



TRUSTEE RECRUITMENT PACK

Chisenhale Dance Space (CDS) has been making space for artists to lead, experiment and create for over 40 years. With a powerful legacy and a pivotal role in the development of dance in the UK, CDS has long been a home to some of the country's most radical artists—often supporting their practice well before wider recognition. Since reimagining our model in 2023, we now support over 230 artists annually through our Artist Community, 70% of whom identify as marginalised, including Global Majority, disabled and neurodivergent artists. We are committed to deepening this reach and prioritising equity in all areas of our work.

This is a moment of real possibility. Our building is busier than ever—operating at 80% capacity—and we are actively exploring the development of a third, fully accessible studio site, while continuing to safeguard and expand our current space. With bold new artist-led initiatives like WTF Thursdays, Class Lab, and Scratch Renaissance—our year-long programme revitalising grassroots dance and performance—we are entering a new phase of purpose-driven experimentation, community building, and sectoral change.

CDS is one of three independent charities that form Chisenhale Art Place, located in a former veneer factory on Chisenhale Road alongside our partners, Chisenhale Gallery and Chisenhale Studios. Our ex-warehouse, tucked behind Victoria Park, was home to the influential 'New Dance' movement in the 1980s and '90s, where artists redefined both the form and politics of movement. That radical spirit remains at the core of our identity—reflected in our Artist Community, artist-led programmes, and connection to the community of Bow.

Since 2023, we've made significant progress in developing a more agile business model—one that reflects our values, supports collective leadership, and responds to today's cultural realities. Studio hire remains a vital part of our income, with two main studios offered at some of the most affordable rates in London. We are committed to ensuring that all artists—especially those under-resourced—can access safe, low-barrier space and feel at home with us.

CDS is led by a small, dedicated staff team and a committed board. As we look ahead, we are embedding the same values that shape our artistic work into our governance. Through our Artist Community and Committee models, we've reaffirmed our commitment to enabling marginalised artists and cultural workers to lead—within CDS and across the sector.

We are seeking new trustees to join us—people ready to explore, embrace uncertainty, and help shape a more responsive and equitable way of working. Our board meets quarterly, either online or in person in East London. Trustees serve as our strongest advocates and critical friends. These are voluntary roles, with travel and access costs covered.

You do not need previous board experience to apply. CDS is a place for firsts—many of our trustees, staff, and artists have stepped into leadership for the first time here. If you believe in the power of collectivity and are excited by the prospect of heart-led organisational change, we'd love to hear from you. If you've read this far—perhaps you're just the person we're looking for.

Becoming a Trustee at CDS

About Chisenhale Dance Space

Chisenhale Dance Space (CDS) is a registered charity and artist-led organisation based in East London, with over 40 years of history in experimental, community-rooted dance and performance. We support artists and local communities to develop work that is boundary-pushing, socially engaged, and grounded in lived experience.

CDS operates with a small, experienced core team alongside a wider network of freelancers, project staff, an artist committee, and dedicated volunteers. Governance is overseen by our Board of Trustees, who carry legal and ethical responsibility for ensuring that our work remains aligned with our charitable objectives. Current staff and trustees are listed on our website.

“CDS is an ever morphing, one of a kind place - an incubator for artistic visions, and a platform that facilitates forward thinking conversations. Here we hold brave and caring spaces that nourish experimental beings and their practices with honest intentions.”

Jane Chan, Artist Community



Audience at a Scratch Renaissance evening, 2025

Role of the Board of Trustees

The Board supports the strategic vision and leadership of CDS, ensuring the organisation is:

- Well managed and financially sustainable
- Committed to equity, access, and inclusive representation
- True to its values
- Relevant to our artistic and local communities

Trustees are appointed for a term of three years, renewable for up to three terms. We are committed to maintaining a diverse board that reflects the intersectional identities of the artists and communities we serve, particularly those from Global Majority backgrounds, disabled and neurodivergent artists, and those historically underrepresented in leadership roles within the arts.

Why Become a Trustee?

There are many reasons individuals choose to become trustees. Some of the most common include:

- To give back to the sector and apply their skills in meaningful ways
- To develop personal and professional leadership experience
- To support grassroots change in the arts, community or charitable sectors
- To become part of a dynamic and heritage-rich artistic community
- To work collaboratively with a diverse board and staff team
- To expand professional networks and engage in sector-wide dialogue



Performers at a Scratch Renaissance evening, 2025

Current Trustee Recruitment Focus 2025

We are currently seeking new trustees to strengthen the board's capacity in the following areas:

- **Marketing and Communications**

We are building a strategic, multi-platform communications approach that deepens engagement with our core audiences—artists, experimental audiences, local residents, and sector peers—while also expanding our reach. This includes strengthening our digital presence through thoughtful content creation, accessible design, and targeted campaigns that reflect our artist-led values. We seek to grow capacity in audience development and to align our communications more closely with our programming cycles, advocacy work, and fundraising goals.

- **Campaigning and Advocacy**

CDS has always stood at the intersection of art and social change. As we step into a new phase of development, we are amplifying our role as a campaigning organisation—advocating for the importance of artist-led spaces, equitable sector practices, and the protection of community assets. This includes building strategic alliances, contributing to public discourse, and foregrounding anti-racist and anti-ableist frameworks in all our external communications.

- **Financial Management**

As a small charity with limited core funding, robust financial planning and management is essential. We are seeking trustees and advisors with experience in charity finance, accounting, and budget oversight, to support the organisation in strengthening its financial infrastructure, scenario planning, and compliance. Our goal is to ensure transparent, strategic financial decision-making in service of long-term sustainability and mission alignment.

- **Business Strategy and Entrepreneurialism**

We are working towards a more agile, mixed-income business model that reflects the complexities of the current cultural economy. We are exploring new revenue streams—including creative studio uses, knowledge sharing, and artist-led initiatives—while continuing to operate a highly accessible, affordable space-hire offer. We seek entrepreneurial thinkers who can support our experimentation, challenge assumptions, and bring insight into ethical business models that are regenerative rather than extractive.

- **Property and/or Law**

CDS is one of three organisations within Chisenhale Art Place, and we are currently working on a long-term vision for the building, including the possibility of a capital redevelopment. We welcome expertise in property law, leases, governance structures for shared ownership, and the navigation of legal frameworks affecting charities and cultural spaces. Advisors with this knowledge will play a crucial role in safeguarding our home and shaping its future.

- **Individual Giving and Philanthropy**

As part of diversifying our income, we are developing a more intentional approach to individual giving. This includes cultivating relationships with major donors, testing membership and patronage models, and integrating philanthropic strategy into our overall communications and fundraising plans. We would benefit from trustees with experience in developing giving cultures—particularly in small organisations rooted in social justice and the arts.

“For all of my years living and working in dance in the UK, CDS has steadfastly been at the forefront of radical experimentalism in the form. There have been challenges that we have tried to face that have required us to imagine another way (of operating), and this has been a truly invigorating experience, opening my eyes to the possible alternatives to our existing organisational structures.

I would encourage anyone who believes in a yet to be imagined future to invest the time to be involved in this precious organisation”

Steven Brett, Interim Chair of the Board



Residents taking part in workshop at Chisenhale Street Party, 2024

General Responsibilities of Trustees

- Ensure compliance with the charity's governing documents, charity law and regulation
 - Act in the best interest of CDS, avoiding conflicts of interest and acting with integrity
 - Contribute to strategic planning, vision-setting, and risk management
 - Safeguard the financial health and ethical accountability of the organisation
 - Support the Executive Director and core team to deliver CDS's mission
 - Champion inclusivity, transparency and shared leadership across the organisation
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Expectations and Time Commitment

CDS Board Members are expected to:

- Attend **four quarterly board meetings** (weekday evenings, online or hybrid)
- Participate in the **Annual General Meeting** and occasional artist-led gatherings
- Join **one Board Away Day** per year
- Attend selected CDS events and performances to stay connected to the community
- Take a **proactive lead** in one area of board activity, contributing time each month to support working groups, offer guidance, and initiate relevant workstreams

We estimate the average time commitment is approximately **one day per month**, spread across short meetings, communications and planning activity. This level of engagement ensures the board remains responsive and aligned with the fast-paced developments taking place across the organisation.

Support and Induction

We are committed to making the recruitment process and trustee role accessible and inclusive. CDS will provide:

- A full induction and mentorship process for all new trustees.
- Ongoing learning opportunities and sector engagement.
- Reasonable access support, including travel expenses.
- Flexibility to support participation alongside work, caring or health needs.

Interested? Next steps...

- Read more about each role below, including responsibilities, opportunities, and challenges before applying.
- If you'd like, you can have an informal conversation with us! You can reach out to our Executive Director, Reece McMahon on reece@chisenhaledancespace.co.uk to chat in more detail about the organisation or to be connected with an existing trustee to hear about what it's like to be on the board.
- To apply, email your CV and a 1-page letter of interest to theboard@chisenhaledancespace.co.uk **no later than 1 September 2025**. We welcome recorded voice and video files instead of a written letter if this is a preferable way of applying.
- Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis. **From August 2025**, we will hold informal interviews led by a staff member and existing trustee with shortlisted applicants to ascertain if you / we are a good fit for each other.
- Shortlisted candidates will be invited to observe the next board meeting between **22 September 2025 at 6pm**.
- **October and November 2025**: appointed trustees go through due diligence checks and procedures. Welcome and induction processes.
- Next Board Meetings will be December 2025 and March 2026.

Get in touch! We want to hear from you, no matter how unsure you are if this opportunity is right for you, let's chat.

JOIN US!