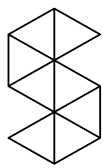




Credit Joseph Lynn



**SUNDERLAND
CULTURE**

Sunderland Culture Chief Executive May 2024



SUNDERLAND
MUSEUM & WINTER GARDENS



Northern Gallery for
Contemporary Art



**Sunderland
City Council**



**University of
Sunderland**

MACSunderland
Music, Arts and Culture Trust



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



**Funded by
UK Government**





Artist Maya Dhananjay was supported through a 'New Encounters' bursary. Photo: Steve Brock

Thank you for taking the time to find out more about our search for the next chief executive of Sunderland Culture.

Rebecca Ball, our current chief executive is going onto a major new job with Arts Council England, and we are now looking for someone to help us lead and develop the work to which Sunderland Culture is committed.

We are a unique and highly regarded partnership of organisations and individuals who are all committed to playing a part in making art and culture an integral part of what makes Sunderland a great city, now and for the future. We are a young, dynamic and fleet of foot organisation able to pivot and adapt to our city's ever-changing context and needs. We care about heritage and arts, and we care about using our resources in the best way to help local people build skills in the arts and pride in their city.

This role is vital to ensuring that culture features at the highest levels of decision-making in the city, and that we support and create excellent opportunities for our citizens and visitors. We do this by managing a number of facilities on behalf of Sunderland City Council and the University of Sunderland, and by running a citywide programme which supports access to arts and culture for young people and for the population as a whole.

Our work has an outstanding reputation, we've built excellent innovative partnerships with national organisations and nurtured talent in our own area.

We are at the crux of change in the way we celebrate and cement the heritage and future of glass making in Sunderland as we work on new plans for National Glass Centre. And exciting developments at Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens as Sunderland City Council prepares for a major redevelopment of the Museum, following stage one funding from National Lottery Heritage Fund in 2022.

We have a fantastic team of staff and partners, and a supportive board of trustees. We are now looking for a highly motivated, creative and inspirational individual who can help us to deliver even more in the future.

If you are passionate about arts and culture and how you can contribute to Sunderland and the wider North East region, we'd love to hear from you. We are looking for an energetic leader who will enjoy the challenge of partnership working. You will be a top class ambassador for the City of Sunderland, for the role of culture in everyone's quality of life, and for the organisers and artists who deliver our work. If you are ready for this unique opportunity to combine creative drive with executive leadership, this may be the job for you.

Both Rebecca and I are happy to talk to you informally if you would like the opportunity to speak before you make an application. Contact recruitment@sunderlandculture.org.uk for details of how to get in touch.

Jane Earl
Independent Chair, Sunderland Culture





Southpaw Dance presented Acedia in the historic Athenaeum building which has been restored by Breeze Creatives and is now a successful independent gallery and studio space. Acedia was commissioned through Sunderland Culture's Unlocking the Doors programme.

Sunderland's Cultural Regeneration

Sunderland is a city going through a monumental period of positive change. With more than £1.53bn of private and public money being invested in the city in recent years, regeneration is happening at an unprecedented pace and scale.

The second largest city in the North East, Sunderland is a city by the sea with stunning beaches and open countryside on its doorstep. Sunderland's historic industrial heart is being reinvented as an extraordinary place to live, a dynamic business location, and a vibrant focus for community life – with culture firmly placed at its core.

Riverside Sunderland is heralded as the most ambitious city centre regeneration project in the UK today, currently transforming 32-hectares on and around the former Vaux site in the heart of the city centre into a dynamic,



Sunderland Culture convened the first Sunderland Creative Forum in the much loved independent venue Pop Recs. The forum is hosted by different venues and meets regularly throughout the year bringing together creative practitioners and businesses from around the city.



Artist's impression of the new Riverside Sunderland development connecting to Keel Square.

carbon-neutral urban quarter with offices, hotels, restaurants, bars and residencies - connecting the newly opened City Hall to Keel Square, and soon to open Culture House, with the nearby Culture Quarter, which is home to the historic Sunderland Empire and The Fire Station – Sunderland's newest music venue.

The city centre's historic Sunnyside area was designated a Heritage Action Zone in 2017, which has seen 13 historic buildings brought to life by entrepreneurs, artist-led organisations, creative businesses and independent shops, cafes and restaurants - opening and creating space for music, creativity and enjoyment.

Sunderland's music credentials are well established as is its rich heritage offer which traces its history to the Anglo-Saxon church of St Peter's, where Saint Benedict Biscop brought the first glass making to Britain in the 7th century. Other key heritage attractions include the newly restored Hylton Castle, Seventeen Nineteen – the recently transformed Grade 1 listed church and now a cultural venue in Sunderland's historic East End and Washington Old Hall – ancestral home to the family of George Washington.

Sunderland Culture's venues – Arts Centre Washington, National Glass Centre, Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art and Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens, as well as the programme of events and activities in communities around the city – sit firmly at the heart of the city's creative community.



Sunderland Empire is the largest theatre in the region and sits in the heart of the city's Culture Quarter with the city's newest music venue, The Fire Station.



Roker pier and beach.



Artist Chad McCail worked with two community groups, exploring their experiences of living in Sunderland and their hopes for its future, to create a new mural in Millfield Metro station. The project was commissioned by Sunderland Culture on behalf of the Metro operator, Nexus, as part of its Metro Community Takeover, marking the network's 40th anniversary.

About Sunderland Culture

Sunderland Culture brings together some of Wearside's most cherished and important cultural venues and activities, and works to realise the ambition of a city brimming with creative potential. We deliver a programme of events and participatory activities across Sunderland, including the creative programmes in Arts Centre Washington, National Glass Centre, Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art and Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens.

Sunderland Culture comprises the three main funders of arts provision in the city, Sunderland City Council, University of Sunderland and Sunderland Music, Arts and Culture (MAC) Trust into a single, independent, and resilient delivery model. We are a not for profit, limited company and registered Charity in England and Wales. We are funded by Arts Council England through the National Portfolio, and with support from public funding schemes and charitable trusts and foundations.

Our mission is to improve life for everyone in Sunderland through culture. To do so, we are driving five step changes through our work: improved profile and reputation of the city; a

As part of the National Partners Programme with Arts Council Collection, we worked with communities and schools including Young Asian Voices (YAV) to take long loans from the Collection into their community centre. The project provided YAV with a platform to bring out the hidden talents of young people, most of whom have had little or no interaction with arts and culture, and to help them develop more provision for young people. Credit Colin Davison.



more vibrant creative economy; raised outlook and aspiration of children and young people; improved health and wellbeing; and a more socially cohesive city.

To see the breadth of our work and our Theory of Change have a look at our [Annual Review for 22-23](#).

Our statutory accounts as filed at the Charity Commission are [here](#).

'I'm a regular visitor and admire the drive and ambition behind the city's recent cultural renaissance.

The 'Sunderland model' brings together the cultural programmes of Sunderland City Council, University of Sunderland and the Sunderland Music, Arts and Culture (MAC) Trust into a single, independent and resilient delivery model – Sunderland Culture.

'I'm an advocate of this innovative way of operating and have used it on various occasions as an exemplar of how a city can pull together to 'improve life for everyone through culture' - Sunderland Culture's stated objective.'

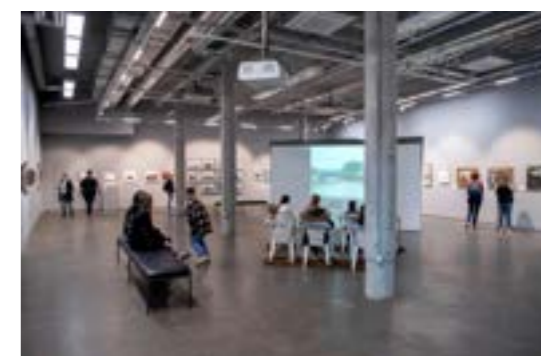
Darren Henley, Chief Executive, Arts Council England



We worked with Fulwell Junior School, where pupils selected and curated artworks from the Arts Council Collection for their new 'Aspirations' art gallery at the school. Two decommissioned aircraft engines by artist Roger Hiorns were installed in the school playground, providing inspiration for the children's own artwork, poetry and creative writing as well as a wonderful discussion point for the school community.



National Glass Centre



Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art

Sunderland Museum and Winter Gardens



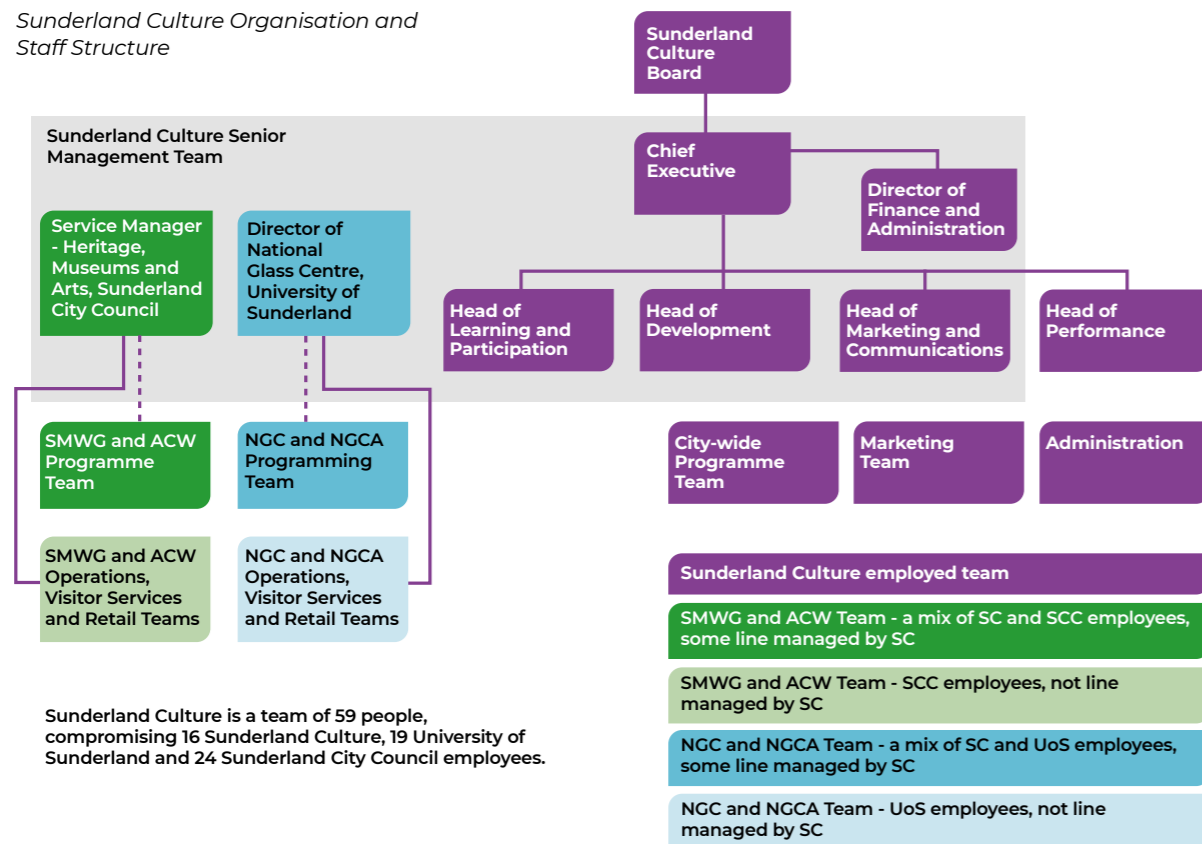
Arts Centre Washington

Our Organisation

The Sunderland Culture team brings together Sunderland Culture, Sunderland City Council and University of Sunderland employed staff, working together to deliver a single programme of exhibitions, performance, learning and participation, audience development, marketing and communications across all of our programme and venues under the direction of the Sunderland Culture Board.

Sunderland Culture employs a small core team to oversee the management of the organisation and its overarching programme, plus employees recruited into project specific or venue specific roles. The programme and marketing teams in venues are a mix of Sunderland Culture, Sunderland City Council and University of Sunderland employees working under the direction of Sunderland Culture for all matters relating to the programme. Operational management of the University and City Council venues is embedded in the systems of those organisations. Delivery of programme and learning activity is governed by agreements between Sunderland Culture and the partner organisation.

Sunderland Culture Organisation and Staff Structure



Equality and Diversity

Sunderland Culture recognises, celebrates and values the diversity of our audiences, staff and community. As an organisation receiving public funds with high profile venues, we aim to act as an exemplar of good practice and to influence our participants, stakeholders and local community to share in our values.

In line with our strategic aims, we work to create a positive environment where all members of our community treat one another with mutual respect and dignity and do not face discrimination with regard to any aspect of their identity.

We are committed to ensuring our performance, exhibitions, learning and engagement programmes reflect the diversity of stories, experiences and interests of our communities and are accessible to all audiences to enjoy and participate in.

We ensure that this commitment is demonstrated through all aspects of our governance, recruitment and training, creative programme, and audience development activities.

Full details of Equality and Diversity commitments are on our [website](#).



Sunderland Culture worked with staff and pupils from Usworth Colliery Primary School to take part in a mass participation dance event on Roker Beach as part of their culture week.

Our Programme and Venues

Sunderland Culture is firmly place-focused in its creative and cultural ambition. We work across the city with communities and local partners to ensure the power of great art, culture and creativity is harnessed for the benefit of Sunderland, its residents and visitors.

Our approach to working in partnership with our core partners, local and national partners is widely recognised as an exemplar model of place-based working.

Culture Start

Culture Start is a transformational, three-year £1.55m partnership programme, launching in 2024, which will offer potentially life changing cultural opportunities to children and young people living in poverty in Sunderland.

Culture Start brings together a cross-sector partnership led by Sunderland Culture working with Sunderland MAC Trust, and city partners including Together for Children, Children North East, Gentoo, InspirED (Sunderland Local Cultural Education Partnership), North East Youth, Sunderland College and the Institute for Economic and Social Inclusion at the University of Sunderland.

An exciting programme of free activities will be developed and delivered by some of the city's cultural organisations which make up InspirED, including Sunderland Culture, We Make Culture, The Cultural Spring, Sunderland Empire, Seventeen Nineteen, Sunderland Music Hub and the All Together Consortium.

The project is supported using public funding by the National Lottery through Arts Council England, and with thanks to the Community Foundation for Tyne & Wear and Northumberland (Sir Tom Cowie Fund), University of Sunderland, Sunderland Local Cultural Education Partnership, and is part funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.



The fourth episode of The Odyssey - The Island of the Sun - took place at The Fire Station in Sunderland in April 2023 and featured 24 local participants, with an epic finale production bringing performers from all five locations together on the National Theatre's Olivier stage in August 2023. Credit Brinkhoff-Mögenburg.

National Theatre

Sunderland Culture, along with Sunderland Empire, is also a partner in National Theatre's Theatre Nation Partnership - a collaborative network of arts organisations aiming to strengthen their relationships with local audiences, schools and communities. This includes programmes specifically for schools and young people including Speak Up and NT Connections. In May 2024 Sunderland Culture, Sunderland Empire and National Theatre announced a new production – Public Record - as part of the National Theatre's Public Acts nationwide programme that creates extraordinary acts of theatre and community. Public Record will be a celebration of the people and music of Sunderland, using a combination of dance and live music and is being developed in collaboration with community members, featuring an array of inspirational artists and musicians who

represent the breadth of Sunderland's rich cultural identity. It will be performed in The Fire Station in April 2025.

This new production follows last year's epic multi-venue production of The Odyssey, reimagined with hundreds of community members in five episodes nationwide, including Sunderland.

This, alongside other significant national partnerships with organisations including the V&A (National Glass Centre), Arts Council Collection (NGCA), British Museum and National Gallery (Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens) and more, positions our programme at the very highest calibre.



The Odyssey participants together ahead of their finale on National Theatre's Olivier stage.

Recipients from the last round of Unlock grants include musicians, sculptors and designers who used the grant to in a variety of ways from buying new equipment to marketing and website design.



Growing our Creative Economy

Our Unlock programme aims to increase confidence and facilitate a more diverse, sustainable and resilient creative sector within Sunderland. Since 2018 the programme has supported creative practitioners through Creative Development Fellowships, residencies and commissions. The programme supports artists to develop their practice and creative business, increase funding and investment in Sunderland's creative industries, delivers support sessions and workshops and has offered one to one advice to creative businesses.

Our New Encounters scheme helped artists from diverse or disabled communities realise their ambitions. Brent Marriner, a talented dancer, spent a week with street dance artist Connor Gribben to develop skills in breakdancing which culminated in a performance for friends, family and arts professionals at The Fire Station.





Arts Centre Washington

Arts Centre Washington provides a year-round programme of theatre, music, comedy, dance, film screenings and exhibitions, as well as a range of classes and courses from salsa dancing to scale model making.

It has an established reputation for offering an inclusive programme for children and young people, including Bright Lights Youth Arts Festival, Creative You, participatory experiences for children with learning disabilities and take-over days by the young people's collective Celebrate Different.

A regular packed programme of performances includes some of the very best of small-scale touring artists. Arts Centre Washington supports grassroots arts organisation, amateur and emerging artists through its exhibitions programme and hosts two annual open exhibitions.

The Centre also houses artists' studios, a recording studio and rehearsal rooms and its seasonal craft and makers fairs draw audiences to enjoy the work of local artists and makers.

Arts Centre Washington is owned and operated by Sunderland City Council and the creative programme is delivered by Sunderland Culture.



Creative You provides opportunities for young people in Washington to get involved and to support their mental and emotional wellbeing. Sessions include Teenage Craft Club, Film Club and a Young Writers Collective which all provide spaces for young people to meet, learn and create.



Members of the regular Creative Age group for people with early onset dementia and their carers.

Amra Shobai Aikhane (We Are Here) at Arts Centre Washington marked 20 years of Sangini, a BAME women-led organisation with a focus on encouraging women from different communities to create, share and build stronger voices.



Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens

Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens is the oldest municipal museum outside of London and has been at the heart of Sunderland's cultural offer for over 170 years.

The much-loved free venue incorporates varied and unique collections exploring Sunderland's rich local history as well as science and technology, natural history, fine and decorative arts, and an immersive Winter Gardens.

The Museum has a changing exhibition programme presenting an exciting mix of historic, modern and contemporary art and collections from around the world. The venue frequently draws on its extensive networks with local and national organisations including the British Museum, the National Portrait Gallery and the National Gallery, and was an Arts Council Collection National Partner from 2019-2022.

The Museum also has an inclusive and varied learning, events and activities programme for all ages and abilities.

Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens is owned and operated by Sunderland City Council and the public programme is delivered by Sunderland Culture. In 2022 Sunderland City Council was awarded round one development funding of £299,425 by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, to progress with plans for an ambitious multi-million pound transformation of the Museum and Winter Gardens.



Natural History Museum's Wildlife Photographer of the Year exhibition allows visitors to come face to face with species at risk of extinction as well as those brought back from the brink, and see first-hand how human activities, both good and bad, are shaping the natural world we rely on.



Local school children working on an Arts Award inspired by the Grayson Perry tapestries which was on display as part of the National Partners Programme with Arts Council Collection.



In February 2023 the Museum hosted Gathering light: A Bronze Age golden sun. Shown as part of the British Museum's spotlight loan tour, the Shropshire Sun pendant is one of the most important and significant Bronze Age objects ever discovered. Credit Colin Davison.



National Glass Centre

National Glass Centre celebrates the origins, growth and history of glass making in Sunderland and is a world-leading centre for artistic practise in glass.

The venue is free to visit and explores the city's rich heritage of glass making alongside an international exhibition programme, presenting the work of leading contemporary artists in glass and ceramics.

Dedicated to offering creative opportunities for everyone, National Glass Centre offers a varied events, learning and activities programme – from family glass making classes to more advanced courses. Visitors can also feel the heat of the 1100-degree furnaces during a daily glass blowing demonstration, buy glass and ceramic artworks and jewellery, hand-crafted by local artists in the shop and refreshments in the Glass Yard cafe.

National Glass Centre is owned and operated by the University of Sunderland and the public programme is delivered by Sunderland Culture. Following an external review of essential building works, in January 2023 the University announced its intention to relocate the centre from its current location to a proposed new exhibition space within the new Culture House which is currently in development on Keel Square in the city centre. Sunderland Culture remains committed to working with our partners University of Sunderland and Sunderland City Council to find an ambitious solution which ensures the future of glassmaking in Sunderland.



Colour Catchers by Neil Wilkin, part of the Harvest: Fruit Gathering exhibition at National Glass Centre. Credit Colin Davison



The Life of St Bede by Monster Chetwynd was displayed at Durham Cathedral as part of Glass Exchange. Credit David Wood.

National Glass Centre's Hot Glass Studio offers daily demos and allows visitors to take part in hugely popular and unique experiences including Blow Your Own Pumpkin and Blow Your Own Christmas Bauble.



Janina Sabaliauskaitė, Dyke Power from Gender Nonconforming Lesbian Visibility series, 2021, photograph. Courtesy of the artist.

Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art

Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art, currently based inside National Glass Centre, has been bringing critically acclaimed contemporary visual art from around the world to Sunderland and revealing the depth of talent in the North East for over 50 years.

Working closely with artists across all stages of their career, it hosts free exhibitions, activities, workshops and events, creates publications and since 2006, has acquired over 500 artworks by more than 50 artists or artist collectives with a focus on lens-based media and the North East of England. Today the collection continues to grow and is widely loaned across the North East of England and United Kingdom.

In 2019, Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art was 50 years old, being the direct descendant of 'Bookshop Gallery' founded in 1969 and its successor Ceolfrith Arts Centre, later Northern Centre for Contemporary Art. Despite the changes in location and name, the gallery's commitment to innovative, experimental art has been a constant. During its fifty years it has given UK premieres to artists from Sean Scully to Claes Oldenberg and Coosje van Bruggen, from Sam Taylor-Wood to Spartacus Chetwynd, and given the first UK shows to Cory Arcangel and Harun Farocki. The public programme within Northern Gallery for Contemporary Art is delivered by Sunderland Culture.

Sunderland Culture is currently working with our partners University of Sunderland and Sunderland City Council to explore options for the relocation of the gallery following the announcement by the University that the current location within National Glass Centre will close in 2026.



Laura Lancaster, Shaking Through, 2023, Oil on Linen, 60 x 50cm, currently on display at NGCA in Laura Lancaster: My Echo, My Shadow – the artist's largest solo show to date. Courtesy the artist and Workplace Gallery. Credit Tom Carter.



Mark Pinder, Mission Tyne and Wear pavilion at the 1990 Gateshead Garden Festival. Teams, Gateshead, June 1990. Part of the exhibition Macromancy.

Job description and person specification

Job Purpose

- To lead Sunderland Culture during a time of change, being accountable, with the Board and partners, for all our business from long-term strategy and plans to our day-to-day operations
- To act as an advocate for culture as a means of delivering the ambitions for the City and its people, and to act as an advocate for Sunderland and the region to celebrate the impact of our work
- To lead, inspire and motivate the organisation, guiding it securely through necessary change and laying the foundations of long-term sustainability and success
- To support the existing strategic partnerships and to work in ways which improve life for everyone in Sunderland through culture
- To develop an organisation that combines entrepreneurial flair with awareness of the charity's standing as a leading cultural organisation in Sunderland and as an incubator for new cultural bodies and skills
- To develop the profile of Sunderland Culture as a model and an exemplar for other localities elsewhere in the country

Job description

Strategic and Creative Leadership

- Work with the Board and the staff team to set the vision and direction for the organisation
- With staff, artists and creative colleagues throughout the City, lead the organisation to deliver an excellent creative programme, to meet the ambitions for the future and the commitments of today
- Develop and implement business plans and performance management approaches to ensure that strategic plans for Sunderland Culture are achieved for the benefit of all our communities

- Lead, develop and inspire the staff team through good management processes
- Work with partners to ensure consistent staff management practices across the organisation, in light of the mixed staffing model for Sunderland Culture

Stakeholder Relationships

- Manage relationships with the three founding partners and wider networks to maximise the resources for culture and arts available to the City
- Work closely with the strategic and operational managers at partners' venues to ensure joined up activity and communications
- Deliver on all current funding agreements and build new ones for the future in the light of changes to venues
- Build new partnerships and relationships with social, civic, business and cultural partners locally, regionally and nationally
- Advocate for the role culture can play in improving lives by leading and participating in networks across the City and beyond

Finance and Fundraising

- Working with the Director of Finance and Administration, ensure Sunderland Culture achieves positive financial performance in line with its agreed budgets through management of accurate budgeting and financial monitoring processes
- Ensure that Sunderland Culture's finance function, including relationships with external accountants, advisors and auditors is efficient and effective
- Actively seek new funding opportunities with the Head of Development

Advocacy and Communications

- Act as the public face of Sunderland Culture and the cultural venues of the three founding partners
- Work with Head of Marketing and Communications to ensure a robust media and communications strategy across activity and partner venues to maximise profile and build audiences
- Participate in national programmes to raise profile for the City and the art forms

Equality and Diversity

- Ensure that the organisation has a strong commitment to diversity and meets the ambitions of the partnership in relation to inclusivity and relevance
- Actively pursue opportunities and partnerships to break down barriers to people accessing or participating in Sunderland Culture's programmes of work

Governance

- Work with the Chair and the Board to ensure good governance, compliance with all statutory requirements, and support a high performing board in delivering on the mission of Sunderland Culture

Person specification

Personal Attributes

- An inspirational leader with a demonstrable commitment to Sunderland Culture's vision and values
- Demonstrable personal integrity, authenticity and emotional intelligence with an ability to engage constructively with a wide range of stakeholders
- Energy, enthusiasm and an entrepreneurial outlook, balanced with pragmatism and the ability and resourcefulness to ensure delivery across a diverse programme of work at a time of change

Experience

- Evidence of successfully leading change and growth in a diverse, public-facing charitable purpose business by devising and delivering on strategic business plans
- A track record of developing and enabling high performing teams
- Experience of identifying, managing and delivering change
- Experience of having led the development of strategic partnerships and delivery of projects in the arts and cultural sector

Skills and Knowledge

- Exceptional interpersonal skills and the ability to build rapport and partnerships with a variety of stakeholders
- A skilled communicator, confident in articulating Sunderland Culture's vision in any context
- Intellectually able to translate ambiguity and uncertainty into clear messages to inspire trust and confidence and empower staff and partners
- Extensive knowledge of the arts and cultural sector including appreciation of curatorial approaches
- Understanding and appreciation of, and a commitment to implementing steps to support, the Creative Case for Diversity
- Sound knowledge of financial and business planning and project/ programme management

Terms and Conditions

Salary

The role is offered at a salary in a range between £62,000 - £72,000 pa.

Hours of work

Full time with some evenings and weekends and some flexibility.

Place of work

The role is based in National Glass Centre but occasional hotdesking is required at other Sunderland Culture venues, and some remote working is possible.

Holidays

30 days per year plus 8 public holiday days.

Pension

Auto enrolment in NEST scheme.

How to apply

We hope that you will want to make an application. Please send us an up-to-date CV, together with a two-page letter, outlining why you want to be part of the Sunderland Culture team, and highlighting the particular skills, experience and expertise you would bring to the role.

Please also complete the equal opportunities monitoring form [here](#)

Applications should be sent to Naomi Mather:
recruitment@sunderlandculture.org.uk

Deadline no later than 12 noon Friday 7 June

First interviews in Sunderland Tuesday 25 June
Second interviews in Sunderland Tuesday 2 July



Reasons You Should(n't) Love Me'
by Amy Trigg and Paines Plough
at Arts Centre Washington



Grayson Perry's Vanity of Small Differences at Sunderland Museum & Winter Gardens



Delicate at Arts Centre Washington by Extraordinary Bodies. Credit Olufsen Media



**SUNDERLAND
CULTURE**

Sunderland Culture Limited
National Glass Centre, Liberty Way
Sunderland SR6 0GL

Registered Charity Number 1184073
Company Reg Number 10098742



1418 Now's Pages of the Sea on Roker Beach co-commission with Sunderland Culture