

# RECRUITMENT PACK



factory  
international



## Chief Operating Officer / Executive Director

Factory International is the organisation behind Manchester International Festival (MIF) and the landmark new cultural venue, Aviva Studios – a super-flexible space that allows artists to imagine new possibilities, while also providing a meeting place for Manchester's many communities. Partnership is key to our approach, working with a wide variety of a local groups to develop ideas together, and collaborating with arts organisations globally to resource and produce ambitious new projects.

At Aviva Studios we develop and present ambitious new creations by some of the world's leading artists; we work with local communities to involve them in every level of decision making – from the choice of artists and events to our long-term plans; and we provide a home for Manchester creatives, where they can make connections, develop their skills, and take their work to the next level.

Aviva Studios is also a commercial venue, presenting a world-class programme of music and events in its dramatic, acoustically exceptional spaces. All profit from its commercial music activity is re-invested in the development of emerging local artists, and in the provision of free events. All profit from other commercial activity is used to

support the operating costs of the building year-round. We embrace commercial and brand partnerships, all of which support our work with Manchester communities.

### Want to join us?

Our mission is to;

1. **Invent.** To take risk on ambitious new artistic work and on new experiences for audiences, bold in scale and focused on the future.
2. **Tomorrow.** To pioneer new models of sustainability – environmental, human, operational and financial – in all areas of our work.
3. **Together.** To create playgrounds, meeting places, spaces to learn from each other, locally and globally.

We aim always to be aware of our wider context, to complement and not compete with good work that is happening elsewhere, particularly in Manchester.

Front cover photo: Benji Reid: *Find Your Eyes*, May 2025 © Benji Reid

Image: Marina Abramović: *Balkan Erotic Epic* rehearsals, October 2025 © Marco Anelli





## EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Factory International is grounded in our city and engages with the world. We aim to reflect the great diversity of Manchester, and our planet, in all aspects of our work – artists, audiences, staff, participants, board members, and partner companies. We invite and welcome input on how we can do this effectively from the many individuals and communities with whom we aim to work in ever more exciting ways.



**John McGrath**

Artistic Director and Chief Executive,  
Factory International

As of Sep 2025, we have 208 staff – of which 25% are from Global majority backgrounds, 21% declared themselves as having a disability and 33% identified as LGBTQI+.

We are continually reviewing recruitment processes and our internal support for all employees as part of our ongoing commitment to diversifying the workforce in the creative industries.

Factory International has a detailed Equalities Action Plan, which includes an Equalities Working Group, reporting to Executive and Board, and sub-groups with specific communities, including Diasporic Equality & Equity Group, Pride (LGBTQI+) Group, Disability Representation Group, Gender Equality Group and Socio-Economic Mobility Group.

# Chief Operating Officer (COO) / Executive Director (ED)

**SALARY** circa £100-110,000 per annum (dependent on experience)  
**CLOSING DATE** Tues 11 November, noon

## CONTEXT

**The Festival** specifically focusses on **new creations of all scales**, premiering in venues and spaces across the city, with interdisciplinary work central to the programme.

For **Aviva Studios**, the focus is on the **large-scale**, including new productions commissioned and developed by Factory International; significant work, not seen before in Manchester, from around the world; shows that will excite and engage a wide range of local audiences; inventive experiences for children and young people; and projects that explore key issues.

**Online** we are focussed on innovation and collaboration, working with the fullest-possible range of technology and partners to explore the creative potential of digital spaces.

**Across all this work**, we trust artists to take us on unexpected journeys. We do not tell artists what their art should be about, but we look for themes and for learning, and we aim to help audiences explore these new ideas.

At Factory International we want to bring together a talented team of people, we're looking for motivated and passionate people from all backgrounds and skillsets to join our diverse and supportive team. Reaching out into every corner of Manchester and harnessing the talent and energy that is found across the city and beyond. Various pastoral support routes are in place incl additional support for those with caring responsibilities and access to external professional support services with a focus on wellbeing.

## JOB SUMMARY

The COO/ED is a senior leadership role, reporting to the Artistic Director and Chief Executive and working closely with the Board.

The COO/ED provides strategic and operational leadership across the organisation, ensuring core excellence in finance, operations and people. They will play a key role in driving organisational sustainability, financial performance, and cultural ambition, while supporting the delivery of the organisation's mission, values, and artistic programme.

This role directly line-manages\*:

- Finance Director
- Director of People and Culture
- Operations Director
- Business Governance: Governance, reporting, legal, insurance, risk, Executive Support
- Director of Producing & Programme
- Technical Director

*\*According to the sector experience and strengths of the candidate Producing and Technical Departments and/or Business/Governance may or may not sit under this role.*



# RESPONSIBILITIES

## Strategic Leadership

- Act as a key member of the Executive Team, contributing to Factory International's overall strategy, business planning, and long-term sustainability
- Provide leadership in embedding commercial and financial priorities while upholding the organisation's cultural and social mission
- Champion inclusion, diversity, and sustainability in all aspects of operations and leadership

## Stakeholder & Partnership Development

- Act as a senior ambassador for Factory International with external stakeholders, funders, and partners
- Support the Executive Team in building strong relationships with commercial partners, funders, local authorities, and cultural networks
- Contribute to strategies that grow income, partnerships, and reputation locally, nationally, and internationally

## Finance

- Provide strategic oversight of financial management through the Finance Director, ensuring robust systems, controls, and reporting are in place
- Support delivery of commercial and partnership income targets
- Ensure financial transparency, compliance and strategic use of resources

## People & Culture

- Provide leadership to the Director of People and Culture, ensuring effective workforce planning, staff development, and wellbeing initiatives
- Champion an inclusive organisational culture where all staff feel valued, respected, and supported
- Embed effective performance management and professional development across all teams

## Operations

- Oversee the delivery of facilities, operations, security, audience experience, and health & safety through the Operations Director
- Ensure operational resilience for both day-to-day activity and large-scale events

## Business Governance, Legal & Risk

- Oversee business support function covering governance, legal, insurance, risk management, and executive support
- Act as Company Secretary (or support this function) ensuring compliance with statutory requirements and best practice and transparency across the organisation
- Ensure efficient structures, systems, and communication across all business areas

## Technical Production & Producing

- Oversee the Technical Director, ensuring world-class standards in technical delivery across theatre, music, and events
- Lead and support the Director of Producing & Programme, ensuring strong planning, delivery, and resourcing of the artistic and commercial programme
- Ensure that both technical and producing teams are fully aligned with organisational priorities and artist and audience expectations





## General

- Actively engaging with the organisation's vision and policies regarding equality, representation and inclusion, artistic ambition, participation and engagement, health and safety, sustainability, reporting evaluation and monitoring
- Training and talent development is central to the way that Factory International work. All job roles are expected to contribute to our training and development activity, contributing time to supporting our training programmes on site and occasionally off site
- To work closely with the Executive and Senior Management Team to aid the development of the overall vision, direction and tone for Factory International
- Any other duties that are commensurate with the post

## FUTURE FLEXIBILITY

Factory International is currently undergoing a significant period of organisational change as we grow and develop to operate the venue. Any new appointees will be required to show a flexible approach to this process – which may involve revisions around job description, titles, roles and departmental structures

# PERSON SPECIFICATION

## ESSENTIAL

- Significant senior leadership experience in a complex organisation with a track record of delivering strong financial strategy and performance at scale
- Experience in managing diverse teams and senior professionals across multiple functions
- Proven ability to lead inclusively, champion diversity, and foster organisational culture
- Highly developed interpersonal and communication skills with the ability to influence at all levels
- Understanding and knowledge of governance, risk, compliance, and legal frameworks relevant to cultural and commercial organization

## DESIRABLE

- Understanding of producing, technical production, and artistic programme delivery in a live venue context\*
- Financial Qualification
- Experience working within both not-for-profit and commercial environments
- Experience within arts, culture, live events, or commercial venues
- Strong networks across arts, culture, live music, or creative industries
- Experience of capital projects or significant organisational change
- Familiarity with Manchester and/or regional and national cultural networks

## ATTRIBUTES

- Strategic thinker with the ability to deliver operational excellence
- Collaborative and inclusive leader with a people-centred approach
- Commercially astute, with strong financial literacy
- Calm under pressure, with excellent judgement and problem-solving skills
- Creative and entrepreneurial thinker with commitment to the organisation's values of equity, inclusivity, and sustainability



# TERMS AND CONDITIONS

## SALARY

circa £100-110,000 per annum (dependent on experience)

## FLEXIBILITY

Factory International has a wide range of projects happening at differing times, with many of our roles requiring some capacity to work outside of usual office hours. This is taken into consideration when designing job descriptions and setting salaries.

We aim to support all staff to work flexibly and according to their capacity and work closely with staff members to ensure a manageable workload.

## PROBATION

There will be a six-month probationary period for this position, during which your notice period will be one month. The notice period will increase to six month once the probationary period is complete

## STAFF BENEFITS

- Annual leave entitlement is 25 days a year plus public holidays (pro rata dependent on hours of work)
- Pension: Auto enrollment begins three months after start date and payments are matched for the first 5% of employee's contribution
- Factory International offers a travel loan scheme and cycle to work scheme via salary sacrifice
- All employees have access to an Employee Assistance programme operated by [Medicash](#)
- Medicash Health Plan: auto enrolment begins after three months service for all eligible employees
- We are committed to supporting employees with their personal development, regularly offering organisation-wide training such as Carbon Literacy, BSL or Mental Health First Aid, along with department specific and individual training opportunities
- Factory International have a Staff Development Fund - £200pa accessible to eligible employees who have passed their probation - for tickets, events, training, or development opportunities

*During recruitment, the selection panel will be shortlisting based on what qualities, skills and experience you may bring to the role. The attached job description is an overview of the type of work the successful candidate will undertake and is not an exhaustive list.*



# GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

Factory International is committed to equality for everyone and we encourage you to apply no matter what your age, caring responsibilities, disability, gender, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation.

**Factory International is an inclusive employer. We value difference and recruit by merit based on fair and open competition. We welcome candidates from all backgrounds and from all sectors.**

We are particularly committed to supporting applications from individuals with backgrounds or social groups that are currently underrepresented in the creative industries – including those within South Asian communities, African and Caribbean communities and Deaf and disabled people, as well as individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

**Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to Factory International on this appointment.**

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at [www.saxbam.com/appointments](http://www.saxbam.com/appointments) using code **JBWSA**.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring\* form.

The closing date for applications is noon on **Tuesday 11 November 2025**.

\* Please complete the equal opportunities questionnaire as part of your application (uploaded as an additional document). The purpose of collecting this data for our clients is to build an accurate picture of the make-up of the workforce and to encourage equality and diversity. Your equal opportunities information will not form part of any selection or promotion process and will not be disclosed to the selection panel.

## GDPR personal data notice

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

## Due diligence

Due diligence will be carried out as part of the application process, which may include searches carried out via internet search engines and any public social media accounts. Factory International are committed to safeguarding and protecting the people that use our facilities, engage in our activities and events, creating a setting where everyone feels welcome and safe. Where roles are subject to a safer recruitment process this will include scrutiny of employment or training history (where relevant), robust referencing and may include a check on criminal record history if the role involves contact with children, young people or adults at risk. This is in line with our DBS & Ex-Offenders Policy and the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

