



TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT PACK

Help shape creativity, community and change across Greater Manchester

Community Arts North West (CAN) | September 2026



WHAT IS IN THIS PACK

Contents

- 1** Welcome letter for prospective trustees
- 2** About Community Arts North West
- 3** Why join CAN's Board now?
- 4** Trustee role description and person specification
- 5** Priority trustee roles
- 6** Finance trustee role profile
- 7** Safeguarding trustee role profile
- 8** Fundraising and income generation trustee role profile
- 9** People / HR and organisational development trustee role profile
- 10** Marketing, communications and digital trustee role profile
- 11** Arts, community and lived-experience trustee role profile
- 12** Board leadership - Chair / Vice Chair skills
- 13** How to express interest and recruitment process

1 WELCOME LETTER

Welcome letter for prospective trustees

Dear Prospective Trustee,

Thank you for your interest in becoming a trustee of Community Arts North West (CAN). We are strengthening our Board at an important point in CAN's development and are looking for people who want to use their skills, experience and perspective to help shape the next chapter of a long-established Greater Manchester arts charity.

CAN creates arts and cultural opportunities with communities who can be excluded from mainstream cultural life. We work collaboratively, using creativity to build confidence and wellbeing, strengthen connections, develop skills and create space for people to express themselves and influence the cultural life of Greater Manchester.

We are particularly keen to hear from people who can bring expertise in finance, safeguarding, fundraising, people and HR, marketing and communications, digital, arts and culture, community development, governance, or lived experience relevant to the communities we work with.

You do not need to have been a trustee before. What matters is that you care about CAN's purpose, can think strategically, are willing to ask thoughtful questions, and can work collectively with other trustees and the senior team. We want our Board to draw on a mix of professional expertise, community knowledge and lived experience.

Trusteeship is voluntary. The Board normally meets quarterly, with some additional involvement for specialist portfolios, development sessions or occasional working groups. Meetings are based in Manchester with hybrid arrangements where appropriate, and reasonable agreed expenses can be reimbursed.

If the opportunity interests you, we would be very happy to have an informal conversation before you decide whether to put yourself forward. The rest of this pack explains the role, the skills we are seeking and how to express an interest.

Thank you for considering bringing your time, judgement and experience to CAN.

Jonathan Billings

Co-CEO / Executive Director

Anna Vu Thompson

Co-CEO / Creative Director

Community Arts North West

2 ABOUT COMMUNITY ARTS NORTH WEST

Creativity. Community. Change.

Community Arts North West (CAN) is an Arts Council National Portfolio organisation working with communities across Greater Manchester. We create access to cultural opportunities with people who are too often excluded from mainstream arts and cultural life.

Our work is rooted in co-creation. Rather than simply delivering activity to communities, we work with people, artists and partners to shape projects together. Through participatory arts, artist development, creative production and partnership work, CAN supports people to build confidence, connection, wellbeing, skills and cultural voice.

CAN's Vision and Mission

Vision: An Inclusive world where everyone has access to the power of creativity.

Mission: To create accessible creative opportunities that empower, inspire and give agency to diverse communities.

Who we work with

- Refugees, people seeking sanctuary and migrant communities.
- Children and young people, including those facing barriers to participation.
- Disabled people and people experiencing poor mental health.
- People affected by poverty, homelessness, isolation or other forms of social and economic exclusion.
- Artists and creative practitioners, particularly those whose voices and opportunities are underrepresented.

Our values

Creative potential	We believe creativity belongs to everyone and can unlock expression, confidence and possibility.
Wellbeing	We value safe, supportive creative experiences that strengthen individual and collective wellbeing.
Social justice	We use culture to challenge barriers, increase access and amplify underrepresented voices.
Ethics	Kindness, honesty, justice and respect should shape how we work and govern.
Collaboration	Co-creation, partnership and deep relationships are central to CAN.

CAN at a glance

Established	1978
Charity number	277135
Company number	01400213
Address	61 Old Birley St, Hulme, Manchester, M15 5RF
Area	Greater Manchester and the North West
Board meetings	Normally quarterly
Trustee status	Voluntary; reasonable agreed expenses reimbursed

3 WHY JOIN CAN'S BOARD NOW?

A chance to help shape the next chapter

CAN is entering a period in which strong governance, financial resilience, profile, partnership-building and community accountability will matter more than ever. New trustees will have the opportunity to contribute to strategy while also strengthening the practical skills and perspectives available around the Board table.

What trustees can influence

- CAN's long-term strategy and priorities.
- Financial sustainability, income diversification and use of reserves.
- Quality, relevance and reach of CAN's creative programme.
- How CAN listens to and shares power with communities and artists.
- Safeguarding, organisational culture, workforce wellbeing and good governance.
- Brand, profile, partnerships and public understanding of CAN's work.
- How CAN demonstrates impact to communities, funders and partners.

What CAN offers trustees

- The opportunity to contribute to a long-established Greater Manchester arts charity with a strong social purpose.
- A collaborative relationship with fellow trustees and CAN's Co-CEOs and staff team.
- A structured induction covering strategy, finances, safeguarding, governance, programmes and key policies.
- Opportunities for learning, Board development and involvement in CAN events and creative activity.
- The chance to use professional skills and lived experience in a meaningful governance role.

We are looking for people who combine care for the mission with the confidence to ask good questions.

4 TRUSTEE ROLE DESCRIPTION

Role purpose

To share collective responsibility for the governance, strategic direction and long-term sustainability of Community Arts North West, ensuring that CAN remains focused on its charitable purposes, uses its resources responsibly and creates meaningful cultural opportunities with communities across Greater Manchester.

Core responsibilities

- Ensure CAN pursues its charitable purposes and acts in the public benefit.
- Contribute to strategy and monitor progress against agreed objectives.
- Scrutinise financial performance, budgets, cash flow, reserves and material risks.
- Ensure appropriate systems for safeguarding, legal compliance, internal control and risk management.
- Appoint, support and constructively challenge senior leadership.
- Contribute to Board discussion, decision-making and organisational learning.
- Protect CAN's reputation, independence, assets and long-term sustainability.
- Declare and appropriately manage conflicts of interest.
- Attend meetings, read papers and contribute between meetings when reasonably required.

Collective responsibility

Specialist trustees may lead discussion or provide additional scrutiny in their area of expertise, but all trustees remain collectively responsible for Board decisions. A Treasurer, safeguarding lead or other portfolio trustee does not carry the whole Board's legal responsibility alone.

Person specification

- Commitment to CAN's purpose, communities and values.
- Integrity, sound judgement and willingness to act in the charity's best interests.
- Ability to think strategically while remaining attentive to practical risk and delivery.
- Ability to work collaboratively and contribute constructively to collective decisions.
- Willingness to challenge respectfully, listen well and consider evidence.
- Commitment to equality, inclusion, safeguarding and ethical practice.
- Capacity to devote sufficient time to the role.

Useful but not required for every trustee

- Previous Board, committee or governance experience.
- Knowledge of charities, arts and culture, community development or Greater Manchester.
- Professional expertise relevant to one of CAN's priority skill areas.
- Lived experience that helps CAN understand exclusion, access and community participation.

- Networks that may support partnerships, profile, income or learning.

4 TRUSTEE ROLE - PRACTICAL DETAILS

Practical details

Status	Voluntary charity trustee / company director role.
Meetings	Normally quarterly Board meetings, plus occasional special meetings, development sessions or committee / working-group activity.
Location	Manchester, with hybrid arrangements as agreed.
Expenses	Reasonable agreed expenses can be reimbursed in line with CAN policy.
Term	Appointments are made under CAN's governing arrangements. CAN has historically used three-year trustee terms with re-election provisions.
Induction	Trustees receive an induction covering CAN's strategy, finances, safeguarding, governance, key policies and current programme.
Eligibility	Trustees must be eligible to act as charity trustees and company directors where applicable. Appointment is subject to the declarations and checks required by CAN's governance procedures and relevant law.

Time commitment

We estimate the time commitment at around 4–6 hours a month on average. This includes reading papers, preparing for and attending quarterly Board meetings, and occasional development sessions or work between meetings. Specialist roles, may sometimes need a little more time.

Accessibility and inclusion

CAN wants trusteeship to be accessible. If a candidate needs adjustments, alternative formats or a different way to take part in the recruitment process, we encourage them to tell us. We welcome people whose route into trusteeship may be through professional expertise, community leadership, lived experience or a combination of these.

5 PRIORITY TRUSTEE ROLES

A Board with complementary strengths

CAN welcomes expressions of interest from people who could contribute as general trustees as well as people who can take a specialist portfolio. Appointment to named portfolio roles will be agreed by the Board, and all trustees retain collective responsibility.

Priority area	What this adds to the Board
Finance Trustee	Finance, accounting, budgeting, reserves, financial risk and scrutiny.
Safeguarding Trustee	Board-level safeguarding assurance, policy oversight, escalation and learning.
Fundraising & Income Generation	Trusts and foundations, corporate partnerships, individual giving, earned income or strategic fundraising.
People / HR & Organisational Development	Workforce strategy, HR, culture, wellbeing, employment practice and organisational development.
Marketing / Communications / Digital	Brand, audience development, digital communications, media, data-informed marketing and reputation.
Arts / Community / Lived Experience	Participatory arts, creative practice, community leadership, co-creation, access and representation.
Board Leadership	Chair / Vice Chair experience, governance, facilitation, strategic leadership and trustee development.

Candidates do not need to match a title exactly. Transferable experience is welcome.

6 TREASURER

Finance Trustee

Use your finance skills to help CAN remain resilient, well-governed and ambitious.

What you would bring

- Strong financial literacy and confidence interpreting accounts, budgets and forecasts.
- Professional or substantial practical experience in finance, accounting, audit, charity finance, business finance or a closely related field.
- Ability to explain financial information to people who are not finance specialists.
- Sound judgement, independence and willingness to ask constructive questions.
- Commitment to CAN's purpose and values.

What you would help the Board do

- Provide clear, proportionate financial scrutiny and help fellow trustees understand CAN's financial position.
- Review budgets, management accounts, cash flow, forecasts, reserves and key financial risks.
- Support the Board to test assumptions, understand scenarios and make financially informed strategic decisions.
- Provide oversight of financial controls, policies, delegated authority and segregation of duties.
- Support constructive relationships with the Co-CEOs, General Manager, accountants and independent examiner.
- Help the Board review annual accounts, reserves, financial sustainability and reporting to funders or regulators where relevant.
- Bring a strategic view to income diversification, investment in capacity and the balance between ambition and risk.
- Present financial matters to the Board in a clear and accessible way.

Useful experience

- Charity finance, SORP, restricted funds or grant-funded organisations.
- Experience of reserves, cash-flow planning, audit / independent examination or risk.
- Knowledge of arts, culture, community organisations or public funding.

Safeguarding Trustee

Help the Board maintain strong safeguarding oversight while keeping operational responsibility in the right place.

What you would bring

- Professional or substantial practical knowledge of safeguarding, child protection, adults at risk, youth / community work, health, social care, education or a related field.
- Ability to distinguish governance oversight from operational case management.
- Confidence handling sensitive information with sound judgement and discretion.
- Commitment to learning, inclusion and trauma-informed practice.

What you would help the Board do

- Provide Board-level scrutiny of safeguarding policy, assurance and organisational learning.
- Maintain an appropriate relationship with the Designated Safeguarding Lead and senior leadership.
- Support independent escalation where a safeguarding concern involves a senior leader or the normal management route is inappropriate.
- Help the Board understand serious safeguarding risk, recurring themes, training needs and policy gaps while respecting confidentiality.
- Contribute to the review of safeguarding policies, procedures and trustee assurance arrangements.
- Support the Board in considering serious incident reporting where safeguarding issues may meet the relevant threshold.
- Champion a safeguarding culture that is proportionate, trauma-informed, inclusive and relevant to CAN's creative and community settings.

8 FUNDRAISING & INCOME GENERATION TRUSTEE

Fundraising & Income Generation Trustee

Help CAN build a broader, more resilient income base and stronger external relationships.

What you would bring

- Strategic fundraising, philanthropy, business development, partnerships, sales, sponsorship or income generation experience.
- Confidence building relationships and communicating a compelling case for support.
- Ability to balance opportunity with capacity, risk and organisational values.

What you would help the Board do

- Challenge and support CAN's fundraising strategy and income-diversification priorities.
- Bring insight into trusts and foundations, corporate partnerships, individual giving, major donors, sponsorship, earned income or other relevant routes.

- Help the Board assess fundraising opportunities in the context of CAN's mission, capacity, ethics and risk.
- Support relationship-building and make introductions where appropriate, without creating unrealistic expectations or substituting for staff fundraising work.
- Encourage strong donor stewardship, supporter journeys and evidence-led fundraising practice.
- Support Board understanding of fundraising performance, pipeline, return on effort and unrestricted-income needs.
- Champion ethical fundraising and alignment between income generation and CAN's values.

Useful experience

- Networks across Greater Manchester business, culture, philanthropy or the voluntary sector.
- Experience of unrestricted or core-cost fundraising.

9 PEOPLE / HR & ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRUSTEE

People / HR & Organisational Development Trustee

Support a healthy, fair and well-governed organisation where people can do their best work.

What you would bring

- Senior HR, people, organisational development, employment law, leadership, learning and development or related experience.
- Strong understanding of good employment practice and healthy organisational culture.
- Ability to handle sensitive issues with confidentiality, fairness and sound judgement.

What you would help the Board do

- Provide Board-level insight on workforce strategy, organisational structure, culture and succession.
- Support scrutiny of key employment policies, people risks and compliance.
- Help the Board think about staff wellbeing, reflective practice, development and sustainable workload.
- Bring perspective to recruitment, induction, appraisal, supervision, performance and organisational change.
- Support the Board's role as employer of the Co-CEOs and help ensure clear, fair leadership accountability arrangements.
- Encourage inclusive employment practice, reasonable adjustments and equitable access to progression.
- Help trustees distinguish governance oversight from day-to-day people management.

This is a governance role. The trustee would advise and scrutinise at Board level rather than acting as an informal HR manager for staff.

10 MARKETING / COMMUNICATIONS / DIGITAL TRUSTEE

Marketing, Communications & Digital Trustee

Help more people understand CAN, engage with its work and recognise its impact.

What you would bring

- Senior or strategic experience in marketing, communications, media, digital, brand, audience development or related work.
- Ability to translate communications insight into practical strategic questions for a small charity.
- Commitment to accessible and inclusive communication.

What you would help the Board do

- Support Board-level thinking on brand, positioning, audiences and reputation.
- Challenge and support CAN's communications and digital strategy.
- Bring insight into social media, content, public relations, websites, digital campaigns, audience development or data-informed marketing.
- Help CAN communicate its purpose clearly to communities, partners, funders, donors, artists and the wider public.
- Support strong crisis and reputation thinking at governance level.
- Encourage accessible, inclusive communications and responsible use of digital tools and data.
- Help the Board connect profile-building with fundraising, partnerships and strategic objectives.

Useful experience

- Experience in arts, culture, charity, public-sector or community communications.
- Understanding of digital fundraising, CRM, website or social-media analytics.

11 ARTS / COMMUNITY / LIVED-EXPERIENCE TRUSTEE

Arts, Community & Lived-Experience Trustee

Bring creative, community and lived insight directly into Board decision-making.

What you would bring

- Knowledge or lived experience relevant to CAN's communities, creative practice or social mission.
- Ability to move between personal / community insight and collective strategic decision-making.
- Confidence contributing to Board discussion, including asking questions where professional language or assumptions create barriers.

What you would help the Board do

- Help the Board test whether CAN's strategy and programmes remain relevant to the people and artists CAN exists to serve.
- Bring insight into participatory arts, socially engaged practice, co-creation, access, community development or cultural production.
- Strengthen Board understanding of barriers to participation and what meaningful inclusion looks like in practice.
- Champion community voice, artistic quality, fair opportunity and respectful representation.
- Support CAN to learn from artists, participants and partners and to show how that learning changes decisions.
- Contribute perspectives grounded in Greater Manchester communities, lived experience or creative practice.

Useful experience

- Experience as an artist, producer, community leader, youth worker, organiser, facilitator, participant representative or advocate.

CAN values professional expertise and lived experience as different but equally important forms of knowledge. Previous trustee experience is not required.

12 BOARD LEADERSHIP - CHAIR / VICE CHAIR SKILLS

Board Leadership

Strengthen Board effectiveness, strategic focus and inclusive decision-making.

What you would bring

- Experience of governance, senior leadership, chairing or facilitating groups, or substantial transferable experience.
- Ability to build trust while remaining willing to address difficult issues.
- Strong listening, judgement, facilitation and communication skills.

What you would help the Board do

- Support effective, well-structured Board meetings and ensure all trustees can contribute.
- Maintain a constructive relationship with the Co-CEOs that combines support, challenge and clear accountability.
- Help the Board focus on strategy, governance, risk and organisational health rather than drifting into day-to-day management.
- Support trustee induction, development, succession and collective accountability.
- Ensure conflicts, difficult decisions and performance concerns are handled fairly and appropriately.
- Act as an ambassador for CAN and support strong relationships with key stakeholders.
- Help create a Board culture that is inclusive, curious, evidence-led and willing to challenge itself.

13 HOW TO EXPRESS INTEREST

Send us your Expression of Interest

We want the first conversation to be straightforward. You are welcome to ask questions or arrange an informal conversation before deciding whether to apply.

To express interest

1. Email recruitment@comartsnw.org.uk and tell us which trustee role or skill area interests you.
2. Include a CV or LinkedIn profile if you have one, plus a short statement explaining what you could bring to CAN and why the role interests you. A short audio or video expression of interest can be considered if a written statement creates an access barrier.
3. Tell us about any adjustments or access requirements that would help you participate fully in the process.
4. CAN will confirm the recruitment timetable and next steps directly, including an informal discussion and / or trustee interview as appropriate.
5. Appointment will be subject to the declarations, eligibility checks, references or other governance checks required for the role.

What we would like to understand

- Why CAN's purpose matters to you.
- What skills, experience, networks or lived perspective you would bring.
- How you approach challenge, collective decision-making and responsibility.
- What you would like to learn or develop through trusteeship.
- Whether you have any conflicts or commitments that CAN should understand early.

Contact

Email	recruitment@comartsnw.org.uk
Website	www.comartsnw.org.uk
Office	61 Old Birley Street, Hulme, Manchester, M15 5RF
Charity no.	277135

HELP SHAPE CAN'S NEXT CHAPTER

Creativity. Community. Change.

To express interest or arrange an informal conversation
recruitment@comartsnw.org.uk
www.comartsnw.org.uk

Community Arts North West | 61 Old Birley Street, Hulme, Manchester, M15 5RF | Charity no. 277135