

board recruitment

synergy
theatre
project



board recruitment

Synergy is looking to appoint new trustees to the Board who will bring a passion for arts and social justice and a belief in the transformative power of theatre to support the ongoing work of the organisation and to help shape the future growth and direction of the company.

We are interested in people who have knowledge and experience in:

- Law
- Finance
- Digital media
- Prison pathways / Probation
- Social Enterprise
- Artistic programming

We are committed to bringing together people with diverse skills, knowledge, and experience to reflect the work of the company and the change we seek to make. Some groups are under-represented on our board so we would particularly welcome applications from:

- People with lived experience of the criminal justice system. This may include people who have convictions, have served a prison or community sentence, or have family members in prison
- Members of the Global Majority



who we are

Synergy Theatre Project is an award-winning arts and criminal justice organisation. Over the 22 years since the company was founded, we have developed a ground-breaking, interrelated programme of artistic work that builds a bridge from prison to social reintegration, prevents young people from entering the criminal justice system, and inspires change by capturing the imagination and affecting the feelings, behaviours and attitudes of participants and the public. We also seek to influence systemic change in the arts and criminal justice sectors. All of our work supports desistance from crime.

our vision

Synergy believes that theatre can be transformative, change perceptions, and open up new possibilities towards a more positive future. We live in a world where some of the most disadvantaged are over-represented in the criminal justice system and are more likely to suffer social exclusion. Our vision is to work through theatre towards a fairer world where those within or at risk of entering the criminal justice system can discover alternate pathways, desist from crime, and become an integral and meaningful part of society.

Synergy's programme of artistic work harnesses the energy and life experiences of those we work with – prisoners, ex-prisoners, young offenders, and young people at risk of offending – gives them a voice and, in doing so, their dignity back.

Our work provides practical, creative opportunities which develop participants' skills, capabilities, and resilience, builds a bridge from prison to social reintegration, provides vital support to rehabilitation, and seeks to prevent young people from entering the criminal justice system.

We do this through

- Producing high quality theatre and film for prisons, theatres, and schools, that uniquely bring together professional artists with prisoners and ex-prisoners to create and perform urgent and authentic work, representing unheard voices on the stage
- Offering theatre-based training for prisoners and ex-prisoners through Synergy Studio, with its focus on creative development, progression routes, and pathways into education, training, and employment
- Challenging mindsets, unlocking creative potential, and offering alternative pathways for young people at risk of offending through our Young People's Programme of projects and productions that use the life experience of trained ex-prisoner facilitators
- Engaging the public through performances, debates, access to prisons, and a chance to hear the stories of those involved in the criminal justice system
- Providing role-play training through Synergy Services, which contributes to professional development for criminal justice sector staff and offers ex-prisoners paid employment, a platform to share their experiences and the opportunity to influence systemic change
- Working to promote the impact of the arts within the rehabilitation and desistance agendas, seeking to influence approaches, to share expertise, and to effect institutional change, and working with mainstream cultural institutions and artists to connect them to new experiences and lives

our core values

excellence

Contemporary practice, high production values, truthful and rigorous work

empowerment

Giving voice, enabling dialogue, inclusive of all experiences and lives

transformation

Transcending expectations, creating change, enriching the mainstream

care

Avoiding stereotypes, acknowledging complexity, offering structure and support



the future

This is an exciting time in the development of the company. Since Synergy was founded 22 years ago, we have built up deep expertise in arts and criminal justice work. We sit with leaders in our field, respected amongst peers and confident of the case we make for the impact of the arts within the desistance and rehabilitation agendas. We believe that, building on the strength of our track record and the quality of our work, our profile can increase further with audiences, key decision makers and opinion formers in both the arts and criminal justice sectors.

Although the impact of Covid-19 has been significant for Synergy, as for the cultural sector as a whole, we have been successful in ensuring the sustainability of the organisation, securing emergency and other funding to mitigate the challenges we faced. Building on our experience we were also able to act swiftly and respond to the needs of our beneficiaries by delivering a range of projects, ongoing and new, online: a national playwriting competition, acting, filmmaking, spoken word, playwriting and comedy courses for prisoners and ex-prisoners; spoken word projects for young people; productions and films made available on YouTube, with over 100,000 views. Online

delivery also enabled us to offer ex-prisoners employment as facilitators on young people's projects.

The focus of Synergy's three-year strategic plan is to grow and develop the company's work, increasing our producing output and artistic profile. We are currently applying for ACE NPO funding to achieve this and enable us to grow the successful Synergy Studio to provide progression pathways for ex-prisoners and young people; to expand Synergy Services to increase our earned income potential and create more employment opportunities for our beneficiaries; to develop our digital capacity to create more access across our programmes.

If you would like to read more about Synergy's work visit [**synergytheatreproject.co.uk**](https://synergytheatreproject.co.uk)

structure and governance

Synergy Theatre Project is a charitable company limited by guarantee governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 18 February 2001. It is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission.

Synergy Theatre Project is led by Esther Baker (founder and Artistic Director) and Jennie McClure (General Manager), and the current board are:

Jules Carey, Partner and Head of Actions against Police and State Team at Bindmans LLP
Paula Hamilton, Arts education specialist and former Deputy Director of Learning at the National Theatre
Clióna Roberts, Independent PR specialising in theatre, dance, and festivals across the subsidised and commercial sectors
Debbie Samuel, Women's Support Worker at Advance Charity and former Synergy member
Jonathan Smith (Chair), Accountant in Public Sector finance
Gaby Sumner, Director of Fundraising at Villiers Park Educational Trust
Catherine Thornborrow, General Manager at the Royal Court Theatre

Expectations for Trustees

- To attend board meetings four times per year at a time that is mutually agreed
- Additional meetings as required
- To attend Synergy productions and events throughout the year
- To undertake an induction on legal responsibilities and any relevant training as required
- The role is a voluntary, unpaid position (travel expenses will be paid as appropriate)

Key Responsibilities

- To advocate for the work of the company
- To support the strategic direction for Synergy in line with the company's ethos and values
- To take responsibility for the governance of the company while delegating management and administration to the Senior Management Team

- To regularly review the charitable purpose and the context in which the company is operating, and to address any issues which may impact on strategy and delivery
- To ensure that the company fulfils the legal and financial requirements of a registered charity as well as applicable standards – including artistic, health and safety, data protection, safeguarding, environmental responsibility and EDI
- To approve strategic plans, budgets, and annual accounts
- To monitor and evaluate the progress of the organisation against its strategic aims, objectives, and financial targets
- To be part of recruitment panels and appraisals as required
- To attend funding meetings as required
- To use their skills, knowledge, and experience to help the Board come to sound decisions and to support the Senior Management Team to deliver excellence

how to express interest

Each board member brings a unique range of skills and experience, and we encourage people from all backgrounds to apply. Previous board experience is not necessary, and we will provide training. We are looking to maintain the quality of Governance and have a breadth and diversity which supports Synergy's activity.

Please express your interest by sending us your CV, the equal opportunities monitoring form ([click here to download](#)) and a short letter (max. one page) telling us why you are interested in becoming a trustee and how your skills, knowledge, and experience — professional and lived — could support Synergy's work. Alternatively, you can send us a video or audio message or presentation instead of a letter. We are happy to receive your expression of interest in whatever form works best for you. Please send to info@synergytheatreproject.co.uk

Closing date

5pm, Monday 20th June 2022

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to meet members of the board and senior management team.

Please contact us if you require any further assistance. We will support any access requirements you have during the recruitment process and ensure that reasonable adjustments are in place.

If you need any further information or would like to discuss the role in advance of applying, please contact info@synergytheatreproject.co.uk

