

Artlink













Chief Executive Officer
Application Information

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Chief Executive Officer Application Information

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JOB SPECIFICATION

Job Title	Chief Executive Officer
Reports to	Board of Trustees
Salary	£55k - 60k p/a
Location	Edinburgh and the Lothians
Contract Type	Permanent
Working Hours	35 hours per week
Flexibility	Some flexibility and out-of-hours work required
Holidays	25 working days holiday per year, in addition to 11 statutory holidays
Pension	Automatic pension enrolment scheme with a 3% employer contribution and 5% employee contribution
Probation Period	26 weeks
Notice Period	3 months (once probation period is passed)

ABOUT ARTLINK

We work with disabled people and the formal and informal systems which surround them.

For more than 40 years, we have continually adapted, reshaped and reimagined our creative practice in response to evolving needs and shifting care landscapes. We listen, we stay flexible and let lived experience lead us. As a result, we have created bold and innovative work, using art not only as a means of expression, but as a powerful tool for creative problem-solving and sparking meaningful dialogues.

We create welcoming spaces where people can work, learn and create together. Within these spaces flourishes a real sense of belonging and meaningful conversations which celebrate and respect diversity. By embracing this approach, we gain fresh perspectives on how we collectively experience and understand the world, while opening the door to stronger collaboration and collective action for change.

We work closely with individuals, as well as their families, carers and local communities. This supports us to highlight the often challenging realities of living with a disability. By doing so, we gain a deeper understanding of the everyday difficulties faced by disabled people and this guides our work and creative practice.

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One of our greatest strengths is how, by collaborating and sharing resources with other people and organisations, we promote and inspire inclusion which begins with placing the individual, who they are and what matters to them at the centre of everything. We make sure that inclusion is not just offered but owned.

We are dedicated to making sure that people with lived experience of disability can make a lasting and positive impact on the communities of which they are an essential part.

We work with contemporary arts practices in non-traditional ways, treating each interaction as creative and collaborative learning. We do not just tread the well-worn paths but seek ways forward which are more responsive and relevant.

Achieving this takes time. Many of our programmes and projects unfold over years, allowing us to build trust, respond meaningfully and make sure we are truly meeting the needs of those with whom we work.



Two artists' hands spraying various colourful shapes onto a wall, taken from "Fifth Exit," Artlink's exhibition and workshop programme at Howden Park Centre in Livingston.

OUR REMIT

We work with:

- Neurodiverse young people who don't fit the traditional school mould.
- People who experience enduring mental health challenges, looking for creative ways to ensure their inclusion in their communities.
- People with complex physical and intellectual disabilities, who are often excluded from cultural activities.
- Older people with dementia and their families.
- People in long-term institutional care, cut off from their communities.
- People with sensory impairments who struggle to access the arts.
- Families and carers of the people who take part in our programmes

We would like to stress that many of the people with whom we work fall into more than one of the above categories.

We operate across Edinburgh and the Lothians, but we also collaborate with people, organisations and institutions nationwide and internationally. This can include renowned artists, cultural and academic institutions.

RESILIENCE

Two people engaging with an artwork at at Artlink's "Human Threads" exhibition at Tramway, Glasgow. They are touching a large green chimney.



The variety of our funding sources contributes to our resilience. We are funded by the City of Edinburgh Council, Creative Scotland and the NHS Lothian Charity. We have long-term agreements with Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership, West Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership and Midlothian Council and we receive regular support from various grant-making trusts. We also provide long-term input through individual and spot-purchase arrangements.

Arts funding in Scotland and the UK is precarious, but we are delighted that we recently secured multi-year funding from Creative Scotland.

The diversity of our funding sources gives us the freedom to adapt and respond quickly to changing needs. For example, during the pandemic, we were able to shift our focus rapidly to reach people directly, in person and in - or, probably more accurately, just outside - their homes.

WHAT WE DO

“When open, a window can be music, birdsong, laughter. A window is a connection to different possibilities. They bring a world closer, they show us how to reach.”

Writer and artist Tessa Berring encapsulating our work at Boghall in West Lothian.



Young men wearing black t-shirts with bespoke phrases at the opening of Sanctuary, a community garden space in Boghall, West Lothian as part of ArtInk's VIVA BOGHALL project.

This is how we do it:

- Opening access to arts and culture by identifying and dismantling barriers, creating environments in which disabled people are empowered to shape, challenge and transform what is on offer.
- Championing the creation of bold, inspirational art that amplifies the unique voices of disabled people and brings communities together to address shared social and cultural challenges.
- Collaborating with participants, artists with lived experience of disability and carers to explore new, experimental approaches that shape our creative direction from within.
- Inspiring a new generation of inclusive practice by imaginatively presenting work created with and by disabled artists highlighting their insight, influence and place at the heart of contemporary arts.
- Building partnerships across culture, health, social care and academia to explore the broader social and cultural impact of our work.
- Presenting, publishing and sharing stories and outcomes in diverse ways and spaces, challenging traditional models and building a cultural profile that reflects the richness and diversity of our communities.

Our Human Threads exhibition at Tramway in 2022 was the culmination of years of pioneering research by Artlink and the Cherry Road Learning Centre in Midlothian. Through a process of mutual learning via collaborative play, each artwork was developed with and informed by people with profound and multiple learning disabilities and invited audiences to interact through a variety of senses. Throughout Human Threads the physical experience of the artwork became a shared, communal language through which to explore new possibilities of human perception.



Interactive artworks from Artlink's "Human Threads" exhibition at Tramway, Glasgow. The sensory and interactive installations include a large screen showing a projected image, colourful beanbags and a green chimney emitting smoke.

Photographs of people viewing artworks at Artlink's "Human Threads" exhibition at Tramway, Glasgow. They include a colourful projection on a screen, a large green chimney and a sensory artwork made of blue wood.



This groundbreaking work is beautifully articulated in Harpers Magazine which can be viewed here: <https://harpers.org/archive/2023/12/bonny-rigg-scotland-sensory-workshop>

You can see more about our programmes and projects on our website artlinkedinburgh.co.uk

As we move forward, we will continue to be led by the interests and experiences of people who take part in our programmes and our new CEO will be primarily tasked with making that happen.

HOW ARTLINK IS MANAGED

A photograph of two paintings by artist Leanne Ross. The paintings say "Ermmm" and "Mmmm" and were part of *Dirty Dancing Flowers*, her exhibition at Tramway, Glasgow.



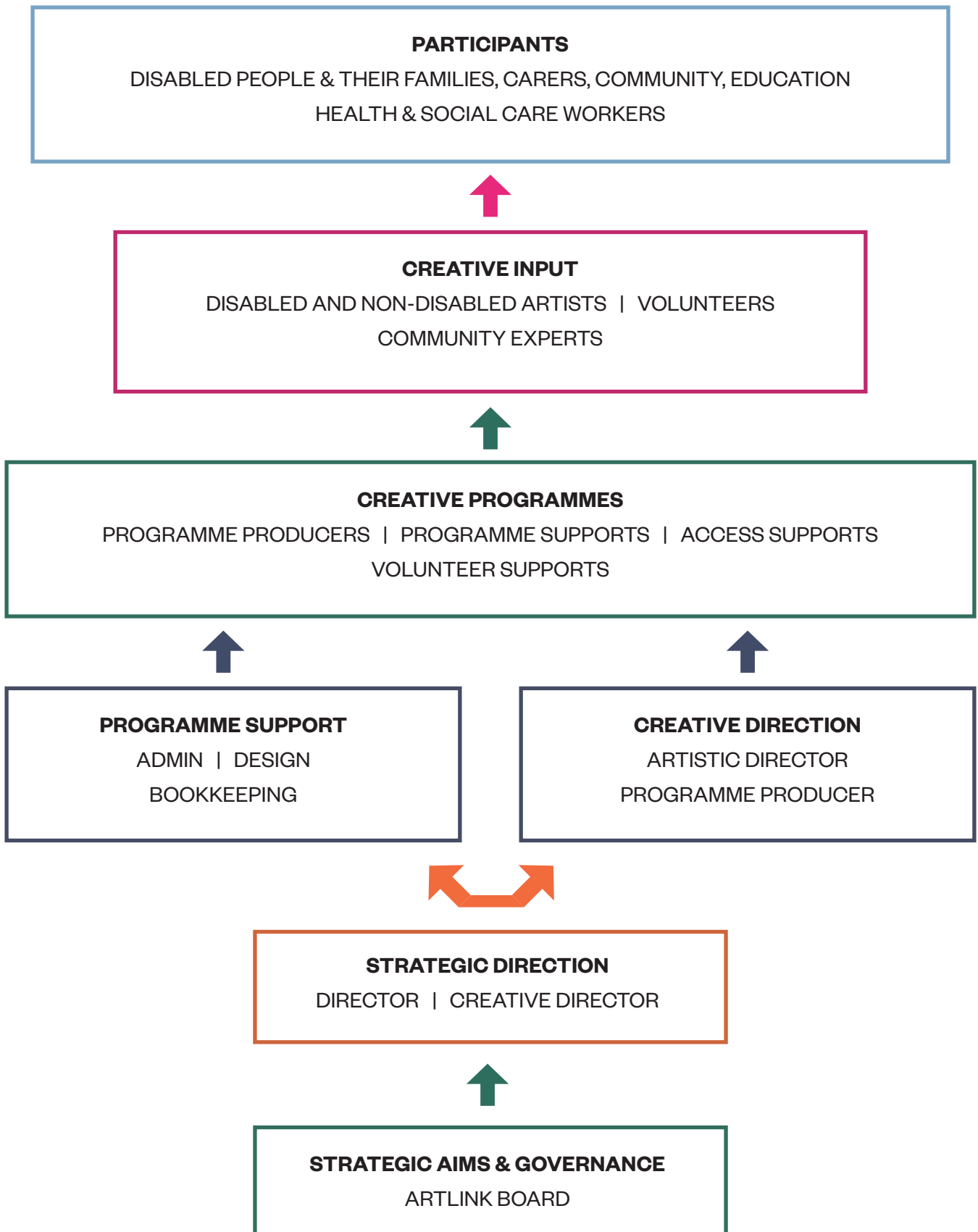
We are a Scottish Charity SC006845 and a company limited by guarantee. We are overseen by a board of 12 trustees and are managed by the CEO, with the support of the Artistic Director and the Programme Co-ordinators.

Our Trustees come from a wide range of backgrounds: people taking part in our programmes, carers, arts practitioners and legal, accounting and communications professionals.

The Board meets at least four times a year and we have standing and *ad hoc* sub-groups. The CEO is expected to attend all Board meetings and will usually attend sub-groups.

The organisational chart overleaf shows the senior managers and the rest of the permanent staff. In addition, we work with over 100 sessional artists and 60 volunteers.

ORGANISATIONAL CHART



OUR ETHOS

In preparing for this recruitment, we have held a number of discussions with staff and trustees in which we began to tease out what is so important to us all about Artlink and our work and how the CEO interacts with the staff team, sessional workers, volunteers and the people who take part in our programmes. The following is taken from what was said at those meetings.

The key to what we are is people. Whether we are staff, sessional artists, volunteers or someone who takes part in our programmes, we are all people and we work collaboratively to improve lives. We are clear that this means we need to be long term, flexible and open to ideas.

We have a strong set of common objectives which we address through programme activity that is tailored to specific experiences, locations and contexts. Our general approach is for the coordinators of the programme activity to get on with the job without micro-management, while providing quality support, supervision and advice.

The staff greatly appreciate that the CEO maintains good contact with all of our projects and the people who use them across all of the sites within which we operate and regularly takes part in their various activities.

As an organisation which works with disabled people, as well as people who use mental health services and, more recently, asylum seekers, we are constantly dealing with the effects of legal and socio-economic trends on the people who take part in our programmes. To make sure we understand the impact of these trends, we participate in, develop and maintain extensive networks across health and social care, education, the voluntary sector and, of course, the cultural and political spheres and the CEO takes a lead role in this.

We strongly believe in the potential of the power of art to change people's lives for the better. Our work is predicated entirely on people's needs and not on what we, or anyone else, has decided that they need. As such, the process can take some significant time to develop, but we always take the time that it needs. We are constantly seeking innovative solutions, based above all on what the people who take part in our programmes aspire to.

As part of this, it is crucial that, while we maintain and encourage good relationships with the providers of health and social care, we are extremely clear that we are not part of those systems. We are an arts organisation and we understand and promote the importance of creative production in and of itself. Often, we work with people who perceived as "challenging" by services. Engaging with art can support them to give voice to different perspectives of their lived experiences and support us to see the possibilities that brings.

We know that the way we work through our many artists, who may themselves be marginalised, helps them to challenge and develop their practice. As one staff member, who began as a sessional artist, said “Art college could not prepare you for Artlink, it might give you visual language but it’s about understanding the context you are working with and what people bring.”

Collectively, we never stop learning and nor should we!



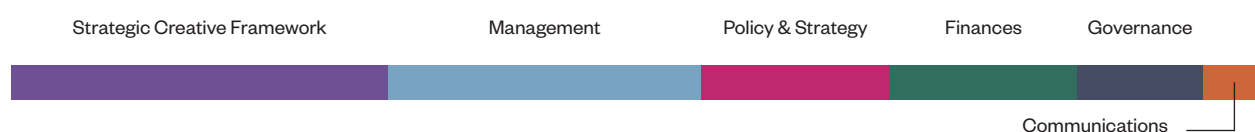
An image of a group photographed at the Snail's Pace Parade at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital. They are smiling and wearing various colourful costumes made especially for the parade in workshops at The Glasshouses

JOB DESCRIPTION

As CEO, you will oversee the development and delivery of our strategic plans which have been created in partnership with the Artlink Board, as well as the management of our programme of work, resources and staff.

Crucially, you will make sure that our focus remains on the needs and aspirations of the people who take part in - or could potentially take part in - our programmes, the creative content of these programmes and the broader cultural and social context within which they sit.

Your responsibilities are as follows.



1. Strategic Creative Framework (30%)

- Set our overall creative and operational framework in close collaboration with the Artistic Director and particularly to enable and support the Artistic Director in their development and the delivery of our artistic vision, strategy and programme.
- Make sure that creative practice and production is central to how we operate, while we engage with people's experiences and aspirations.
- Make sure that artists and volunteers are appropriately supervised and supported in order to be the best they can be.
- Use the insights gained through our work to promote developments in arts and cultural practice beyond our own organisation.

CONTINUES OVER

2. Management (25%)

- Lead and support the staff, sessional artists and volunteers in the development and implementation of strategies and plans to meet our agreed aims.
- Supervise the Artlink Artistic Director and line manage programme staff in accordance with the organisational chart.
- Make sure that we are a supportive environment for all who work with or for us, or who take part in our programmes.
- Arrange regular reviews of programme activities and the resources necessary to support these.

3. Policy & Strategy (15%)

- Maintain a good understanding of and engagement with the broader cultural, political, health, social community and educational sectors.
- Take part in relevant forums and networks relating to the broader cultural, political, health, social, community and educational sectors.
- Articulate the impact of our work and what can be learned from it within these broader networks.
- Engage with elected members in local authorities, Holyrood and Westminster on issues affecting Artlink and the people using our programmes.



CONTINUES OVER

4. Finances (15%)

- Be accountable for our financial performance and the management of our resources within agreed budgets.
- Costing programmes of work on the basis of individual and block purchased arrangements.
- Lead our fundraising efforts through developing and sustaining relationships with potential and existing funders, making sure they know the difference our work makes and how their investment contributes to that.
- Develop programme funding applications, working in close collaboration with programme coordinators, the Artistic Director and the Board to shape robust and compelling proposals.
- Identify potential contractual funding arrangements and manage those already in place. These include: public procurement, service level agreements, grant-in-aid, spot purchases and collaborative contracting.

5. Governance (10%)

- With the Board develop, implement and evaluate plans and strategies to fulfil our aims, objectives and principles.
- Report regularly to the Board and provide them with the information and resources they need to carry out their role effectively.



CONTINUES OVER

5. Governance (cont.)

- Maintain and develop effective systems for understanding the impact of the work through research, monitoring and evaluation.
- With the Board, make sure that we comply with all legal and regulatory requirements.
- Advise the Board on the best employment and management practices.
- With the Board maintain and update our Risk Register and take steps to mitigate identified risks.

6. Communications (5%)

- Represent the organisation to external stakeholders.
- Build and maintain good internal and external communication networks.
- Make sure that the value and impact of our work is clearly presented and articulated.
- Promote our work and its values at local, national and international levels.
- Maintain and build on our links with the arts, cultural and educational sectors, local and national government.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

ESSENTIAL

- A collaborative, inclusive and empathetic approach to leadership.
- Ability to think and act strategically.
- Familiarity with the arts and the cultural sector in Scotland and beyond.
- Commitment to and experience of being an advocate for inclusion and equality.
- Experience of arts, voluntary or not for profit sector management.
- Excellent communication, networking and people skills.
- A good understanding of the complexities of working with the statutory sector.
- Experience of bidding for contracts, the procurement process and contract management.
- Proven experience of securing grants from public, trust and foundation sources.
- Experience of financial management, including devising and working to agreed budgets.

DESIRABLE

- Understanding of digital delivery channels and presenting work in different settings
- A personal creative practice.
- Personal understanding or experience of equality issues..



An image of a woman drawing with a marker on a woodcut, taken during a Curious Routes workshop at Boghall Parish Church in Boghall, West Lothian.

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