

# Forward Arts Foundation Executive Director Recruitment Pack



**December 2020**

Dear Applicant

Thank you for your interest in the Executive Director post at Forward Arts Foundation. This is an exciting opportunity to play a significant role in our future and in growing the Forward Arts Foundation in line with our aspiration to embed the thriving National Poetry Day and the Forward Prizes for Poetry in a programme of year-round inspiration, advocacy and activism.

I have pleasure in enclosing the recruitment pack which includes the following:

- Background information about Forward Arts Foundation and the role of Executive Director.
- Job Description, person specification, terms and conditions.
- Equality & Diversity policy statement.

Please advise us if you require a copy of the recruitment pack in large print or an alternative format.

If you would like an informal discussion before applying, please contact Natalie Charles at [natalie@forwardartsfoundation.org](mailto:natalie@forwardartsfoundation.org) to arrange a conversation with our chair, Martin Thomas.

Key dates:

- Closing date for applications: Monday 11 January at 12 noon
- Interview Round 1: Tuesday 19 January
- Interview Round 2: Tuesday 26 January

Good luck with your application. We look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Martin Thomas  
Chair of the Board

[www.forwardartsfoundation.org](http://www.forwardartsfoundation.org)

**National Poetry Day**

Facebook: [@PoetryDayUK](https://www.facebook.com/PoetryDayUK)

Instagram: [@nationalpoetryday](https://www.instagram.com/nationalpoetryday)

Twitter: [@PoetryDayUK](https://twitter.com/PoetryDayUK)

**Forward Prizes for Poetry**

Facebook: [@forwardprizes](https://www.facebook.com/forwardprizes)

Instagram: [@forwardprizes](https://www.instagram.com/forwardprizes)

Twitter: [@ForwardPrizes](https://twitter.com/ForwardPrizes)

## Forward Arts Foundation

Forward Arts Foundation is the vibrant and influential national charity that promotes knowledge and enjoyment of poetry. We are working towards a society in which all of us can develop our innate creativity and agency by enjoying, discovering and sharing contemporary poetry. We believe that in a world in which communities, families and individuals are under ever-increasing pressure, poetry offers the creative space to imagine, to share our stories and to find new ways of navigating the future together.

Our flagship initiatives are: National Poetry Day, the mass celebration of poetry that takes place every year at the beginning of October; and the annual Forward Prizes for Poetry, with their associated anthology and education programmes.

Our mission is to enable everyone to enjoy, discover, and share poetry as performers, writers, listeners, and readers. We do this by supporting poets directly and by building audiences for their work; by working through education partnerships to foster creativity, confidence and communication skills; and by working with communities to help reduce isolation and exclusion.

This is an exciting time for a new Executive Director to join Forward Arts Foundation. For us, like all cultural organisations, the pandemic has brought uncertainty and challenges. However, it has also created opportunities to engage wider and more diverse communities, by expanding our digital offer. It has also reinforced the value of poetry in uncertain times:

- Poetry is agile; and, this year, has been the artform most easily adapted to the challenges of the pandemic.
- Poetry is inclusive and a platform for a diverse range of voices.
- Poetry is connective, giving us a voice and easing isolation.
- Poetry is emotionally enriching and fosters understanding of others.

We now want to revamp our model to enable us to build on our learning over the past year.

The charity is run by a small team, made up of the Executive Director, National Poetry Day Manager, Forward Prizes for Poetry Manager, and an Office Manager. We have plans to recruit a Development Manager. The staff are based in London and Manchester. Forward Arts Foundation has an experienced and engaged Board of Trustees. We are a National Portfolio Organisation, funded by Arts Council England. We have a good track record in attracting funding from Trusts and Foundations. And our earned income was almost a third of our total income last year.

## **The Executive Director role**

Job Title: Executive Director  
Reporting to: The Board of Trustees  
Direct reports: Forward Prizes for Poetry Manager, National Poetry Day Manager, Office Manager

Purpose:

The Executive Director is responsible for developing Forward Arts Foundation's role as the national charity that promotes knowledge and enjoyment of poetry. They are also expected to set out the five-year strategy for the charity, ensuring that it continues to be a diverse and forward-looking organisation. They deliver that strategy and are accountable for the charity's successful financial and operational management, including business development and income generation.

The Executive Director is expected to build an internal culture of team working as well as excellent external relationships with partners and stakeholders to enhance the reputation and advocate the vision of Forward Arts Foundation. They create a collaborative, welcoming and inclusive environment. They are the lead advocate for the charity, while also empowering the team, Ambassadors, partners, and poets associated with the charity to champion our vision, mission, and programmes.

### **Key responsibilities**

The Executive Director will:

#### **Strategic leadership**

- Work with the Trustees to develop the long-term strategy of Forward Arts Foundation, articulating its core objectives, and developing the business plan which will deliver it.
- Be accountable for the effectiveness of the strategy.
- Ensure Forward Arts Foundation operates within its governing documents and charitable law.
- Maintain a good sense of changes in the national and international context which may impact Forward Arts Foundation's beneficiaries or its future planning, horizon scanning on behalf of the Board.

#### **Management**

- Determine the appropriate structure and staffing of Forward Arts Foundation to enable it to deliver on its strategy and continue to fulfil its purpose.
- Manage Forward Arts Foundation's people directly against agreed objectives.
- Develop the charity's policy on equality and diversity to embed an inclusive approach across the organisation.

- Encourage staff to have the right training and development for their skills and career progression.
- Instil a performance management culture which ensures that all staff know what is expected of them and are supported to achieve their set criteria;

### **Financial management**

- Take stewardship of Forward Arts Foundation's financial sustainability.
- Plan strategically to increase the funds of the organisation, building strong relationships with potential fundraisers and donors.
- Draw up and oversee Forward Arts Foundation's business plan and budget and ensure good practice in Forward Arts Foundation's day-to-day accounting.

### **External relations**

- Act as the lead advocate for Forward Arts Foundation, representing its work and the opportunities it provides to multiple audiences.
- Cultivate relationships with those engaged with the organisation.
- Ensure good long-term relationships with Forward Arts Foundation's present and future partner organisations.

### **Governance**

- Work with the Chair to ensure that the Board has the right advice and information to fulfil its governance, fiduciary, regulatory and risk management responsibilities.
- Work with the Chair to ensure that the Trustees are appropriately involved, meetings scheduled with reasonable frequency and that they are provided with the right information.

### **The Person**

- Forward Arts Foundation is seeking candidates with good leadership experience in arts and culture.
- They do not need to come from the poetry world but a keen interest in the work of Forward Arts Foundation and in the possibilities that poetry affords will be important.
- They will be able to operate both at a strategic and an operational level and will bring effective oversight to the work of Forward Arts Foundation.
- They will have excellent communication skills and the ability to champion Forward Arts Foundation across the many communities with which it engages.
- They will be able to demonstrate their commitment to diversity with experience of inclusive practice.
- They will have management experience and will appreciate the need to implement any governance and structural changes with sensitivity, valuing the work that the small and dedicated staff have delivered over many years.
- Ideally, they will have charity experience, and an understanding of governance.

Specifically, candidates for this role will have the following attributes:

## **Essential**

- Interest in poetry

## **Knowledge and skills**

- Ability to organise and plan strategically whilst being able to pay attention to detail.
- Financial management.
- Knowledge of good practice guidelines for charities and limited companies.
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills and ability to act as the charity's spokesperson.

## **Experience**

- Leadership within the creative and cultural sector in a management role.
- Leading a team and working collaboratively.
- Securing fundraised income and an understanding of the fundraising landscape.
- Working with a board.

## **Values**

- A commitment to equality and diversity in all aspects.
- Working in partnership.

## **Attributes**

- Ability to be flexible and responsive.
- Entrepreneurial and self-motivated.
- Creative thinking and problem solving.

## **Desirable**

- Experience of leading organisational change
- Experience of delivering through digital media

## **Terms**

Salary:	£50,000
Hours:	40 hours
Annual leave:	25 days plus bank holidays
Pension:	Scheme provided by NEST
Location:	FAF's office is in London. Some remote working is possible.

## **Equality & Diversity**

Forward Arts Foundation is committed to being an equal opportunities employer. We encourage applicants from the broadest range of backgrounds, with different skills and experiences to bring into our organisation. All candidates who identify as disabled and demonstrate that they meet the essential criteria will be invited for an interview, in line with the Equalities Act 2010.

## How to apply

Please submit a CV and also tell us your reasons for applying for this role, drawing attention to how you match the knowledge, skills and experience we are looking for. Please include two referees' names: references will be taken up only if you are selected for the post.

Applications should be sent to Natalie Charles at [natalie@forwardartsfoundation.org](mailto:natalie@forwardartsfoundation.org). You will receive an email confirming receipt of your email application within 2 working days.

To discuss the role and for further information, please contact Natalie Charles at [natalie@forwardartsfoundation.org](mailto:natalie@forwardartsfoundation.org) to arrange a conversation with our Chair.

Closing date for applications: Monday 11 January 2021 at 12 noon.