

**BRIEF FOR THE POSITION OF
TRUSTEE NOVEMBER 2021**

**national centre
for circus arts**





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Background

The National Centre for Circus Arts is one of Europe's leading providers of circus education. Based in a magnificent Victorian power station adjacent to Hoxton Square, we are at the heart of developing and supporting excellent and innovative circus in the UK.

Our diverse range of activities include:

- Higher education programmes.
- A structured progressive training programme for under 18s.
- Professional development opportunities for aspiring and established performers.
- The provision of consultancy services.
- A range of recreational classes for adults and children.
- Workshops, learning programmes and away-days for the corporate market and other communities.

Circus is a collaborative art form that draws from multiple creative areas and we find a joy and richness in the partnerships we form. We believe that circus is moving towards its rightful place alongside opera, ballet, theatre, music and dance in the cultural fabric of the country and that this journey is enhanced if we join forces with other art forms and work collectively.

Graduates of our higher education programme have gone on to work around the world with companies including Cirque du Soleil and Les 7 Doigts de la Main. We also work closely with some of the UK's most reputable companies including the RSC, The Bridge Theatre, the Roundhouse, ENO, the V&A and the National Theatre.

Other past successes include the significant role we played in a number of major public events from the millennium celebrations at the Dome to training performers for the opening ceremony of the Paralympic Games in 2012.





Our Vision

Great circus everywhere



Our Mission

We prepare circus artists for the future by delivering innovative circus arts training, encouraging individuals along their chosen pathway from community engagement, through progressive vocational training and into successful professional careers. We continue to support individuals throughout their careers as professional circus artists through mentoring and through our advocacy of circus as a valuable, recognised artform. By pursuing creative and commercial opportunities we are able to extend the reach of circus into other sectors and markets whilst generating vital financial support for our core purpose.



Our Values

- Ambitious & willing to take risks: we explore new ideas and approaches, looking for what will add real value and have the most impact.
- Inclusive and accessible: we value diversity and work to make sure that opportunities are open to all.
- Environmentally aware and financially sustainable: we constantly strive to improve our environmental footprint, and take an entrepreneurial approach to generating income to ensure our viability for the future.

Our strategic plans continue to be reviewed and scrutinised to enable us to ensure a resilient and sustainable future for the organisation in response to external funding volatility and organisational challenges. The National Centre has a three-pronged strategy of training world-class circus artists, encouraging participation in circus arts and supporting circus artists and companies at all stages of their careers. This strategy includes:

Developing the degree programme that remains at the heart of the organisation by continuing to invest in the development of the very best models of teaching and learning to ensure that our graduates take with them a broad toolkit of skills into their professional lives.

Delivering support for teachers and developing excellence in our teaching practices, working with our validating partner University of Kent, our international peers and partners in FEDEC (the European Federation of Professional Circus Schools) and developing a suite of resources and opportunities for teachers working with all ages and abilities of circus students.

Developing our role as a hub for the sector by responding to sector needs and desires and supporting a network of regional organisations to encourage communication, collaboration and sharing of best practice. We also support the development of new and innovative work, establishing circus on the cultural menu in the UK and supporting the creation of high-profile nationally acclaimed circus productions.





We continue to develop our work with children and young people to encourage access to participation in circus arts activity for all. We are working on plans to reach areas of low cultural engagement and groups who historically do not engage with higher education.

To support this work and to develop a model that is resilient and sustainable we recently created a commercial directorate that exists to ensure we are exploiting all possible opportunities to raise independent funds to support our charitable work. Under the leadership and guidance of a new Commercial Director, work has started to review our recreational programme, ensuring it is fit for purpose and is delivering both excellent customer experience and income generation. The role will also launch a new product into the corporate learning market, develop the use of our building as an events space, and strengthen our fundraising pipeline with trusts and foundations.

The Organisation

During 2021, the National Centre for Circus Arts has embarked on an application to the Office for Students for independent registration as a higher education provider following seventeen years as a member of the Conservatoire for Dance and Drama (CDD).

The Trustee Board is the governing body responsible for matters including the finance, property and staffing of the institution. It is specifically required to determine the educational character and mission of the institution and to set its general strategic direction. Following a review in 2021, the Trustee Board adopted the CUC code and its requirements. The Trustee Board has access to several independent advisors. Trustee Board meetings are attended by all members of the Senior Management Team.





Subject to the overall responsibility of the Trustee Board, the Academic Board has an oversight of the academic affairs of the charity and draws its membership entirely from the staff and students of the charity.

It is chaired by the Chief Executive who is also the school Principal. It is particularly concerned with general issues relating to the learning, teaching, student experience and research work of the charity.

Although the Board meets quarterly, much of the detailed work is delegated to sub groups and committees, including those for Remuneration and Nomination, Finance and Audit.

A significant proportion of the membership of these groups and committees consists of members of the Trustee Board. Co-opted staff and student members may also be eligible to serve on some of the committees, subject to the provisions of the articles. The Chair of each group or committee is selected from the Trustees.

Senior Management Team

The Chief Executive is the head of the charity and has a general responsibility to the Trustee Board for the organisation, direction and management of the charity. As Chief Executive, the head of the organisation exercises considerable influence over the development of the organisational strategy, identification and planning of new developments and shaping of the institutional ethos, and is responsible for around 50 FTE staff (full time equivalent) and income of circa £2.8m.

Following a recent strategic review and some significant structural changes the organisation has refined its structure and is now led by a skilled, rounded senior management team comprising:



Kate White
Chief Executive



Froniga Lambert
Chief Operating Officer



Glen Stewart
Director of Professional Development



Dan Cowdrill
Commercial Director

For further information visit
nationalcircus.org.uk





To proactively support the ongoing development of the National Centre for Circus Arts whilst ensuring that the organisation meets its charitable objectives.

Main responsibilities

- Ensure that the National Centre for Circus Arts complies with charity law and company law and functions within the legal and financial requirements of a charitable trust and any other legislation or regulations that apply to it.
- Contribute actively in formulating and regularly reviewing the strategic aims of the organisation through agreeing the Business Plan and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
- Ensure that the policies and practices of the organisation are in keeping with its aims and comply with current law.
- Support the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team and to be an active member of the Board so that it fulfils its responsibility for the governance of the organisation.
- Ensure the financial stability of the organisation agreeing annual budgets and monitoring financial performance.
- Protect, manage and develop the estates of the National Centre for Circus Arts ensuring proper investment of the organisation's funds.
- Work with the Trustee body to set overall strategy and policy objectives and to monitor performance against agreed targets.
- Be an active member of the National Centre for Circus Arts sub-committees as appropriate, according to areas of expertise or interest.
- Contribute specific skills, interests and contacts and to support the organisation in fundraising activities.
- Follow the Articles of Association and the Charity Commission guidelines at all times, particularly when exercising the functions of the Trustees, or any of its committees, sub-committees or groups.
- Review and ratify the policies and procedures of the organisation on an annual basis.
- Safeguard the good name and values of the National Centre for Circus Arts.
- Attend Board and sub-committee meetings, read papers in advance and engage in discussion and debate.
- Take collective responsibility for the actions of the organisation and other Trustees.
- Keep informed about the activities of the organisation and wider issues which affect its work.
- Represent the National Centre for Circus Arts externally and act as an ambassador and advocate.



The Person

We want our Board to be representative of our local community and so would welcome approaches from people who live locally or have a connection with the National Centre. However, we are also conscious of our national remit and so would also welcome applications from those with an interest in performing arts who are based outside of London.

We encourage applications from under-represented groups, particularly people from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, but also a broad age-range and people living with disabilities.

We are looking for trustees with skills and experience in the following areas:

- **Higher or Further education**
- **Fundraising and income generation**
- **Communications and PR, particularly digital marketing**
- **Audit**
- **Human resources**
- **Disability arts**

We would also welcome applications from people who have not been senior volunteers or non-executives before, including younger people who may not have had previous Board experience but have undertaken voluntary work and been involved in team decision making e.g. through membership of committees or voluntary groups.

Our Trustees will have:

- A commitment to the organisation.
- A willingness to devote time and expertise. Around two days per month may be expected as trustees are expected to participate in a specialist subcommittee (Remuneration & Nomination, Audit, Finance), to spend time informally with senior members of staff and to attend various events and performances at the National Centre.
- An ability to think strategically and experience of developing strategic vision.
- An ability to think creatively, share ideas, provide scrutiny, and take part in sound decision making.
- A willingness to understand Charity and Company law and acceptance of legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship.
- An interest in the arts and in the development of Circus Arts in the UK.
- A willingness to act as an ambassador for the National Centre for Circus Arts.
- A commitment to adherence to the Nolan Principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, leadership, openness, honesty and accountability.

Time commitment

The Board and sub-committees meet quarterly. The trustees also participate in a half-day strategy review and planning session each year, attend National Centre and occasional stakeholder events and engage with fundraising related activities as appropriate. An average of two days over the month could be expected.



How to Apply

Application is by CV and a supporting statement outlining the reasons for your interest in the post and explaining why you believe yourself to be suitable. Please include your full contact details including daytime and evening telephone numbers.

Please apply by email enclosing your CV and supporting statement to the EA to the Chief Executive, Sharon Harble at

sharon@nationalcircus.org.uk

If you would like to arrange an informal, confidential conversation with the Chief Executive, Kate White, or to visit our magnificent building near Hoxton Square before submitting your application, please make the necessary arrangements directly with Kate's EA by emailing her at the address above.

#NationalCircus

