

## Head of Dance

## Role Description

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| Salary grade: |  | E |
| Reference number: |  | HOD |
| Team: |  | Arts |
| Reporting to: |  | Deputy Director of Arts |
| Line managing: |  | Relationship Manager (Dance) |
| Location: |  | This role can be based at any one of the Arts Council of Wales offices in Cardiff, Colwyn Bay or Carmarthen |
| Travel: |  | Frequent |

### The Arts Council of Wales

Arts Council of Wales is an independent charity, established by Royal Charter in 1994. It is a Welsh Government Sponsored Body whose members are appointed by the Welsh Government.

The Welsh Government provides the majority of our funding. We also distribute funding from the National Lottery and raise additional money for the arts where we can from a variety of public and private sector sources.

We're ambitious for the arts in Wales. Our vision is of a creative Wales where the arts are central to the life and well-being of the nation, making our country an exciting and vibrant place to live, work and visit. The success of our vision depends on the imagination and creativity of our artists, the quality of their work and the efforts that are made to reach out to and inspire audiences. We work to create the environment in which ambitious, enterprising artists can grow and flourish, where as many people as possible enjoy and take part in the arts.

### Our values

As a public body we're expected to uphold the highest standards of accountability and openness. We also value creativity and innovation. Our staff often work together in groups and teams to achieve our programmes of work. We place particular emphasis on flexible, collaborative working and support our staff to nurture and develop these skills.

About this role

### The Head of Dance is a strategic leadership role requiring deep expertise in dance sector development, cultural policy, and artistic excellence within Wales’s distinctive dance ecosystem. You'll have an established background in dance sector leadership, whether through practice, production, creative direction, or executive management of dance organisations/venues, with extensive experience in nurturing dance talent and building resilient, diverse creative communities across Wales’s dance landscape. Recognising dance as a specialised sector within the arts, this role is offered at 2.5 days per week, reflecting the focused nature of dance development work while ensuring dedicated strategic leadership for this vital artistic discipline.

### Drawing on your specialist knowledge and proven track record, you'll drive our ambitious vision for developing Wales’s dance sector through comprehensive strategic frameworks following the critical findings of the 2025 Dance Review, leading implementation of key recommendations to revitalise and develop the dance sector throughout Wales. You'll champion dance diversity and excellence across contemporary, ballet, hip-hop, folk, community and inclusive practices with sophisticated understanding of this specialised artistic domain.

### You'll leverage your extensive professional experience to provide authoritative leadership across the dance sector, embedding dance priorities throughout our organization while managing a dedicated dance project team. Your role demands sophisticated understanding of dance sector dynamics, enabling you to negotiate complex partnerships across dance institutions, performance venues, and cultural bodies while shaping policy, investment priorities, and sector development initiatives that enable Welsh dance practitioners to flourish nationally and internationally.

### Reporting to the Deputy Director of Arts, you will operate as the strategic lead for dance, applying your specialist expertise to identify emerging sector needs, develop innovative programming frameworks, and create sustainable strategic approaches that support a thriving dance ecosystem. Throughout all strategic initiatives, you'll integrate our key cross-cutting themes: promoting the Welsh language, addressing climate challenges, and advancing diversity and inclusion at a strategic level, requiring sophisticated expertise in managing and negotiating complex, multi-faceted cultural development programmes. This high-profile role demands exceptional sector knowledge and collaborative leadership as ACW's principal specialist in dance, with your expertise informing organisational decision-making while representing dance interests across government, industry, and community stakeholders, and mentoring staff with dance specialisms to ensure excellence in dance is recognised and celebrated across all Welsh communities.

### Principal responsibilities

**Leadership and strategy:**

* Lead on the creation and implementation of dance sector development strategy that contributes to the Arts Council overall, long term strategy as a member of the management board
* Manage and mentor a Relationship Manager with dance specialisms
* Advocate for ACW at dance events and sector partnerships
* Lead cultural development across the Welsh dance ecosystem
* Implement place-based approaches with dance stakeholders
* Manage MYF organisations in the dance sector and lottery grant development teams
* Convene and Chair sector development groups and lottery grants assessment panels for dance-specific programmes
* Use data tools to track impact in dance, identifying trends and demonstrating outcomes
* Foster inclusive practice within Wales' diverse communities through dance initiatives
* Uphold ACW values and Nolan Principles, promoting access to dance opportunities

**Key Relationships**

The Head of Dance will build and maintain senior relationships with internal staff and external stakeholders in the dance sector. This will include supporting the development of programmes of work within the Arts Councils strategies and advising on dance and related matters. These relationships will include:

* Directors and Arts Council colleagues working on dance strategies
* Dance industry stakeholders including companies, venues, festivals, and education providers
* Artists across dance disciplines
* Dance networks and national sector partners
* Institutions working on collaborative research initiatives
* International dance organisations and cultural exchange partners

**Dance Expertise & Leadership**

* Maintain comprehensive knowledge of Wales' dance sector across all forms
* Track emerging trends in dance creation, production, and distribution
* Provide specialist dance advice to inform Council decision-making
* Develop specific policies that advance Welsh dance talent
* Lead the integration of dance priorities across arts frameworks
* Champion dance innovation and artistic excellence
* Support dance artists' professional development pathways
* Facilitate cross-genre collaboration and artistic exchange

**Sector Development**

* Assess dance organisations' performance and business needs
* Convene the Dance Sector Development Group to identify opportunities
* Participate in dance-related steering groups across Welsh Government and cultural organisations
* Address challenges within the dance sector
* Ensure diverse voices are represented in dance programming
* Deliver high-impact initiatives advancing Welsh dance nationally and internationally
* Support emerging and established dance artists and companies

**Partnerships & Advocacy**

* Build strategic relationships connecting dance stakeholders
* Represent ACW at key dance events and festivals
* Champion Welsh dance nationally and internationally
* Develop relationships with funders and development agencies for dance
* Strengthen connections with education providers and cross-sector partners
* Foster international cultural exchange in dance

**Resource Management**

* Oversee funding streams for dance initiatives
* Ensure alignment between dance sector needs and budget allocation
* Monitor quality through specialised dance assessment
* Develop innovative approaches to supporting diverse dance practices
* Mentor and coach staff with dance specialisms across the organisation and those who require expert input in to programmes such as Arts, Health and Wellbeing
* Approval of purchase orders within delegated authority
* Manage and monitor assigned budgets, seeking partnership funding opportunities
* Oversee reporting requirements for dance programs

Corporate compliance – adheres to those policies that protect the Arts Council and its staff against potential exposure to reportable risks and incidents. These include Anti-Fraud, General Data Protection Regulations, Welsh Language Standards, Wellbeing of Future Generations and Cyber Security/ICT use. (Staff responsibilities are defined in the relevant Arts Council policies.)

Additional duties – any reasonable duties consistent with the above.

### Knowledge, experience and attributes

We want to attract to our organisation people who have an interest in the arts, a commitment to the principles of open and accountable public service, and the flair to work with a diverse range of customers. We believe in setting the highest standards in all aspects of our work. Every member of staff is therefore an ambassador for the company, and we expect everyone to respect and uphold our reputation.

We aspire to be an innovative, forward-looking organisation. We look to our staff to work collaboratively with each other to ensure that we’re efficient, effective and useful.

We take for granted that our staff will be competent in their management of routine administration and that they’ll have developed good organisational skills. So, we’re particularly interested in staff who have the ability to work imaginatively and flexibly to tackle the challenges that they’ll face – staff who have the initiative and drive to thrive in a busy work environment and who derive satisfaction from achieving ambitious and stretching targets.

In addition, this role requires the following specific knowledge, experience and attributes. Applicants will be assessed against the essential and desirable criteria set out below:

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|  | Essential | Desirable |
| Knowledge | • A degree and/or significant relevant experience with advanced expertise in dance sector analysis and strategic development across multiple forms, demonstrating sophisticated understanding of artistic excellence frameworks and sector dynamics that inform high-level strategic decision-making   * Comprehensive expertise in dance across multiple forms, with deep understanding of contemporary, ballet, hip-hop, folk, community and inclusive practices, and their interconnected role within Wales' cultural ecosystem and broader artistic landscape * Strategic understanding of the political and social landscape of dance and cultural policy, with proven ability to navigate complex policy environments, government frameworks, and cultural development initiatives that impact dance sector growth and sustainability * Comprehensive expertise in Welsh, UK, and international dance landscapes, with established understanding of sector interconnectivity, cultural positioning, and strategic partnership opportunities across diverse dance ecosystems and performance contexts * Advanced knowledge of project management techniques for large-scale projects, with sophisticated understanding of strategic planning frameworks, resource optimisation, and delivery mechanisms that support complex dance initiatives and sector development programmes * Strategic leadership in equalities frameworks and their transformative application to dance programming, with demonstrated expertise in designing and implementing comprehensive diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies that remove systemic barriers and create sustainable pathways for underrepresented groups in the dance sector * Demonstrated executive leadership in dance sector development with extensive experience in conceptualising, scaling, and delivering transformational dance programmes with measurable sector-wide impact and strategic influence across Wales’s cultural landscape * Established expertise in policy development and implementation across cultural sectors, with proven track record of translating complex policy frameworks into actionable strategic initiatives that drive dance excellence and sector transformation |  |
| Skills & Experience | * Management expertise in overseeing complex, multi-stakeholder dance initiatives, with sophisticated understanding of strategic coordination, resource optimisation, and delivery mechanisms that support large-scale artistic and organisational development * Expert contract negotiation and grants management experience at organisational level, with demonstrated ability to secure funding, optimise partnerships, and manage substantial financial frameworks that support sustainable dance sector growth * Sophisticated capabilities in building and sustaining high-level strategic partnerships, with documented success in establishing transformational relationships with senior executives across government, arts organisations, and cultural institutions * Robust financial acumen including management of substantial programme budgets and resource allocation, with proven ability to drive strategic decision-making that maximises impact while ensuring organisational sustainability and growth * Excellent leadership in mentoring and coaching team development, with proven expertise in cultivating talent, driving professional advancement, and effectively managing geographically dispersed staff across diverse dance disciplines * Advanced advocacy capabilities with demonstrated ability to influence diverse stakeholders at executive and policy-making levels, with proven success in representing organisational interests and articulating complex dance sector needs to government, industry, and community leaders * Strategic analytical capabilities and visionary thinking, with demonstrated capacity to synthesise sector intelligence into actionable frameworks that align dance initiatives with organisational objectives while driving measurable performance outcomes and sector development * Passionate advocate and strategic developer of Welsh dance talent, with comprehensive approach to nurturing excellence across all dance forms and demonstrated commitment to positioning Wales' distinctive dance heritage and contemporary innovation on national and international stages * Strategic analytical capabilities with sophisticated ability to think logically about dance sector development, with proven expertise in synthesising complex sector intelligence into transformative frameworks that drive sustainable growth and artistic excellence | • Experience with international cultural exchange in dance contexts  • Public/charitable sector work experience  • Professional background in dance |
| Attributes | * Results-driven leader with exceptional performance under pressure, with proven track record of negotiating and delivering complex, outcome-focused initiatives that hit performance targets while maintaining strategic vision and operational excellence in challenging environments * Visible leadership presence at senior levels in arts environments, with demonstrated ability to influence decision-making, and represent organisational interests with authority across government, industry, and cultural stakeholders * Excellent communication capabilities for diverse audiences, with proven expertise in articulating complex dance sector concepts to varied stakeholders including artists, policymakers, funders, and community leaders at the highest levels * Strategic commitment to continuous professional development, with demonstrated dedication to advancing sector expertise and staying at the forefront of dance industry developments, policy frameworks, and best practices * Visible presence and commitment to strategic engagement across Wales and beyond, with demonstrated ability to represent organisational interests and build transformational partnerships through active participation in dance events, cultural gatherings, and sector forums at national and international levels |  |
| Welsh language | * Learning Welsh language skills will be necessary when appointed. Although you are not expected to be able to speak Welsh fluently when applying, we are looking for an individual who understands the culture of the country; the varied relationship of the people of Wales with the Welsh language and who is committed to developing innovative use of the Welsh language both linguistically and culturally within the Arts Council and the wider sector. Everyone’s story with the language is different and we recognise that levels of ability and confidence vary from person to person. We will ensure the relevant support to increase or learn Welsh language skills. |  |