



Director, National Poetry Centre Job Description

Hours:	Full-time
Location:	Leeds with hybrid working and regular travel for meetings
Reporting to:	Ruth Pitt, Chair of Board of Trustees
Contract:	Staff post, subject to secured funding
Salary	£50,000 plus, depending on experience

ABOUT THE NATIONAL POETRY CENTRE

The National Poetry Centre will be a major national cultural destination, based in Leeds and reaching out to the world – giving voice to people from every community in every corner of the UK. It is the brainchild of Simon Armitage, who is actively engaged in the project. The Centre will be the principal legacy project of his tenure as Poet Laureate, which ends in 2029.

Supported by a board of trustees and key stakeholders, a feasibility study has identified a building to house the NPC and a concept design has been produced. The NPC established itself as a charity in 2022 and there is a substantial commitment to the project from Arts Council England, Leeds City Council and the University of Leeds, which owns the building.

Fundraising and planning are underway with a view to providing a dynamic programme of events from 2024 and opening the doors of a physical building by the end of 2027.

Poetry is the most accessible and democratic of art forms, common to all languages and cultures and enjoying an international boom in popularity as people seek ways to express themselves and make sense of our challenging world. A UK centre would elevate the position of poetry in national life, becoming the spiritual home for poetry as it is written, read, spoken and performed up and down the country.

The project will breathe life back into a historic Leeds landmark, Trinity St. David's, a former church and iconic nightclub currently lying empty in the middle of a regeneration area, on the edge of the University of Leeds campus and beside a major public transport route in the heart of the city.

The building will be reimagined to create:

- An environmentally sustainable building with open access for all
- 250 seat auditorium
- Digital learning area
- Cafés, bookshops and vibrant social spaces
- Workshops and performance spaces
- Writing rooms and quiet areas
- A broadcast studio
- Room for exhibitions
- Important collections and archives
- Shared offices and workspaces for poetry, literature and associated organisations

In an increasingly virtual world, the National Poetry Centre will bring people together– to meet, perform, write, research, spend time or just pass through. This will be an inclusive space for the people of Leeds to share with visitors from around the country and across the world.

The centre - initially in host locations and eventually in its new home - will drive an ambitious programme of engagement for schools, young people and communities, helping them amplify their voice and boosting confidence to explore ideas, play with words, speak and perform in public. We are committed to supporting oracy, literacy and creative skills across the UK.

ABOUT THE ROLE

The Director will be a dynamic and visionary leader responsible for establishing and guiding the NPC towards its proposed opening in 2027 and beyond. This role involves strategic leadership, creative direction, financial management, an energetic presence in Leeds, stakeholder engagement and team management to ensure the NPC's growth and sustainability.

You will work with the NPC trustees to drive forward plans for its organisational development and to establish relationships with diverse partners in order to progress both the capital building project and programming of the NPC. The Poet Laureate retains a keen interest in all aspects of the project and will have regular input at every stage.

THE POST IN SUMMARY

Strategic Leadership and Management:

- Lead and manage the establishment of the NPC, setting organisational, creative, and financial goals
- Oversee the recruitment of and manage the NPC team

Good governance:

- Ensure effective legal and financial compliance in collaboration with relevant teams
- Regularly report to and support the Board of Trustees
- Work in tandem with the board and be accountable to them

Fundraising and Financial Management:

- Devise and implement a detailed fundraising strategy (with support as needed)
- Progress existing funding applications and initiate new bids
- Collaborate with accountants to manage budgets, forecasts, and annual accounts

Stakeholder Engagement and Partnership Development:

- Foster relationships with principal stakeholders and national/local delivery partners for the capital project
- Build partnerships with cultural organisations for creative and commercial collaborations
- Ensure the NPC upholds equity and inclusivity standards

Programme Development:

- Develop a pre-opening creative programme
- Expand the Young Laureates programme nationally
- Create and lead a team for local, regional, and national activities from 2024
- Develop a long term creative and financial plan for the expected opening in 2027

Communications and Marketing:

- Identify and secure the services of a marketing organisation to work with the NPC
- Oversee all communications and marketing activities

Project Management:

- Ensure the timely completion of the capital project by 2027
- Design and implement a long-term plan for the NPC's opening and future operations
- Produce detailed budgets and timelines from April 2024 onwards

PERSON SPECIFICATION

To achieve the above outcomes, we seek a candidate who can evidence the following knowledge, skills and experience:

1. Exceptional communication and advocacy skills, both written and in-person
2. Strong project management experience, working on complex projects with multiple stakeholders including capital development
3. Strong organisational skills with excellent time management, ability to multitask and consistently meet differing deadlines
4. Good working knowledge of the cultural landscape (including in Yorkshire)
5. Proven commitment to diversity and equality
6. Commitment to involving local communities in the project
7. Proactive problem solving
8. Experience of working in the culture sector
9. Excellent and effective business and administrative skills, including use of IT
10. Good finance skills commensurate with the role

YOUR APPLICATION

If you wish to have an informal conversation about the role before applying, please contact Administration Manager Lily Stead:

lily.stead@nationalpoetrycentre.org.uk

If you wish to apply, please email your CV and a letter describing how you meet each of the numbered person specification requirements above to lily.stead@nationalpoetrycentre.org.uk. The closing date for applications is midnight on 29th February 2024, and interviews for short-listed candidates are planned to take place in March 2024.