

## Head of Young People and Skills

## Role Description

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Salary grade: |  | E |
| Reference number: |  | HYPS |
| Team: |  | Arts |
| Reporting to: |  | Deputy Director of Equalities and Partnerships |
| Line managing: |  | |  | | --- | | Relationship Manager (Young People and Skills), Arts Development Enabler | |
| 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, whereas 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 Young People & Skills is a strategic leadership role requiring deep expertise in youth development, arts education, and cultural sector engagement. You'll be an established practitioner with extensive experience in nurturing talent and building resilient, diverse creative ecosystems. Drawing on your specialist knowledge and proven track record, you'll drive our ambitious vision for developing Wales’s creative sector through comprehensive youth engagement strategies.

As an expert in youth engagement, talent development and education partnerships, you'll leverage your extensive professional experience to champion meaningful artistic participation that bridges cultural engagement with career development pathways. Your role demands sophisticated understanding of sector dynamics, enabling you to negotiate complex partnerships across educational institutions, arts organisations, and cultural bodies while facilitating young people's active collaboration in strategic decision-making processes.

You'll apply your specialist expertise to identify emerging needs, develop innovative programming frameworks, and create sustainable strategic approaches that support a thriving cultural ecosystem. Your comprehensive knowledge of best practices will be essential as you lead transformative initiatives across all art forms—supporting work created for and by young people, expanding access to high-quality artistic experiences, and establishing robust pathways to creative careers.

Working co-creatively with young people, your leadership will ensure the arts sector authentically reflects the needs and ambitions of future generations. Throughout all strategic initiatives, you'll integrate our key cross-cutting themes: promoting the Welsh language, addressing climate challenges, and advancing diversity and inclusion, requiring sophisticated expertise in managing and negotiating complex, multi-faceted cultural development programmes.

The Head of Young People & Skills drives our vision for nurturing talent and building a resilient, diverse creative sector in Wales. You'll lead our strategy to develop youth arts across all art forms—supporting work created for and by young people, expanding access to high-quality artistic experiences, and creating pathways to creative careers. Working co-creatively with young people, you'll ensure the arts sector reflects the needs and ambitions of future generations.

As an expert in youth engagement, talent development and education partnerships, you'll champion meaningful artistic participation as both cultural engagement and potential career development. You'll facilitate young people's active collaboration in decision-making processes, identifying needs, developing innovative programming, and creating sustainable frameworks that support a thriving cultural ecosystem. Throughout all initiatives, you'll integrate our key cross-cutting themes: promoting the Welsh language, addressing climate challenges, and advancing diversity and inclusion.

Reporting to the Deputy Director of Equalities and Partnerships, you'll mentor and coach staff specialising in youth engagement and professional development. This forward-looking role requires collaboration with young people, educational institutions, arts organisations, training providers, and employers—developing Wales’s youth arts provision and creative talent pipeline. You'll ensure young people's voices remain central to shaping these initiatives and the future direction of the arts in Wales.

### Principal responsibilities

#### Leadership and Strategy

As part of your role, you will:

* Lead on the creation and implementation of sector specific strategy, with specific focus on young people and skills, that contributes to the Arts Council overall, long term strategy as a management board member,
* Manage & Mentor Relationship Managers, Enablers and Team Coordinators, providing mentorship focused on young people and skills
* Lead cultural development work across the youth arts sector, sharing learning to inform future investment, equalities, and strategic priorities
* Develop and implement the Arts Council's commitment to young people,
* Chair sector group and grant decision-making panels on funding programmes related to young people and skills
* Use data tools effectively to track impact and identify trends in both youth participation and workforce development
* Contribute to a positive working culture through proactive learning, inclusive practice, and environmental responsibility
* Reflect the Nolan Principles of Public Life and the Arts Council's values with a commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion

To deliver your role you will:

* + Ensure Arts Council invests in opportunities for young people to experience high quality arts that inspires and engages
  + Identify and respond to areas of most need for young people, especially those living with poverty and facing life challenges
  + Build partnerships with key stakeholders to develop training and skills development opportunities in the sector
  + Develop mechanisms for youth voice to be embedded in Arts Council's decision-making at all levels

#### Key Relationships

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

* Arts organisations and youth networks focused on youth arts, talent development and engagement
* Directors and Arts Council colleagues working in related areas including Creative Learning, workforce strategies and artform development
* Welsh Government departments supporting young people, skills development, and creative industries
* Education partners, creative and cultural sector employers, industry bodies, unions, and professional associations

#### Youth Engagement & Strategic Leadership

* + Develop a comprehensive strategy for young people's engagement with arts and culture
  + Lead the implementation of recommendations from the youth arts report, including creating a lottery funding strand, leadership development, and national networks
  + Establish mechanisms for authentic youth voice within Arts Council's decision-making processes
  + Create frameworks for young people to lead on creation and production of their own art
  + Design partnerships that provide access to arts opportunities for young people outside school settings
  + Target initiatives toward young people in areas of high socio-economic deprivation and those facing life challenges

#### Skills Development & Training

* + Identify current and future skills needs across Wales’s creative ecosystem
  + Work with partners to develop training frameworks that address future technical, creative, and business capabilities
  + Establish specialist training initiatives for priority skills gaps and anticipated future needs, including digital transformation
  + Develop and implement sustainable apprenticeship opportunities in the arts sector

#### Partnerships & Networks

* + Establish communities of best practice around how arts experiences are created and for young people. Develop regional and national conversations and networks to provide peer support
  + Develop arts employer networks committed to skills development and youth opportunities
  + Create forums connecting arts sector with education provision
  + Represent ACW on national youth and skills forums

#### Funding & Resource Development

* + Design and lead dedicated funding programmes supporting young people and skills development in collaboration with MYFOs and other organisations in the sector
  + Create evaluation frameworks measuring impact of youth and skills initiatives
  + Oversee funding initiatives and grant decision-making related to young people and skills development
  + Help identify partnership funding opportunities that extend resources for the sector
  + Ensure alignment between specific sector needs and budget allocation
  + Approval of purchase orders within delegated authority
  + Manage and monitor assigned budgets, seeking partnership funding opportunities

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:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Essential | Desirable |
| Qualifications | * A degree and/or significant professional experience in this sector |  |
| Knowledge | * Deep expertise in evidence-based youth engagement models and participatory practice, with track record of developing and evaluating programmes that achieve sustained youth involvement * Proven leadership in designing and implementing creative programmers, skills development pathways, and strategic workforce planning initiatives * Proven track record of developing and implementing strategies to remove institutional barriers preventing young people and underrepresented groups from accessing arts opportunities and advancing in creative careers * Established expertise in creative sector talent development, with comprehensive understanding of professional frameworks that support artistic career advancement and industry workforce need | * Expertise in creative careers guidance and progression frameworks |
| Skills & Experience | * Demonstrated executive leadership in conceptualising, scaling, and delivering transformational youth arts and skills development programmes with measurable sector-wide impact * Established portfolio of high-impact youth engagement and educational initiatives, with documented success in driving participation, outcomes, and sustainable programme growth * Recognised expertise in designing and implementing comprehensive diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies that transform workforce composition and organisational culture * Advanced expertise in education and training funding ecosystems, with proven success in securing, optimising, and diversifying revenue streams to support large-scale programme delivery * Sophisticated analytical capabilities in workforce intelligence, with demonstrated ability to synthesise complex data into actionable strategic frameworks that drive organisational performance * Exceptional leadership in building and developing high-performing, multidisciplinary teams, with proven mentoring expertise that cultivates talent and drives professional advancement across diverse creative disciplines | * Experience developing creative apprenticeship or traineeship programmes * Project management expertise in educational or skills development settings * Deep knowledge with digital learning methodologies and platforms * Experience securing skills-focused funding or investment |
| Attributes | * Demonstrated commitment to transforming creative sector equity through systematic removal of barriers and creation of sustainable pathways to skills development and career advancement * Sophisticated understanding of youth development needs and employer demands, with proven ability to architect solutions that bridge skills gaps and drive mutual value creation * Strategic collaborative leadership with demonstrated success in building and sustaining complex multi-stakeholder partnerships that deliver transformational outcome * Proven expertise in developing and implementing scalable, evidence-based interventions that address critical skills gaps and drive measurable workforce development outcomes * Passionate advocate and strategic developer of Welsh creative talent, with comprehensive approach to nurturing excellence across all artistic disciplines and career pathways * Results-driven executive with exceptional independent leadership capabilities and proven track record of delivering complex, outcome-focused initiatives that exceed performance targets * Executive presence and commitment to strategic engagement across Wales and nationally, with demonstrated ability to represent organizational interests and build partnerships at the highest 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. |  |