

# Orpheus

## Trustee Candidate Information Pack 2025



# Introduction from our Chair

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in being a Trustee of the Orpheus Trust. This application pack and our website tell you what we do but can't tell you much about what it's like to be an Orpheus Trustee. You have to experience it for yourself. Orpheus is everything you would hope and expect to find in a well-run charity working to transform the lives of young adults – but it is more than that. Since becoming Chair in 2022, it has been my joy and privilege to be part of this outstanding organisation. Our learners, volunteers, supporters and staff make Orpheus a very special place.

The Orpheus Centre, was founded by Sir Richard Stilgoe. Through a focus on the arts, it seeks to inspire and empower young disabled adults to live fulfilling and independent lives. Our success was recognised by Ofsted in Spring 2024: they assessed us as Outstanding in all areas.

The Board must ensure that Orpheus' governance is of the same high quality as the teaching, care and support it provides. It does that. Our Board members have diverse backgrounds and careers, but we are united in our commitment to Orpheus' ideals and practice. You will be joining a group of people determined to improve the life chances and experiences of our own students and to challenge the barriers that exist for disabled people everywhere.



It may be unusual, in a candidate information pack, to use a regulator's report to describe an organisation, rather than to write one's own blurb. But the Ofsted report expresses well how exceptional the Orpheus Centre is, and it's surely a positive that it's not just us saying it!

I look forward to working with you to further these aims.

*Howard Webber*

Chair of Trustees, Orpheus

# Further education and skills inspection report



## Inspection of The Orpheus Centre

**Inspection dates:** 20 to 21 March 2024  
18 to 19 April 2024

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Provision for learners with high needs	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Information about this provider

The Orpheus Centre is an independent specialist college based in Surrey. The college uses the arts to provide training and support for young adults aged 18 to 25 years old. All learners have special educational needs and/or disabilities including Down Syndrome, autism and social and communication needs. Learners come from a wide range of local authorities in the United Kingdom. The college provides training and support to develop learners’ confidence and independence and preparation for adulthood. They aim to enable learners to advocate for themselves effectively in adulthood to support their ambitious aspirations.

At the time of the inspection visit, there were 63 learners studying at entry level 3 to level 2. All learners have education health and care plans in place.

## What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

From the start of their time at the college, learners thrive due to the exceptionally well planned and implemented transition activities that prepare them well to move from school to college. Learners settle into the very supportive setting quickly and benefit significantly from staff who promote age-appropriate behaviours and independence. Learners develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need to be successful in their training swiftly.



Learners are highly motivated and ambitious to achieve their aspirations, qualifications and outcomes. They are inspired by the high expectations and ambitions that leaders, trustees and staff promote. Learners personify the values of the Orpheus Centre. They greatly enjoy their learning and become increasingly bold, inclusive and resilient. All learners are polite, encouraging and helpful to each other and staff during their lessons, on work experience and in their free time. They aspire to make the world an inclusive and joyful place.

Learners value the support they receive to become empowered, advocate for themselves and challenge negative behaviours and discrimination. They are supported to lead sessions for their peers in subjects they choose, which help them to appreciate equality and celebrate diversity. For example, learners plan and lead lunchtime clubs for other learners in challenging and interesting subjects such as different religious beliefs.

Learners rightly relish the exceptional, individualised opportunities to extend their interests and talents. For example, learners benefit from one-to-one lessons in performing arts, dance workshops with Sadler's Wells Theatre and visits to film studios such as Pinewood Studios.

Learners feel safe at the college. They benefit significantly from the exceptional training they receive to help them stay safe in the community and in their personal lives. They develop secure knowledge of healthy relationships, online safety and the risks to their safety in the community.

### **What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders have a highly ambitious rationale for the provision they offer. They have created a highly innovative project-based curriculum which provides learners with up-to-date training in arts, creativity and enterprise, along with personal, health and social development. Consequently, learners develop key knowledge, skills and behaviours that prepare them well for their next steps and greater independence in adulthood.

Leaders have developed highly effective relationships with employers within the arts and associated industries. As such, the programmes that leaders offer meet employers' business needs closely. Staff and learners host useful events to help employers understand the benefits of working with disabled employees.

Employers value the skills, motivation and positive attitudes that learners bring to their organisations. For example, learners complete projects to further develop businesses' equality and diversity plans. As a result, learners are confident and successful in applying for and moving on to exciting and relevant next steps such as radio presenting and commissioned artistry.

Experienced staff teach with passion and skill. They apply their expert subject knowledge exceptionally well. They tailor programmes and activities to closely match individual learners' needs so that they make outstanding progress. Staff carefully incorporate core skills such as English and mathematics and employability skills successfully into specialised training and activities so that learners master these essential skills. Staff use an effective range of teaching, learning and assessment methods successfully. Consequently, learners develop the necessary skills for independence and where relevant, prepare to work in their chosen industries and roles.

Learners develop, practise and master creative, technical and academic skills successfully to prepare them for their future working lives. For example, learners complete a staged performance of their project work enabling them to practise performance, stage management and digital skills in a simulated work environment.

Staff provide learners with a wide range of meaningful work opportunities in collaboration with employers and community stakeholders. Leaders make sure that learners have realistic attitudes to future work in the arts. They expose them to roles in associated industries such as catering and administration so that learners gain a wide range of transferrable employability skills.

Staff motivate learners to achieve to the best of their ability and promote high ambitions. Learners benefit from useful careers education, information, advice and guidance throughout their time at the college which helps them to prepare well for the future. For example, learners learn how to apply for roles, share their work and develop marketing tools and skills for becoming self-employed.

All learners achieve high quality, sustainable next steps such as qualifications in further education and employment within the creative arts.

Leaders and trustees continually evaluate the quality of the provision through a range of suitable activities. Exceptionally experienced and specialist trustees provide suitable challenge to leaders to strive for continuous improvement. Leaders take swift and effective action to develop and improve the provision using the information from quality assurance activities and measure the impact of the provision very well.

### **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Full report - <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50249230>



# Further information about Orpheus

Orpheus now has 66 learners, the highest intake to date, which is a testament to the popularity and need for the specialist education which Orpheus offers. There are 21 flats on site and learners come from across the UK.

Performance students have performed in venues all over the country including the Royal Opera House, Royal Albert Hall, Glastonbury Festival, Notting Hill Carnival, the Paralympic Opening Ceremony, the Royal Festival Hall, and have appeared in the hit TV show *Call The Midwife*.

Orpheus visual arts students have been commissioned by professional art organisations and had their work exhibited. Orpheus dancers have performed at many events including the All-England Dance 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala at the London Coliseum.

In 2023 we celebrated Orpheus' 25th anniversary year. We are excited to see what the next 25 years hold for Orpheus.



 Orpheus

# Our Mission

We're focused on inspiring and empowering young disabled students to live fulfilling, independent lives.

# Our Values

We work to demonstrate our values every day and we focus on these in everything we do. Our values are to be joyful, bold, inclusive, resilient and determined, and we encourage all staff, volunteers and students to represent these values. We affectionately refer to them as JOY BIRD.

## Bold

We campaign together on agreed themes, being brave and enabling.

We set each other stretching and achievable targets.

## Inclusive

We are ambitious for young disabled people.

We work hard to make all our spaces accessible for all.

We respect differences.

## Joyful

We celebrate achievements - small and big – celebrating together regularly and frequently.

We seek opportunities for joy, welcoming and modelling a positive attitude.

## Resilient

When challenges arise, we face them together and work out as a team how to overcome them.

When life is difficult, we don't give up; we seek support and look for ways to learn from the experience.

## Determined

We know there will be challenges, but we seek support to overcome them.

We recognise that challenges build our experience and enable us to learn and develop.

We are professional.

# Our Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion

Inclusion is at the heart of what we do and who we are at Orpheus. As well as being one of our core values, it is a huge part of our mission to help young disabled adults thrive every day.

We are committed to increasing diversity and inclusion within our organisation. This means reflecting critically on issues of diversity and inclusion in all we do, identifying and taking appropriate action to reduce inequality, and welcoming challenge.

We welcome applications from anyone able to further Orpheus' mission and values, regardless of disability, ethnicity, heritage, gender, sexuality, religion, socio-economic background or other difference.

We are committed to inclusive working practices, and during the application process we commit to:

- Paying for your travel costs to the office and back for interviews if they are held in person.
- Making any reasonable adjustments – for example ensuring we have sign language interpreters organised in advance if you'd like them.
- Providing this document in Word format readily available to download.
- Offering a first stage interview to disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for the role.

If there is anything else you're concerned about or think we could provide, please let us know.





# About the role

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of Orpheus, developing the organisation's aims, objectives and goals in accordance with the governing document and with legal and regulatory guidelines. For all trustee roles, the following responsibilities and duties apply.

## Main duties and responsibilities

- Ensuring that Orpheus and its representatives function within the legal and regulatory framework of the sectors in which it operates and in line with its governing document.
- Determining the overall direction and development of the charity through clear strategic planning.
- Striving continually for best practice in governance, so as to inspire public confidence and trust in the charity.
- Acting at all times in the best interests of Orpheus, its beneficiaries and its future beneficiaries.
- Ensuring sound management of Orpheus' resources, ensuring expenditure is in line with its objects.
- Promoting and developing the charity in order for it to grow and maintain its relevance to young disabled adults.

# Person Specification – Learning Trustee / Co-Committee Chair

**We have a vacancy on our board for a Learning Trustee who meets the following person specification criteria.**

## Essential

- Substantial experience in educational management at FE level
- Knowledge of the Education Inspection Framework
- Knowledge and experience of quality assurance and improvement planning, to assist Orpheus to maintain our Ofsted Outstanding rating.
- Experience of local authority procedures and understanding of educational funding
- Experience of working with SME or the charity sector
- Flexibility and willingness to visit the Orpheus Centre and support events
- Belief in and support for the vision and aims of the charity
- Knowledge of data protection regulation and compliance

## Desirable

- Knowledge of SEN education
- Knowledge of SEND Code of Practice and Provision for High Needs Learners
- Understanding of employment challenges for disabled people
- Knowledge of the challenges and barriers young disabled adults face in their transition to adulthood
- Oversight of learning and care departments
- Experience of liaising with local authorities
- Experience of working with young disabled adults and/or the performing arts

# Additional information

## Remuneration

This position is unremunerated, but reasonable expenses will be covered.

## Terms of Appointment

Trustees are normally appointed for a three-year period and may be reappointed for up to two further three-year terms.

## Time Commitment

The time commitment is between 10 and 15 days per annum, including four Board meetings including the AGM (mainly in person), four committee meetings (mainly virtual), one or two awaydays and ad-hoc attendance.

## How to Apply

If you wish to apply for this position, please supply:

- A detailed CV setting out your career history, with responsibilities and achievements.
- A covering letter (maximum two sides) highlighting your suitability for the role and how you meet the person specification. Please note that the covering letter is an important part of your application.
- Contact details of two professional referees, together with a brief statement of their relationship to you and over what period of time they have known you; referees will not be contacted without your prior consent.
- Diversity monitoring form - your data will be stored separately from your application and will at no time be connected to you or your application.

If you have any questions or would like to arrange a call to discuss the role, please email [HR@orpheus.org.uk](mailto:HR@orpheus.org.uk) or call 01883 744664 to speak to our Head of HR.

To submit a full application please send your CV and cover letter to:  
[HR@orpheus.org.uk](mailto:HR@orpheus.org.uk).

