

CHANGING THE WORLD ONE PLAY ♀ AT A TIME

A woman with grey hair, wearing a patterned blue and white coat, is shown from the waist up. She is looking upwards and to the right, with her right hand raised as if gesturing. The background is a vibrant blue with some blurred lights. The text 'CHANGING THE WORLD ONE PLAY ♀ AT A TIME' is overlaid on the left side of the image. The word 'WORLD' has a globe icon where the letter 'O' would be. The female symbol '♀' is used in place of the word 'WOMEN'.

Executive Director
Recruitment Pack 2025

About Us

We are an award-winning women's theatre company dedicated to equality, participation, and change. We work collaboratively with charities and community leaders to co-create theatre with women and girls locally, nationally, and internationally. Our work has garnered global acclaim for transforming our local communities through art and co-creation.

Our feminist practice informs our governance, operations, and artistic processes, shaping how we engage with audiences. Our activism is rooted in partnerships, particularly with the West End Women and Girls Centre, where we are based. Our productions have a wide reach, with notable works like *Mycelial* (cocreated with sex worker activists), *Key Change* (a portrayal of women in prison) and *Rattle Snake* (used by the company and others to train the police) achieving international recognition. To date we have performed in 159 venues, reaching over 192,000 people (nearly 8k per month), with 38% of our audiences being those furthest from the arts.



“Open Clasp plays: over its 20-plus years the company has created the most substantial and ambitious body of work putting the lives of working-class women on stage in British theatre history.”

Kate Chedzoy and Rosalind Haslett for Routledge Companion to Literature and Feminism



A Welcome from Chief Executive and Artistic Director



Thank you for your interest in working with us.

I co-founded Open Clasp in 1998. We are based at Westend Women & Girls Centre in the heart of Newcastle Upon Tyne. We work regionally, nationally and internationally. We meet communities of women where they are at, and we create the best theatre we can to change the world one play at a time. We are a political feminist theatre company using the arts to create social change. We believe in justice; equity and over the past 26yrs we have seen the power of the arts to change hearts and minds.

We are excited to be looking for an experienced executive leader who is passionate about the power of theatre to grow the diversity of who makes great art. We seek to complement our talented team of Artistic Director, Executive Producer, Producer, Finance Manager, Marketing Assistant, trustees, Gold Star Members and cocreators.

You will support a period of co-creating and celebrating with our community in a place-based context, sharing stories from our community to others nationally and internationally through our award-winning approach to co-creation and distribution.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Catrina McHugh MBE, Hon DLitt

Company Structure

Staff Team

Artistic Director / CEO: Catrina McHugh MBE, Hon DLitt
Executive Director: Ellie Turner (outgoing)
Executive Producer: Carly McConnell
Producer: Erin Connor
Finance and Office Manager: Rachel Errington
Marketing Assistant: (Starts 3rd March 2025)

Associate Artists

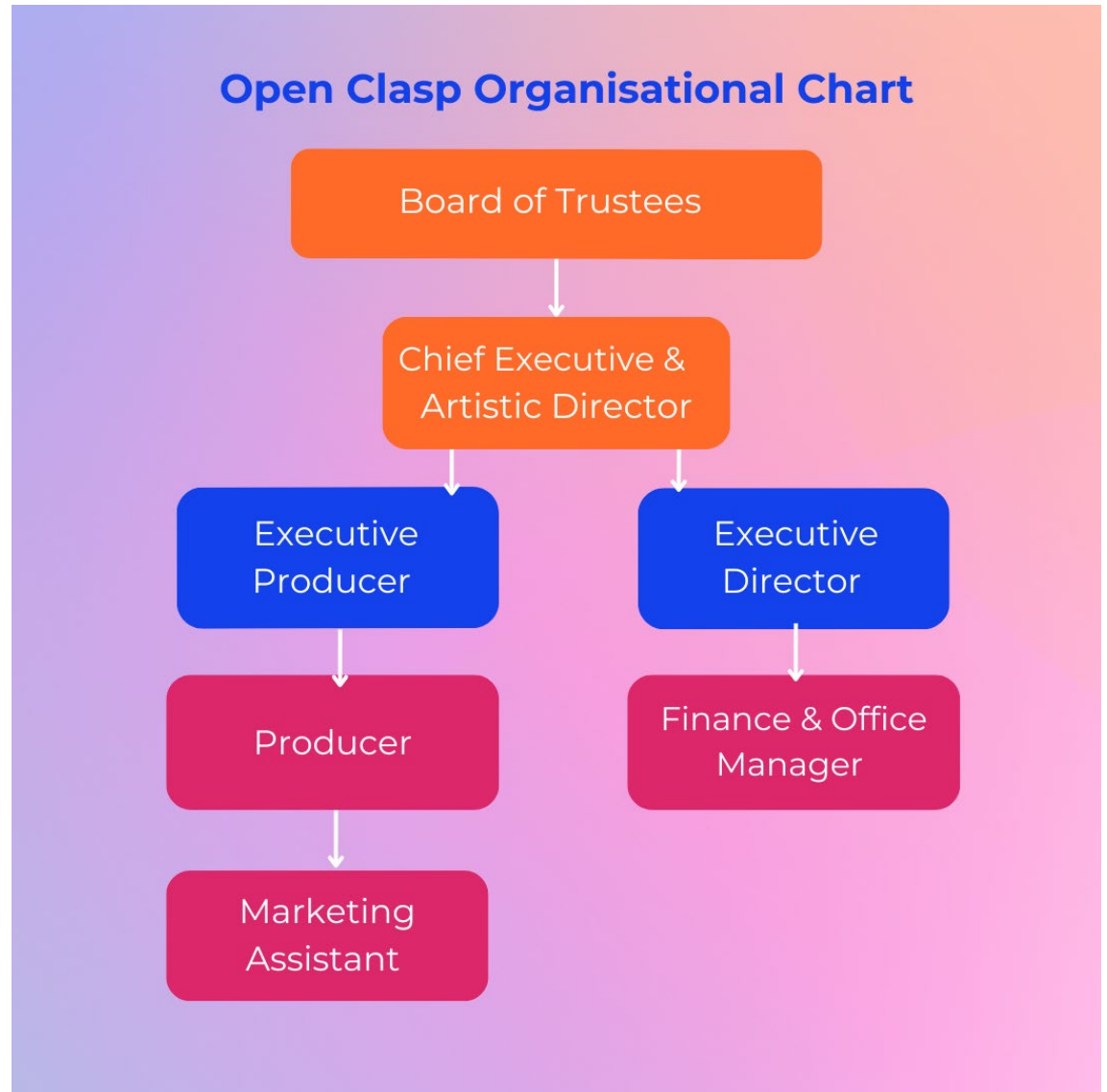
Jessica Johnson
Rachel Glover
Zoe Lambert
Christina Berriman Dawson

Trustees

Chair: Jacqui Kell
Lara Jonah
Francesca Cross
Hayley Calvert
Leanne Sutherland
Charlotte Bennett
Kate Sweeney

Patrons

Dame Catherine Healy
Carol Tambor
Charlie Hardwick



A woman with short dark hair, wearing a yellow and black plaid shirt, is shown in profile from the chest up, reaching towards a green plant. The background is a textured wall with a purple and blue color gradient. The lighting is soft, highlighting the woman's face and the texture of the wall.

**“I am so proud to
have been giving
the opportunity to
be part of this
production. We
have been
listened to.”**

Co-Creator on Lasagna

Awards & Reviews



“A touching, empowering work that hits the hat-trick of great script, direction and performance”

The Stage for *Key Change*



“It is rich in contradictory humanity and a touching portrait of a mother and daughter bond”

The Guardian for *don't forget the birds*

2024 International Purple Ribbon Award for Raising Public Awareness of Domestic Abuse through Creativity

2023 Calouste Gulbenkian Award for Civic Arts Organisations - shortlisted for our work transforming our local communities through art and co-creation. *“It is clear to see the impact on a personal level for the women Open Clasp support but also at a policy and political level. We are impressed with Open Clasp’s connections and partnerships with the social sector. We wish Open Clasp every success in continuing to raise awareness and effect personal, social and political change.”*

2023 North East Charity Awards Outstanding Contribution to Social Impact

2023 Big Issue Top 100 Changemakers

2022 Special Commendation Digital Culture Awards for Impact of digital content and distribution strategy.

For much more about what we do take a look at our website www.openclasp.org.uk view our [Annual Reviews](#).

“Open Clasp operates out of a Newcastle women’s centre, and was busy making theatre carefully with participants long before ‘co-creation’ became a buzzword in British theatre and decades before the Let’s Create strategy was a twinkling in Arts Council England’s eye.”

Lyn Gardner, The Stage



Executive Director

Open Clasp is looking for a driven and dynamic, business-minded individual who has a passion for co-creating new theatre.

As a small and dedicated team, we are passionate about building positive and supportive working cultures and this role will lead on strengthening internal structures alongside promoting wider sector change. The Executive Director will be central to ensuring the sustainability of our artistic programme, through an achievable business plan with diversity and inclusivity at its core.

The role will work closely with the Artistic Director and Executive Producer to deliver the programme which is designed to 2030 through developing future sustainable fundraising strategies. The Executive Director will also be responsible for the financial stability and accounting processes of the organisation, feeding into the Board, and providing impeccable organisational management for all Open Clasp staff.

Open Clasp is passionate about supporting women to progress within the industry. We have a flexible/hybrid model of working and are happy to discuss part-time applications and offer development support to anyone who is taking a career step into this Executive role.

Responsible to: Artistic Director

Working closely with: Executive Producer & Open Clasp Team



Job Description

Title: Executive Director

Responsible to: Chief Executive & Artistic Director

Salary: £39,826 (E9) - £44,854 (E14) pro rata

Purpose of the Job

The Executive Director holds a senior leadership position combining strategic management, operational oversight and external relations to ensure the organisation is in a position to fully exploit strategic opportunities and partnerships, is financially robust, and that systems and processes are in place which make the organisation fit for purpose as it continues to grow and thrive.

Duties and Responsibilities

Strategic and Business Leadership

- Set the strategic direction for the company and manage artistic and financial risk to ensure the company is a sustainable and effective business.
- Set and agree the annual budget ensuring that income targets are met, costs controlled, and opportunities maximised.
- Drive the process of developing, reviewing and monitoring the organisation's Business Plan and NPO to ensure their successful implementation and evaluation.
- Deliver the requirements of Arts Council, including ensuring that Open Clasp are delivering on the Investment Principles and Let's Create Strategy.
- Manage and support recruitment of key staff. Ensure regular appraisals and a training strategy are implemented.
- Regularly report to the board of trustees through reports, subcommittees and attend board meetings.
- Lead on the governance of the Finance Sub-Committee, creation and development of reports and reporting for the sub-group and then to board.
- Maintain and increase the company's profile regionally, nationally and internationally, without losing contact with the grass root support from the local communities.

- Provide leadership in the positive health and wellbeing of the staff team, co-creators, board and freelancers.

Strategic Partnerships and Profile

- Lead on the relationship with Arts Council and be Open Clasp's key contact with ACE's Relationship Manager
- Keep abreast of developments in arts and cultural policy and the women and girls' sector and pursue opportunities for the benefit of Open Clasp
- Build productive external partnerships with community networks, organisations and groups, stakeholders and potential funders and co-producers which can be leveraged to benefit Open Clasp.
- Devise and deliver innovative ways to engage partners so that more women and girls are given opportunities to thrive as participants, audiences and stake holders.
- Lead on relationships with key stakeholders and partners, regionally, nationally and internationally, including partner venues, universities, businesses, local authorities, public sector and third sector organisations
- Promote Open Clasp externally and continuously strive to raise the organisation's profile
- Work with the Executive Producer to oversee Open Clasp's marketing and audience development strategy so that audiences are built across the venues we tour to and to ensure we continue to reach non-traditional audiences.
- Work with a PR consultant to oversee the development and implementation of a press strategy.

Fundraising and Resource Development

- Provide organisational and financial leadership for the Company
- Oversee agreements and contracts across all of Open Clasp's productions and activities.
- Identify and implement a fundraising and Income Generation strategy for the organisation including via trusts and foundations, commissions, training packages, assets, sponsorship and individual giving
- Generate and oversee the generation of funding bids with support from the wider team and Finance and Office Manager
- Ensure excellent relationships with funders are established and maintained

Operations and Business

- Oversee and take ultimate responsibility for all financial matters including overseeing the preparation and presentation to the Board of management accounts, detailed annual budget, cashflow forecasts and production budgets.
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring all policies and procedures are in place, up to date and regularly reviewed by the board
- Ensure compliance with all relevant legislation, including employment law, charity law, company law, health & safety legislation and data protection
- Ensure efficient and effective financial management systems are in place for the organisations
- Line manage staff to help them realise their full potential to maximize results and opportunities for the organisation
- Oversee an effective appraisal system for all staff
- Ensure all staff have up to date contracts and are aware of the organisation's policies and procedures
- Ensure that Open Clasp is committed to and delivering on our Equality, Inclusivity and Diversity policy and practice and meeting best practice for employees as set out in ITC and Bectu Collective Agreement.

Governance

- Work with the Artistic Director and trustees to ensure the company maintains the highest standards of governance and strategic planning.
- Ensure Open Clasp is compliant with all statutory requirements including the Charity Commission and Companies House.
- Report to the Board on all operational, financial and strategic matters.
- Lead on the governance of the Finance Sub-Committee, creation and development of reports and reporting for the sub-group and then to board.
- Alongside the Artistic Director, work with the Chair of the Board to plan Board meeting agendas
- Produce papers for board meetings in a timely manner
- Assist the Board in identifying, recruiting, retaining and developing Trustees

- Ensure effective policies and plans are in place, regularly reviewed and implemented to promote equal opportunity, access and diversity and compliance with best practice and legal requirements, including employment law, data protection and environmental sustainability.
- Attend board meetings and assist the Trustees to discharge their legal responsibilities, both as charity trustees and company directors, ensuring that they receive accurate and timely information enabling them to make informed decisions.



Person Specification

Essential Skills and Experience

1. Commitment to the aims and ethos of Open Clasp Theatre Company
2. Experience of strategic management and business planning
3. Experience of carrying financial responsibility and ensuring the delivery of financial targets.
4. Excellent financial management skills and experience of budget management.
5. Proven experience of fundraising and resource development and a broad knowledge of public and private funding for the arts
6. Experience of partnership working with a range of stakeholders including ACE and Boards of Trustees
7. Strong leadership and interpersonal skills to deal effectively with internal and external relationships.
8. Experience of managing staff
9. Excellent organisational and administrative skills
10. Excellent people management and motivational skills.
11. Experience in promoting diversity and inclusion.

Desirable

1. Experience of the charitable not-for-profit sector, including experience of Arts Council England funding and NPO applications.
2. Experience of working with a Board of voluntary trustees in a community-based organisation
3. Experience of working with creative people and projects
4. Ability to work across sectors, for example arts, health, education and other industries
5. Understanding of appropriate press and media relations
6. Knowledge of ITC/Equity Contract
7. Knowledge of Charity Commission and Company House Requirements
8. Ability to maintain good humour under pressure

Terms and Benefits

Job Title:	Executive Director
Reports to:	CEO/Artistic Director
Responsible for:	Finance and Office Manager
Salary:	Open Clasp Pay Scale £39,826 (E9) - £44,854 (E14) pro rata
Contract:	Permanent contract
Probation Period:	Six months during which notice period is one month on either side
Holidays:	28 days holiday a year pro rata plus bank holidays
Hours:	37 hours per week. Occasional evening and weekend work essential. Flexible/Hybrid working available
Notice Period:	3 months, increasing by 1 week per year following 4 years' service
Pension:	An auto-enrolment Group Personal Pension Plan is in place with contributions matched by the company in line with regulations.
Location:	Open Clasp's office at West End Women and Girls Centre, Elswick, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 6SQ

Please note that, as the role will involve financial responsibility and may involve working with vulnerable adults, the successful applicant will be subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Application Process

The post is open to women only (exempt under the Equality Act 2010 Schedule 9, Part 1).

Please send us your CV and a covering letter.

Your covering letter should address: why you are interested in the role of Executive Director at Open Clasp? And evidence your ability to fulfil the position and meet the Person Specification.

Your CV should include: two referees who know you in a work context.

Please also submit completed Equal Opportunities Form alongside your CV and covering letter and send to recruitment@openclasp.org.uk with the subject line: Executive Director.

Applications must be received by **12 noon on 28th February 2025**

Interviews will be held on **Thursday 20th & Friday 21st March 2025** in Newcastle upon Tyne

Guidance Notes

If after reading all the supporting information you would like an informal chat about the role or the company, please contact Catrina McHugh MBE catrina@openclasp.org.uk


If you require this pack in a different format, please contact recruitment@openclasp.org.uk

When shortlisting we are looking for how closely your application meets the criteria set out in the Person Specification. We can only offer feedback for shortlisted applicants.

Important Documents

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

Most Recent Accounts

A woman in a dark, textured coat stands on a stage, gesturing with her hands as if speaking. In the background, several other people are visible, some sitting at tables and others standing, in a dimly lit room with blue and purple lighting. The scene appears to be a performance or a presentation.

“Open Clasp are a shining example of a smaller arts organisation that is making use of **digital technologies** and art to advocate for change on a national level.”

Fiona Morris, Chief Executive and Creative Director of The Space