



20  
STORIES  
HIGH

# 20 Stories High Board of Trustees Become our Chair (or Co-Chair!)

## Application Pack



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



**Paul Hamlyn  
Foundation**

**The  
Coutts  
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This pack is available in a range of formats including dyslexia-friendly, large print, and screen reader compatible versions.

If you have a more specific formatting requirement, please let us know by emailing [recruitment@20storieshigh.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@20storieshigh.org.uk) or by calling 0151 708 9728 and we will try our best to provide this for you.

# <sup>1</sup> Welcome

**Thank you for your interest in the role of Chair.**

Our current Chair, Catrina Hewitson, will be standing down at the end of 2026 and we want to recruit a new Chair(s) to bring leadership, ideas and energy to 20 Stories High. We're looking for someone who shares our values, mission, ambition and is committed to working with young people and communities.

We're really up for considering this role as a Co-Chair position. So please apply if you would like to share this role with another person, or apply as a duo if you have someone in mind to Co-Chair with already.



2026 is our 20th Birthday. It's an exciting moment.

20 years of making excellent theatre with, not just for, culturally diverse, working-class young people. We've worked in theatres, community centres, schools, hospitals, living rooms and bus-stops. Our roots are firmly in Liverpool; our reach has been much wider.

We believe everybody's got a story to tell, and their own way of telling it. So we create bold, joyful, socially urgent work alongside communities, emerging artists and world-class professionals. We're activist. We're playful. We care deeply about wellbeing and we refuse to be ordinary.

This is an opportunity to be part of our future, ensuring we have the best Board of Trustees to support and challenge us and helping to shape what we do next.

This pack explains the role and how to apply and tells you something more about who we are and what is important to us.

We look forward to hearing more from you.

# The Chair's role

You will chair our Board of Trustees and work closely with our CEO/Executive Director, Leanne Jones and her team, with support from our Vice Chair and the Chair of the Finance and Operations Sub-Committee.

The Board of 20 Stories High has ultimate responsibility for the affairs of the company, ensuring we are solvent, well run and deliver our charitable objectives for the benefit of the public.

## The essentials of the role are:

- Leading the Board, reviewing progress on our Business Plan and making sure we deliver our commitments to our funders
- Developing the Board agenda, running inclusive lively board meetings that make the most of our Trustee and team talent and making effective decisions
- Supporting and constructively challenging our CEO and the staff team
- Making sure we're well managed, financially viable and legally compliant (we're a registered charity)
- Championing the organisation externally with funders, partners and sector peers
- Helping ensure young people have a genuine voice in how we're run
- Building and developing a Board that reflects the communities we serve

The Board meets six times a year (four meetings plus two away-days), with subcommittees covering finance, anti-racism, environmental responsibility and creative fundraising. Beyond that, you'll stay in regular contact with the leadership team offering insight and guidance.

In total, the role needs around 12 days per year.

Our funders include Arts Council England, the Coutts Foundation, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, John Ellerman Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation, Youth Music, and Liverpool City Council.

# <sup>3</sup>About you

## *Essential:*

- Understanding and experience of Trustee responsibilities and governance
- Vision and independent judgement. The ability to take an objective, long-term view
- Good communication and interpersonal skills, someone who builds trust and great relationships
- Willingness to challenge constructively, and be challenged in return
- Commitment to equity not as a policy, but as a practice

## *Useful:*

- Experience of chairing meetings, committee work, and some experience of charity finance and fundraising.
- Knowledge of the arts, cultural or voluntary sector
- A wider involvement with the voluntary sector.

We particularly encourage applications from people of the Global Majority, Deaf and disabled people, neurodivergent people, people from working-class backgrounds, and LGBTQIA+ people. **Lived experience matters here.**

This is a voluntary role. It comes with no salary but it does come with a front-row seat to some of the most original creative work happening in the country.

We work with children, young people and adults at risk, so all Board members are subject to appropriate checks and receive a full safeguarding induction.

## *Interested in applying?*

We'd love to have an informal conversation before you apply. Email [amy@20storieshigh.org.uk](mailto:amy@20storieshigh.org.uk) to arrange a call with our current Chair.

To apply, complete the Proposal Form and Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form and send to [recruitment@20storieshigh.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@20storieshigh.org.uk) — or send a video or audio response (BSL welcome), up to 15 minutes. This pack is available in audio, large print and screen-reader compatible formats. If you need anything else, just ask.

# About us

20 Stories High believe *“everybody’s got a story to tell... and their own way of telling it.”*

We create bold, excellent theatre, music and art experiences with culturally diverse, working-class communities, emerging artists, and world-class professionals. We tell stories that bring joy, empower, and enable social change.

5 We inhabit a wide variety of spaces: from theatres, community centres and schools to digital spaces, living rooms and bus-stops. *Our heart is in Liverpool, but our reach is universal.*

## Vision

We want to create a world where culturally diverse, working-class communities are equally valued, seen and heard by the most diverse audience possible.

## Mission

- To make theatre and creative projects with and for, underrepresented communities, emerging artists and world class professionals.
- To create bold, heartfelt, and unique experiences that enable social change.
- To collaborate with young people and communities to develop the stories they want to tell through the art forms they own and want to see.

## Our values

20 Stories High values...Activism, Playfulness, Wellbeing & Excellence.

## Strategic Aims

- To offer excellent participatory experiences allowing access for all
- To train, develop and collaborate with the next generation of theatre makers and artists
- To produce/tour new theatre and develop creative experiences for diverse audiences - locally, nationally and internationally, in a variety of imaginative community space and venues

## What we do

Our mission and values form the foundation of all the company's activities. These are expressed in a range of ways that are intrinsic to the company's work.

### The Programme

Our 2026/27 programme includes:

- **Youth Theatre:** Weekly creative workshops for 14 – 21-year-olds, including annual performances and a summer national youth theatre exchange project.
- **Nu Noize:** 2-year music programme including performances of minigigs & desk jams in unusual spaces, 4x 12-week music programmes and a steering group who integrate their ideas and advocacy into 20SH's programme
- **Us, Together:** a new 3 year Cultural Bridging project working in Bootle, Huyton, Kensington & Fairfield – engaging young people in the arts and conversations around communities, activism and connection
- **Transformations:** the launch of our Transformations network and commissions – commissioning six Trans artists with partner organisations across Merseyside, and launching a new Merseyside-based Trans network of creatives – helping to improve Trans visibility in our sector
- **20th Birthday year:** Celebrating 20 amazing years of 20SH with a birthday party, digital re-launch and a series of films celebrating our legacy so far
- **Professional Development:** launching a new professional development programme early 2027 for hip-hop theatre makers
- **Half Rice, Half Chips:** A sharing of work created with Associate Artist Paisleigh Bi
- **POWER UP! Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Activism programme:** staff/board training, partnership working, conversations/workshops/events with young people, artists and our community
- **Access Manifesto:** Continuing to develop and promote our work around disability access for arts organisations
- **State of Mind:** Rolling out professional workshops around mental health support in the workplace, based on our own learning and experience in this area

During 2026/27 we will be submitting a renewed application to Arts Council England for continuation of our NPO (National Portfolio Organisation) funding from April 2028 onwards. We will also be carrying out an extensive programme of business development activity to ensure that our business and financial models are dynamic and adaptable enough to continue meeting the demands of an ever-evolving environment.

## Inclusion and Representation

It is important to us that the lived experience of our team accurately and fairly represents our participants, audiences and communities we serve. We strongly believe in having a diverse team, and we specifically welcome candidates from the following groups, which we believe are underrepresented in our workforce and in the wider cultural sector:

- People of African or Caribbean, South Asian, East or Southeast Asian, or mixed heritage, or other people of the Global Majority\*
- Deaf and/or disabled candidates
- Neurodivergent candidates
- Candidates from working class backgrounds
- LGBTQIA+ candidates

\* This includes, but is not exclusive to, people of Middle Eastern, Arab, Latinx, Jewish, Romany and Irish Traveller heritage.

## Safeguarding

20 Stories High are committed to working together for the safeguarding of children, young people, and adults at risk. As part of our process, 20SH will seek to understand applicants' suitability to work with children, young people and adults at risk. All Board Members undergo formal checks for their suitability of work and will receive a thorough safeguarding introduction, including key contacts for the reporting of abuse.



# Terms & Conditions

**Role Title:** Chair of the Board of Trustees

**Direct Reports:** Chief Executive Officer

**Background:** A general background in strategy, governance, finance, HR and fundraising would be useful. Previous experience as a Trustee or Chair would be welcomed.

**Remuneration:** The Chair is a voluntary role involving a commitment of approximately 12 days per year, to be negotiated with the successful candidate.

## Time Commitment

- The Board meets at least 6 times a year (including 4 Board Meetings and 2 Board away-days).
- The Chair also has the option to attend regular meetings of our governance sub-committees at their discretion including our; Finance & Operations Subcommittee, Anti-Racism Working Group, Environmental Responsibility subcommittee and Creative Fundraising Working Group.
- It is important that the Chair can visit 20 Stories High's office and be available to meet the Chief Executive and senior staff on a regular basis.
- In addition to attending Board Meetings, other contact (usually by phone or email) will be necessary.
- Attendance at other external meetings by mutual agreement, as and when required.

We aspire to onboard a new Chair over the summer, allowing the successful candidate to be appointed at our AGM this November 2026.



# How to apply

We are committed to inclusive working practices and ensuring equal access. This pack is available in a range of formats including audio, large print, and screen reader compatible versions. If you have a more specific formatting requirement then please let us know and we will do our best to provide this for you.

If you would like to arrange a confidential one-to-one discussion about the role then please contact [amy@20storieshigh.org.uk](mailto:amy@20storieshigh.org.uk) and we will arrange a call with the current Chair to answer any questions that you might have.

To submit an expression of interest in the role please complete a copy of the Proposal Form and Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form and return them to: [recruitment@20storieshigh.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@20storieshigh.org.uk)

Alternatively, we also welcome submissions in video/audio format and BSL. Please send a film/audio file answering the questions within the Proposal Form (no longer than 15 minutes).

If you have any additional access requirements to complete this submission, then please let us know and we will support this.

Deadline: 9am, Monday 6th July 2026.

Interviews: Monday 13th July 2026. Candidates will be notified of an interview by Tuesday 7th July.

# 20 STORIES HIGH

[www.20storieshigh.org.uk](http://www.20storieshigh.org.uk)

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