now available for our community, 24/7.
Since our foundation, the history of Foothold and the IET has been intertwined – and although we are independent charities, we both work to support the world of engineers and engineering.

On 20 March 1890 the benevolent fund was set up to help members of the Institution of Electrical Engineers (IEE). Its purpose was to help widows and children of members who had died and who were living in poverty. In 1920 the first recorded grant of £20 was given. That’s around £2,500 in today’s money.

Since 1890, the IEE has grown and merged with other organisations to become the Institution of Engineering and Technology, an organisation of over 150,000 members across 168 countries – who form the bulk of our Foothold community – alongside lapsed members, dependents and non-IET members.
Meet the board of Trustees

Dr Dolores Byrne OBE – Chair

Dolores Byrne has been a Trustee since 2018.

Dolores is a chartered engineer and an Honorary Fellow of the IET. Following a career in industry, she has been a Board member of several engineering & technical services organisations.

Dolores has been a Trustee and Vice-President of the IET and also Chair of the IET Fundraising Committee. She was also a Trustee for other charities engaged in supporting engineers and encouraging more young people into careers in engineering. Dolores is currently a Non-Executive Director at Sellafield and a Trustee of Winchester Science Centre.

Gareth Price – Treasurer

Gareth has been a Foothold Trustee since March 2020.

“I am a Chartered Accountant and qualified with a medium-sized London firm of chartered accountants.

After qualifying, I joined Deloitte where I worked in the audit department for five years. Whilst there, I was involved in the audit of numerous NGOs, charities, universities and colleges.

I then moved on to work in the secondary banking sector, providing factoring and trade finance facilities for small to medium-sized family businesses.

I have also acted as a financial consultant to a number of businesses in the wholesale sector. From 2004 until I retired in 2018, I worked for 3 charities where I managed the fiscal and operational health of their UK and/or worldwide operations.

I lead teams in the areas of finance, information technology, personnel, legal, membership management and administration. In my spare time, I enjoy walking, travelling, and exploring family history, and I am a season ticket holder at Reading

Joe Dunn – Trustee

Joe is a chartered engineer who started working for BAE Systems in 2008 as a Software Engineering graduate.

Since then he has held roles as a Systems Engineer, System Design Authority and an Engineering Manager in the UK and Europe.

Joe is now the Head of Systems Engineering and Governance for one of BAE Systems’ UK business units in the Maritime sector, and lives on the south coast of the UK. He has been a volunteer with the IET since 2009, first as the Solent Local Network’s Young Professionals team leader which led to him winning the IET’s Paul Fletcher award in 2015, then as Solent network Vice Chairperson, Solent network Chairperson, a member of IET Council (2016-2018) and a member of the IET’s Board of Trustees (2018-2021). Joe has been a volunteer with Foothold since 2020 and joined the Board of Trustees in 2021.
Paul Connor – Trustee

Paul Connor is founder and Chief Executive of Mycon Marketing Services Ltd. He has been a Foothold Trustee since March 2017.

After graduating in 1975, he worked in the engineering industry for two multinational, blue-chip UK companies, gaining valuable skills in the commercial areas of marketing, pricing, tendering, sales and contracts.

Experience as a Senior Business Planner led him to found Mycon in 1981, thus bringing his expertise in developing and implementing successful marketing strategies to benefit other companies.

Mycon’s worldwide client base includes every type of organisation from small entrepreneurial companies through to national and international government departments.

Richard Spalding - Deputy Chair

Richard has been a Foothold Trustee since October 2017.

“Having retired as a Captain from the Royal Navy in 2014 after 37 years, I am now actively engaged in various non-paid voluntary activities, mainly in charity management.

I became a Trustee of Foothold in 2017 having spent the previous eight years as a member of IET Council (two years as Chair), during which I learnt a lot about the predicaments some unfortunate members and dependants find themselves in. So I wanted to see how I could help.

I am also President of Winchester Rotary (since July 2020) and support other aspects of Rotary overseas, including helping disaster areas and disabled citizens. Additionally, I am the co-founding Chairman of Worthy Runners as I believe social exercise is so good for wellbeing, and I provide occasional customer services consultancy as this is an area which I believe can always be improved.”

Professor Kate Sugden – Trustee

Kate has been a Foothold Trustee since October 2020.

She has been working in the area of photonics for nearly 30 years. This includes working for ADC (Australia), Oxford Fiber Optic Tools and Indigo Photonics. She joined Aston University in 2004 and is currently Deputy Dean for the College of Engineering and Physical Science. Her current research interests are in photonics and include fibre sensing, femtosecond laser material processing, OCT metrology and 3D printed photonics. Kate has a passion for outreach work and encouraging people to enter the engineering field regardless of their background. She is also a Trustee of the IET.
Tom was born in Australia and studied at the University of Queensland and the University of Cambridge. He has been a Foothold Trustee since October 2020.

He has lived and worked in London for many years. He is a solicitor and a partner in an international law firm, Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher LLP, specialising in finance and restructuring law.

He is also honorary legal adviser to the Order of St John (which operates St John Ambulance in the UK and elsewhere in the world) and a Trustee of the British Society of Gastroenterology.

Virginia has been a Foothold Trustee since October 2019.
What our Trustees do

- Our Trustees get together five times a year (once every quarter and for a strategy day in October) to prepare and attend board meetings and discuss any other ad-hoc matters, offering approximately 50-70 hours of their time each year in the role.

- They're responsible for providing strategic direction and making key decisions to ensure we're delivering on our objectives.

- They serve on our three Committees:
  - finance audit and risk (quarterly)
  - service development (twice yearly)
  - renumeration and nominations (quarterly)

- They might advise on particular subjects related to their area of interest or expertise.

- They are appointed for a three-year term, and can serve four terms maximum (two stints of two terms each, separated by at least 12 months).

- Although this role is unpaid, we reimburse some expenses (like childcare costs so you can attend meetings).
Why our Trustees are so important

Some of the vital things you’ll be doing include:

- Making sure our charity is fulfilling its promises and purposes for the communities we support
- Checking that we’re always following the law, as well as our own governing document
- Effectively managing our resources
- Using your unique skills and experience to help us meet our objectives
- Seeing that we’re accountable for what we’re set to do, down to the last report
- Working in the best interests of Foothold.
Our people are full of passion. Are you?

You don’t have to have experience as a Trustee to join us. For us, believing in our purpose to do good is the most important thing. Just bring your positive energy – we’ll support you with everything else from day one.

How our Board is constituted

- At least six of our Trustees are past or present members of the IET – two appointed by the IET, and four appointed by our Local Representatives Assembly
- Four Trustees are appointed by the Board and can be non-IET members
- As well as nominating Trustees, our Local Representatives Assembly provides comment on our strategy and direction.

If you have expertise in any of these areas, we’re all ears:

- Strategic IT
- Professional fundraising
We want to fill our Board of Trustees with people from the communities we support

It’s how we can help them in the best way possible – by 100% reflecting them and understanding their needs. Which is why we encourage applications from those who are currently underrepresented on our board and are:

- Young people under 35
- From an ethnically diverse or other marginalised community
- Living outside the UK.
Being a Trustee puts you in a unique position

You get to develop skills you wouldn’t necessarily build in other roles, and learn from and work with people from all walks of life. On top of this, you’ll also:

- Use your passion to help **build a brighter future for engineers and their families**
- **Play a big role** in strategically leading our charity
- **Enjoy a fresh, unique and meaningful experience** in a leadership role
- **Get good insight** on how others work, respond to situations and make decisions
- **Enjoy the perks of teamworking for the greater good.**

Have we got your attention?

If so, we can’t wait to meet you!

For more information, visit our Trustee information page (https://www.myfoothold.org/get-involved/become-a-trustee) and apply before Tuesday 8 March 2022 – we’ll take it from there!