



Board Chair Job Description



Pop Up Projects are a national children's literature development agency and Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation (NPO), working across the UK, Northern Ireland and Ireland. We are seeking applications for the Chair position on our Board of Non-Executive Directors, to step in and take over from our outgoing Chair, Cynthia Davis, Founder & CEO of BAME Recruitment Ltd. This is an exciting opportunity for a dynamic professional who may have held a leadership or executive position in any sector, and has transferable skills to support the growth of our non-profit, which delivers social impact and change through children's literature and publishing enterprises. As we emerge from a challenging period of disruption and innovation, driven by a renewed ambition to create a more balanced portfolio of charitable and commercial products and services, the new Chair will play a pivotal role in supporting the Executive & Creative Director and his team in delivering that ambition, while ensuring good governance. Over a five-year tenure, the Chair will prepare for and host four quarterly meetings, check-in on Board members between meetings, liaise regularly with the Executive & Creative Director to gain a strong understanding of the organisation's activities, opportunities, challenges and risks, and lead the whole Board in establishing a new philanthropic fundraising drive. The right candidate will have passion for or interest in children's literature and publishing but does not need to have professional experience in that world. Would suit someone who is retired, freelance or part-time, i.e. with a little time on their hands during some working weeks.

"It's been a pleasure and honour to serve as the Chair of this wonderful organisation. The executive and board members are all tremendously talented, and I feel lucky to have served alongside them. Pop Up is truly unique and the work they do is vital. I am so proud of all we

have accomplished over the three years of my tenure as Chair, and I enthusiastically encourage new applicants who want to play a part in Pop Up's ambitious future," Cynthia Davis, Board Chair 2018-2022

ABOUT US & OUR WORK

Pop Up Projects (est 2011) is a non-profit social enterprise with a mission to transform lives through literature and publishing. Through our work we aim to:

1. provide literary experiences and publishing opportunities for writers and illustrators of all ages, including children and young people;
2. engage and inspire, nurture and invest in writers and illustrators from under-represented and excluded backgrounds;
3. contribute to a more inclusive canon of children's books, so that more young readers can find themselves and discover others in the books they read.

We achieve these aims by:

- providing courses which offer routes into children's literature and publishing for illustrators and writers of all ages, including children and young people;
- publishing inclusive children's books by the illustrators and writers we discover through our courses.

Our flagship offer is **Pathways Into Children's Publishing**, a two-year course for aspiring illustrators of colour and illustrators with disabilities, delivered in partnership with and investment from 24 publishers and universities. We also offer one-off illustration masterclasses, short courses and professional development events via our **Pathways Plus** programme. In the coming years we will be widening opportunities for writers within both of these programmes.

We also produce and present a range of other **Pathways Projects** in diverse contexts - such as **The Rainbow Library**, a UK and Ireland-wide literature and publishing programme for and with LGBTQ+ young people.

Our first collection of children's titles, **10 Stories to Make a Difference**, was published in 2021. Between 2024 and 2025 we plan to publish two new lists: eight LGBTQ+ inclusive titles developed out of The Rainbow Library; and ten titles exploring the climate emergency, illustrated by mentees from the Pathways Into Children's Publishing course.

We are currently in the process of rebranding and will be relaunching our website www.pop-up.org.uk in the summer.

We have a team of four full-time and four part-time staff, and expect to recruit two more full time positions within 2022. We are governed by a Board of Non-Executive Directors who volunteer their time to offer strategic support and ensure accountability. Because we are a CIC (and not a charity) we take a business-minded approach to achieving our charitable mission; this greatly informs our ethos, making us enterprising and ambitious.

Since 2011 we've secured almost £6,000,000 from funders and sponsors including: Paul Hamlyn, Esmée Fairbairn and Rothschild foundations; Arts Councils in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; National Lottery Community Fund and the Heritage Lottery;

Bloomberg, Linklaters and The Guardian; publishers including PenguinRandomHouse, Harper Collins, Scholastic and Oxford University Press

THE ROLE OF OUR BOARD

The Board's primary and statutory remit is to review and question, advise on and enhance key areas of the company's work. These include:

- Vision, mission, aims, objectives
- Financial projections and accounts
- Business planning including fundraising
- Impact and legacies
- Policy development
- Legal matters

The secondary but perhaps more important role of our Board is three-fold:

1. To support and empower the Executive & Creative Director and his team in achieving the best possible experiences and outcomes for our beneficiaries and stakeholders;
2. To enhance our development of products and services, and the growth of a sustainable and thriving enterprise, by contributing ideas and insights, expertise and advice, connections and introductions, as well as monitoring and navigating risk;
3. To actively take part in fundraising through a Board-led philanthropic donations strategy*, and - where relevant - provide input and advice especially in the areas of sponsorship approaches and sales strategies.

*It is not a requirement for Board members to bring existing connections to philanthropic donors to the organisation - though members with such connections will be especially welcome - but all members will contribute to our campaigns to cultivate new donors. Ideally, our Chair will be experienced at or comfortable and confident in making approaches, speaking at events, and in contributing (in a light touch way) to relationships with generous donors.

THE ROLE OF THE CHAIR

The Chair will need to gain understanding of CICs, their governance structures and statutory requirements. They will hold the Board and Executive & Creative Director to account for the organisation's mission and aims. The Chair will ensure that the Board functions as a unit, and that Board members are able to support the Executive & Creative Director and his team to achieve both short- and long-term goals; this will involve ensuring that each Board member fulfills their duties and responsibilities for the effective governance of the organisation,

Responsibilities include:

- Liaising with the Board secretary, Board finance lead and Executive & Creative Director to prepare for each quarterly Board meeting, ensuring that meetings are well-planned, meaningful and reflect the responsibilities of trustees;

- Chairing those meetings effectively and efficiently, bringing impartiality and objectivity to the decision-making process, and deputizing to others whenever unavailable to attend;
- Reviewing and signing off Board meeting minutes within two weeks of each meeting;
- Ensuring, with the Board finance lead, that the Board fulfills its duties to ensure sound financial health of the organisation;
- Being aware of major risks and associated opportunities, ensuring that systems are in place to manage and mitigate those risks as well as take advantage of opportunities;
- Taking an active role in philanthropic fundraising, supporting the Board lead/s on this initiative, and encouraging the whole Board to achieve annual targets and build long-term relationships with donors;
- Support in recruitment, appointment and onboarding of Board members;
- Ensure that the Board is regularly refreshed and incorporates the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to govern and lead the organisation effectively;
- Ensuring Board membership is diverse and inclusive, including by sustaining representation of people of colour on the Board (currently 50%);
- Encouraging positive change where appropriate, and addressing and resolving any significant conflicts within the Board or between staff where appropriate;
- Acting as a spokesperson for the Board and the organisation as a whole.

This requires a time commitment of 12-15 days per year. In recognition of this, and to support applicants who may not be from affluent backgrounds, we can offer a stipend of £500 per quarter/£2,000 per year.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Anyone joining our Board will be passionate about and committed to transforming the lives of especially children and young people through literature, and ensuring there is greater inclusion and representation in publishing. Diversity is at the heart of our model in terms of the places we work, the artists we commission, the audiences we reach, as well as our organisational culture. We strive to ensure diversity at both staff and Board levels and therefore welcome expressions of interest from applicants from backgrounds that are often under-represented at Board levels, especially people of colour, disabled people and people who identify within the LGBTQ+ spectrum. We are also currently expanding our work nationally and would particularly welcome applicants who are based in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

MAKING AN APPLICATION

If you are interested in applying for this role, please submit a short 'expression of interest' letter, addressing the following:

- Your professional history and areas of expertise you might bring to the Board
- Any personal qualities, passions and ideas you might bring to the organisation
- Why you think you might be the right fit as Chair of the Board
- Why you want to champion the values and aims of our organisation

Email expressions of interest to our Executive & Creative Director, Dylan Calder, at dylan@pop-up.org.uk. If you'd like to discuss this opportunity before making an application, please let Dylan know and if appropriate he will arrange a call with you.