

board recruitment

synergy
theatre
project



board recruitment

Synergy is looking to appoint a new trustee to the Board to support the ongoing work of the organisation and to help shape the future growth and direction of the company. The new trustee should have a chartered accountancy qualification, or the equivalent, experience of working within the Creative Arts or Charity sectors and be prepared to chair the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee. They should also have an interest in the arts and social justice and a belief in the transformative power of theatre.

Finance, Audit & Risk Committee Chair

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. As some groups are under-represented on our board, we welcome applicants from diverse backgrounds, in particular members of the Global Majority.



who we are

Synergy Theatre Project is an award-winning arts and criminal justice organisation. Over the 25 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 and progression to our Young Studio
- 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 25 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.

The impact of Covid-19 was significant for Synergy, as for the cultural sector as a whole, but we were successful in ensuring the sustainability of the organisation, securing emergency and other funding to mitigate the obstacles we faced, although the persistent cost-of-living crisis and uncertain financial landscape present ongoing challenges. In spite of these challenges, we have demonstrated modest growth over the past three years and gained recognition for our work, including the 2021 The Stage 100 Award for our provision during the pandemic, shortlisted for both the 2022 and 2023 London Youth Awards, and more recently received the 2023 Creative

Circle Award (Bronze, Silver and Gold), 2024 Smiley Charity Film Award and 2024 Offies (Off West End) 'Theatre for Young Audiences' Award. We recently won the Community Award at The Stage Awards 2025.

Our focus over the next three years is to grow and develop the company's work, increasing our producing output and artistic profile. We intend to grow the successful Synergy Studio to provide progression pathways for ex-prisoners and young people; to extend our networks and partnerships in Lambeth where the company has a base at Brixton House; to expand Synergy Services to increase our earned income potential and create more employment opportunities for our beneficiaries.

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:

Keshina Bouri, Associate and criminal defence solicitor at Russell-Cooke LLP

Paula Hamilton, Arts education specialist and former Deputy Director of Learning at the National Theatre

Tyrone Paul, Film production co-ordinator and former Synergy member

Ihsan Rahim, Manager Client Development at S&P Global Commodity Insights (Platts)

Clióna Roberts, Independent PR specialising in theatre, dance, and festivals across the subsidised and commercial sectors

Gaby Sumner, Chief Executive at Villiers Park Educational Trust

Finance, Audit & Risk Committee Chair

Essential criteria

- Understanding of finance, audit and risk management, ideally in a charity or not-for-profit organisation
- Membership of the CCAB (Consultative Committee of Accountancy Bodies) and/or a qualified accountant
- Experience of chairing meetings

Desirable criteria

- Experience in the arts and/or charity sectors
- Understanding of the criminal justice sector
- Experience of holding a trustee or board level role

Under the Charity Commission guidelines, we cannot consider anyone for this position who

- Has unspent convictions for offences of dishonesty or deception
- Is declared bankrupt or subject to bankruptcy restrictions
- Is subject to a debt relief order
- Is disqualified from being a company director

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. 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 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, Friday 21st February 2025

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**

