



## Chair of Trustees

Sunderland Culture is seeking to appoint a new Chair of Trustees to lead the governance of this unique model of cultural leadership and guide it over the next phase of its development in the wake of the Covid 19 pandemic. The new Chair should be independent of our founding partners – University of Sunderland, Sunderland City Council and Sunderland MAC Trust.

This is an amazing opportunity for someone who wants to play a pivotal role in leading the cultural regeneration of one the UK's most dynamic cities.

Time Commitment: Board meetings are held 4 times per year. Additional meetings and one to one discussions with the Chief Executive mean that we are seeking a time commitment equivalent to 1 day per month.

The role is unpaid and out of pocket expenses will be refunded.

Meetings take place in Sunderland, UK or via video conference.

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### Introduction

Founded in 2016, Sunderland Culture has developed rapidly and dynamically from a standing start to a charity with a turnover of over £2 million per annum and reaching audiences of over 2 million people. As we move to a more stable, long-term phase in our development we seeking a new Chair to follow in the footsteps of our founding Chair, Graeme Thompson and lead us into the future. Clearly this future is now within the context of the devastating impact of Covid 19 on the communities and economy of the local area and consequently the changing nature of Sunderland Culture's own activities.

We are seeking someone with strong experience of boards and governance, a commitment to equality and diversity and a passion for arts, culture heritage and the impact it can have on communities and places.

### About Sunderland Culture

Sunderland Culture was founded through a partnership between Sunderland City Council, University of Sunderland and Sunderland MAC Trust (a business-led charity). However, it is independent of all of the founding partners and is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity.

We work across the city to ensure the power of great art, culture and creativity is harnessed for the benefit of Sunderland, its residents and visitors and work created here is showcased internationally. Our mission is to improve life for everyone in Sunderland through culture.

We work across 5 venues owned by our partners and deliver a city wide cultural programme

Sunderland Culture brings together the individual artistic and cultural strengths of our key venues:

- Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art (NGCA)
- National Glass Centre



- Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens.
- Arts Centre Washington
- The Fire Station

In addition we are delivering a major programme of support to artists and creative businesses, health and wellbeing activities in communities, support to schools to use more creativity in the classroom and targeted work with community groups including refugees, older people and veterans.

Sunderland Culture's main income sources are currently from grants and donations with small numbers of tickets and booked workshops. We are an Arts Council England NPO. The Fire Station is a new 450 seat / 800 standing auditorium for music, theatre, dance and comedy predicted to attract an audience of around 100,000 ticket buyers each year. In addition, the running costs of each of the venues are paid for directly by founding partners. Although this does not show as a financial contribution in our accounts, it would be impossible for Sunderland Culture to effectively operate without this contribution.

The fallout from the Covid 19 pandemic on the finances of both Sunderland Culture and the founding partners requires a review of the existing business model and governance structure and it is hoped that the new chair will lead this process.

To find out more about Sunderland Culture visit our [website](#)

Our annual review for 2018/19 gives a good summary of our mission and impacts and can be found [here](#)

### **Background to the Board of Trustees**

The charity's Board consist of 11 Non-Executive Directors/Trustees, comprising the following:

- Two Directors nominated by each of the founding partners (Sunderland City Council, University of Sunderland, MAC Trust). Six in total.
- Five Directors independent of any of the founding partners appointed to bring specific skills and experience to the governance of the organisation.

The current Board members are:

Graeme Thompson, University of Sunderland (outgoing Chair)

Cllr John Kelly, Sunderland City Council

Paul Callaghan, Sunderland MAC Trust

John Mowbray, Sunderland MAC Trust

Fiona Brown, Sunderland City Council

Steve Knight, University of Sunderland

Anabel Turpin

Andrew McKay

Iraa Kadcha

Gillian Miller

There is currently one vacancy for an independent member, ie not linked to the University, MAC Trust or Council, which would be filled by the Chair.

The Board operates at a strategic level and is the responsible body for the performance, achievement and overall direction of the company.

### **The role of a Trustee**

Trustees play a key role in ensuring there is effective governance and leadership at Board level. They contribute to the work of the Board, both by actively participating in Board discussions and decision making and more widely, contributing to the Board's governance, performance management and development of strategy for the company. Board members are required to represent the organisation locally, regionally and nationally, developing and maintaining excellent relationships with a range of key partners, funders and stakeholders. They contribute across a range of specific areas, including: the development of strategy for the future success of the company.

Under law charity trustees must:

- Act in a charity's best interests
- Manage a charity's resources responsibly
- Act with reasonable care and skill

For further information on what it means to be a trustee click this [link](#)

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### **How to apply**

For an informal conversation please contact Keith Merrin, Chief Executive on [keith.merrin@sunderlandculture.org.uk](mailto:keith.merrin@sunderlandculture.org.uk)

To apply please send a CV and covering letter setting out how you meet the person specification to [Amy.Martin@sunderland.ac.uk](mailto:Amy.Martin@sunderland.ac.uk)

The deadline for applications is noon on 16 October 2020.

Interviews will take place in Sunderland or via video conference.

**Job Description**

<b>Job Title:</b>	Chair of Trustees
<b>Responsible for</b>	Executive Team
<b>Reports to:</b>	Board of Trustees
<b>Salary:</b>	Unpaid
<b>Working hours:</b>	Variable, equivalent to one day per month
<b>Terms:</b>	The appointment is made for an initial 3 year period
<b>Location:</b>	Meetings are held in Sunderland, UK.
<b>Main purpose of role:</b>	<p>The Chair will hold the Board and Executive Team to account for the organisation's mission and vision, providing inclusive leadership to the Board of Trustees, ensuring that each trustee fulfils their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of Sunderland Culture.</p> <p>The Chair will also support, and, where appropriate, challenge the Chief Executive and Creative Director to successfully deliver the aims and objectives of the organisation, ensuring that the Board functions effectively as a unit. He or she will act as an ambassador and the public face of the charity in partnership with the Chief Executive and maintain close relationships with the founding partners and key stakeholders.</p>
<b>Key Tasks and Responsibilities:</b>	<p><b>Strategic leadership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide leadership to the charity and its Board, ensuring that the organisation achieves maximum impact</li> <li>• Ensure that Trustees fulfil their duties and responsibilities for effective governance</li> <li>• Ensure that the Board operates within its charitable objectives, and provides a clear strategic direction</li> <li>• Act as a champion for equality and diversity</li> <li>• Ensure that the Board is able to regularly review major risks and associated opportunities, and satisfy itself that systems are in place to take advantage of opportunities, and manage and mitigate the risks</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the Board fulfils its duties to ensure sound financial health of the charity, with systems in place to ensure financial accountability</li> </ul> <p><b>Governance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that the governance arrangements are working in the most effective way</li> <li>• Develop the knowledge and capability of the Board of Trustees</li> <li>• Encourage positive change where appropriate and address and resolve any conflicts within the Board</li> <li>• Appraise the performance of the Trustees and the Board on an annual basis</li> <li>• Ensure that the Board of Trustees is regularly refreshed and incorporates the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to govern and lead the organisation effectively</li> <li>• Work within any agreed policies adopted by the charity</li> </ul> <p><b>External Relations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act as an ambassador for the organisation</li> <li>• Maintain close relationships with key members of the founding partners and key stakeholders (eg Arts Council England) Government and influencers</li> <li>• Act as a spokesperson for the organisation when appropriate</li> <li>• Represent the company at external functions, meetings and events</li> </ul>
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**Person Specification**

<b>Key competencies</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Assessed by</b>
<b>Knowledge and Experience</b>	<p>Experience of serving on a Board or management committee</p> <p>Experience of Chairing meetings</p> <p>Knowledge of the charitable or not for profit sector and meeting the statutory reporting requirements of a registered charity</p> <p>Knowledge of the arts and cultural sector and the policy framework in which it operates.</p> <p>Experience of working (professionally or in a governance role) at a senior level with key stakeholders.</p>	<p>Experience of being on the board of an arts or cultural organisation</p> <p>Knowledge of the impact of arts and culture on placemaking and communities</p> <p>Knowledge of the north east of England and the City of Sunderland</p> <p>Experience of raising funds or securing commercial income.</p>	Application and interview
<b>Personal Qualities</b>	<p>Passionate about arts, culture, heritage.</p> <p>Collaborative – with the ability to manage and bring out the best in a team.</p> <p>High level of integrity.</p> <p>A strong commitment to equality and diversity.</p> <p>Committed to working effectively and supportively in a team.</p> <p>Confident and able to relate well to people, with good communication skills.</p> <p>Good problem solver</p>		Application and interview
<b>Special requirements</b>	<p>Able to give the necessary time commitment.</p> <p>Able to demonstrate independence of the three founding partners.</p>		<p>Application and Interview</p> <p>Application and interview</p>