

The logo for Aberdeen Performing Arts is located in the top right corner. It consists of three stacked rectangular boxes. The top box is black with the word 'ABERDEEN' in white, uppercase, sans-serif font. The middle box is black with the word 'PERFORMING' in white, uppercase, sans-serif font. The bottom box is blue with the word 'ARTS' in white, uppercase, sans-serif font. The background of the entire page is a photograph of the Aberdeen Music Hall, a grand neoclassical building with a prominent green dome and the words 'HIS MAJESTY' on its facade.

ABERDEEN PERFORMING ARTS

Appointment of

**Director of People, Culture and Organisational
Development**

April 2026 Reference: DBYZA

Saxton Bampfylde

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Introduction from our Chair and Chief Executive

Thank you for your interest in this appointment.

APA is entering an important stage in its organisational development. We are strengthening our senior leadership structure so that we can support our staff, develop leadership capability, and maintain a strong organisational culture as our work continues to grow.

As part of this development we are appointing a Director of People, Culture and Organisational Development. This is a new role within the organisation and reflects the priority we place on people, culture, and organisational effectiveness.

The Director will work closely with the Chief Executive, Board, and senior leadership team to lead our people strategy, support leadership across the organisation, and help shape the culture that underpins our work. The role sits at the heart of how we develop our organisation and support the people who deliver our mission.

We are looking for a senior leader who brings strong strategic insight, credibility with executive teams, and a clear commitment to developing people and organisations.

We hope this opportunity will attract candidates who want to contribute to the next stage of APA's development.

Edel Harris OBE
Chair of the Board

Sharon Burgess
Chief Executive



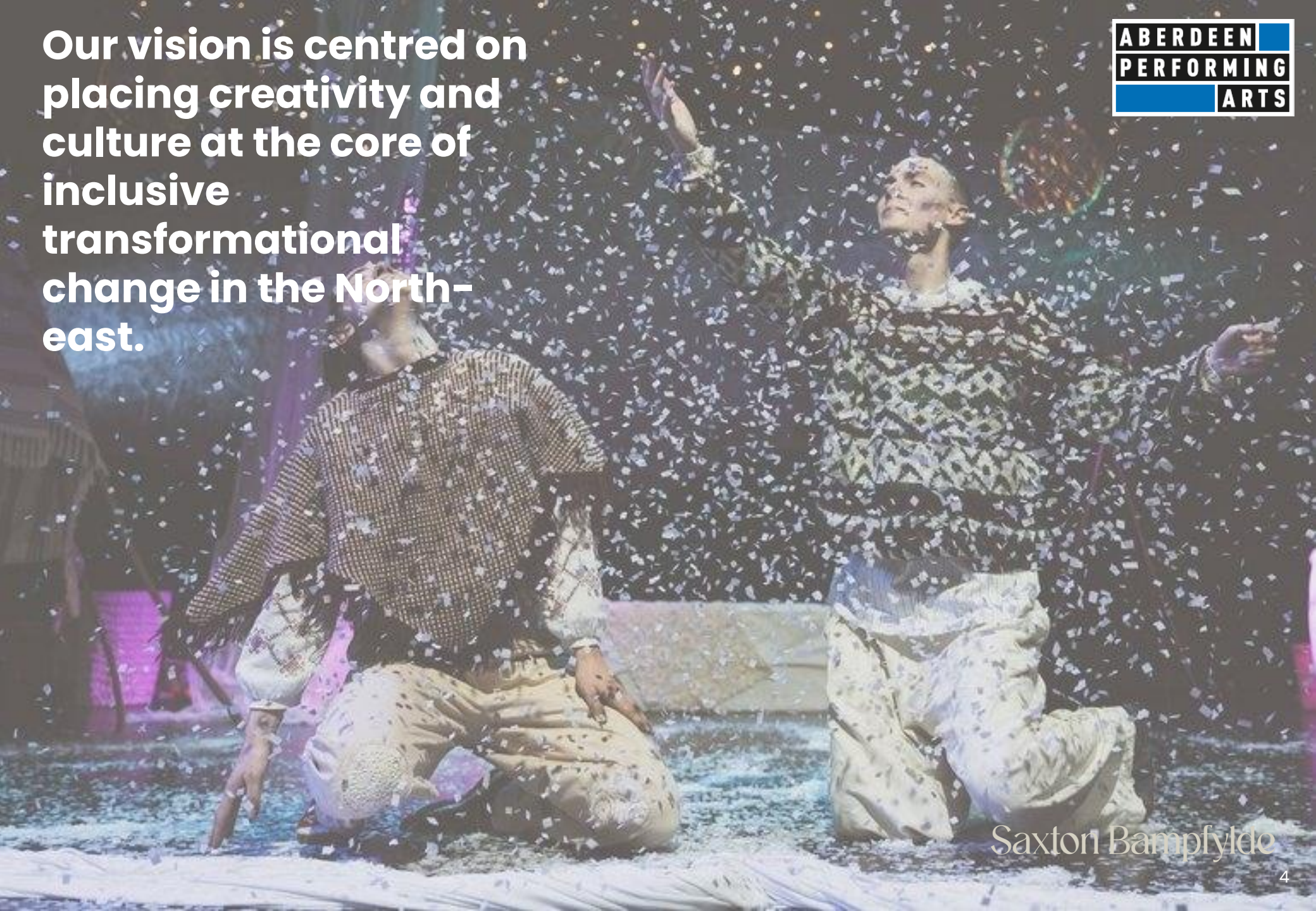
Edel Harris OBE
Chair



Sharon Burgess
Chief Executive



Our vision is centred on placing creativity and culture at the core of inclusive transformational change in the North-east.



Saxton Bampfylde



About

Aberdeen Performing Arts – Who We Are

Aberdeen Performing Arts (APA) is a multi-award-winning, multi-site arts charity right at the centre of North-east Scotland, and one of the country's most ambitious and dynamic cultural organisations. Far more than a presenter of live performance, APA is a commissioning organisation, a festival maker, a community builder, and an engine for social change.

Our three iconic city centre venues: **His Majesty's Theatre, the Music Hall** and **The Lemon Tree**, are all on a national and international touring circuit for the performing arts and a vital part of Aberdeen and Scotland's cultural landscape.

His Majesty's Theatre, an Edwardian masterpiece designed by celebrated architect Frank Matcham, has been a landmark location in the city since it opened in 1906, attracting world-class shows and performers to its renowned 1,400 seat auditorium. The Music Hall, which reopened in 2018 following a major redevelopment, has been at the heart of cultural life in Aberdeen for nearly 200 years. Together with the more intimate Lemon Tree, these three landmark venues form a portfolio that few regional arts organisations in the UK can match.

The venues are only part of the story. In 2025–26, over 393,000 people attended 802 diverse performances spanning theatre, music, dance, comedy, literature, spoken word, and work for young people. The scale of reach is remarkable, and it is matched by the depth of ambition.

APA has moved decisively into commissioning and producing, shaping the cultural agenda rather than simply responding to it. The organisation introduced the annual International Season in 2024, bringing performers from Australia, New Zealand, Africa and across Europe to Aberdeen, a ground-breaking series that placed Aberdeen

firmly on an international cultural map while championing sustainable touring practice.

Five festivals are curated through the year including Granite Noir, the acclaimed international crime writing festival, and Light the Blue, a multi-artform festival for and by young people, becoming fixtures in the regional calendar and are growing year on year.

APA's commitment to equity and inclusion is not a footnote; it is central to its programming identity. The inaugural Aberdeen Queer Arts Festival was held in 2025 showcasing and celebrating the LGBTQ+ community in Aberdeen with the chance to express, create and connect.

The organisation works with schools, community groups, and emerging artists to ensure that the arts are genuinely accessible to everyone in the region, not just those who already feel at home in a theatre.

Business plan:

APA's 2024–2028 business plan sets out a bold ambition:

To become the cultural cornerstone of North-east Scotland, fostering inclusive, transformational change through creativity, and upholding its position as the vibrant hub of arts, community and civic life in the region.

This is an organisation with the confidence to think on a national and international scale, and the grounding to know that its greatest responsibility is to the communities of Aberdeen and the North-east.

Read our business plan [here](#)

The Role

The Director of People, Culture and Organisational Development leads the organisation's strategic approach to people, leadership, and organisational effectiveness.

The role focuses on organisational leadership rather than operational HR delivery. The Director will guide the development of workforce planning, leadership development, and organisational culture across the organisation.

The post holder will manage two People Advisors and work closely with departmental leadership teams.

This is a newly created role, and a significant one. Working closely with the Chief Executive, Board, and senior leadership team, the Director will lead APA's people strategy, strengthen organisational capability, and develop leadership capacity across the organisation.

It sits at the centre of APA's strategic development, shaping how the organisation supports its people and delivers its mission in the years ahead.

APA places strong emphasis on:

- organisational integrity,
- collaboration across teams,

- professional development, and
- building an inclusive and supportive working culture.

These are not aspirations for the future; they are the values that already shape day-to-day life across the organisation, and the foundation on which the incoming Director will build.

APA operates across six departments delivering programmes and services aligned with the organisation's mission and strategic objectives. The organisation is led by the Chief Executive and a senior leadership structure that includes departmental Heads and a Director of Finance and Commercial.

Chaired by Edel Harris OBE and a refreshed board bringing wide-ranging expertise, APA is in an exciting period of growth and renewal, investing not just in its stages and festivals, but in the people and culture that make all of it possible. This is an organisation on the move: rooted in one of Scotland's great cities, alive to the possibilities of the future, and ready to invest in the leadership that will take it there.





Main Activities & Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- Lead the people, culture and organisational development strategy
- Contribute to corporate strategy, business planning and risk management
- Advise the Chief Executive and Board on people and organisational matters
- Prepare and present Board reporting on workforce and culture

Culture, Values and Inclusion

- Embed organisational values in leadership behaviour and decision-making
- Lead equality, diversity and inclusion strategy and delivery
- Strengthen staff engagement, wellbeing and voice
- Monitor organisational health and act where required

Leadership and Capability

- Design leadership and management development frameworks
- Strengthen performance management and feedback systems
- Lead succession planning and talent development
- Coach and support Heads of Department

Organisational Development and Change

- Lead organisational design and workforce planning
- Support restructures and change programmes
- Improve cross-department working and decision-making
- Build organisational capability to respond to growth and complexity

People Strategy and HR Oversight

- Own people strategy, policies and governance frameworks
- Oversee HR operations, employee relations and compliance
- Manage external HR advisers
- Align pay and reward principles with organisational strategy

Accountability

You are accountable for:

- Organisational culture, values and inclusion
- Leadership capability and workforce health
- Quality and effectiveness of people systems and practice

The Chief Executive retains final authority on senior appointments, restructures and organisational design decisions.

Person Specification

The successful candidate will bring all or most of the following:

Experience

- Senior leadership experience in people, culture or organisational development
- Experience operating at Director or equivalent strategic level
- Track record of leading organisational change and workforce strategy
- Experience advising Boards or senior governing bodies
- Experience working in complex, multi-disciplinary organisations
- Experience in managing Trade Union relationships and strategy

Knowledge and Skills

- Strong understanding of organisational design and development
- Commercial awareness and ability to align workforce strategy with financial context
- Strong judgement in employee relations and governance matters
- Ability to influence senior stakeholders
- Clear written and verbal communication

Personal Qualities

- Credible at Board and executive level
- Pragmatic and solutions-focused
- Calm under pressure
- High integrity and discretion

About Aberdeen

Aberdeen is rich in local highlights and history, there's plenty to explore throughout the Granite City. Where coastline meets countryside, there's something extraordinary at every turn.

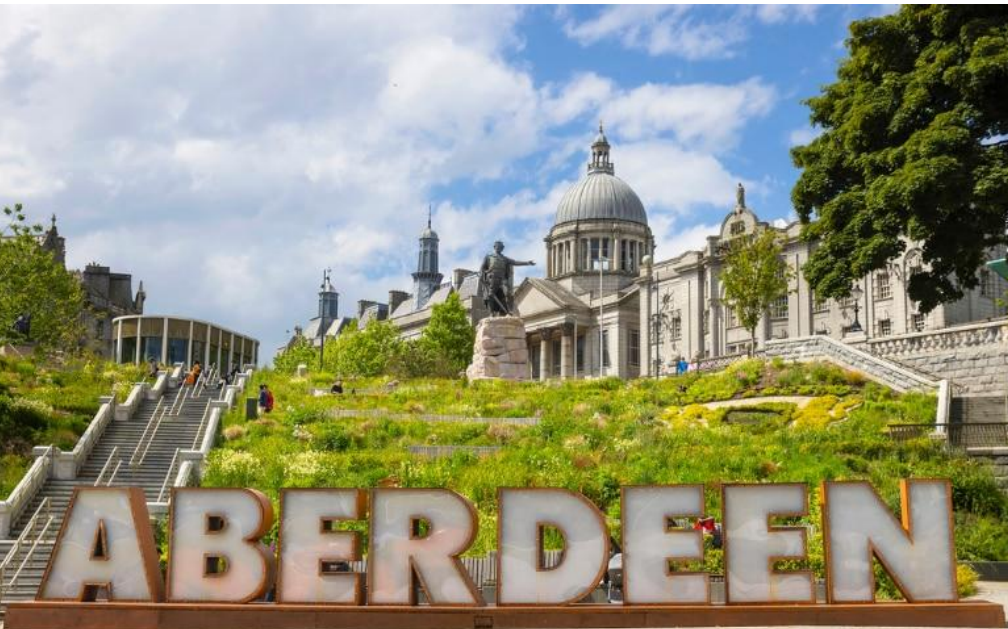
With a vibrant cultural landscape, breathtaking scenery, world class food and drink and outdoor adventures right on the doorstep, living in Aberdeen is an experience everyone can enjoy.

In the city, uncover the Nuart street art tours, take in panoramic views of the city on our open top bus and visit attractions like the Art Gallery, Maritime Museum and Winter Gardens. Admire the impressive golf courses in the region, beach front and Pittodrie Stadium - home of Aberdeen Football Club. The surrounding countryside offers a unique

blend of "castles to coast" experiences, featuring over 300 castles, the stunning Cairngorms National Park, and dramatic, award-winning coastlines.

As well as this impressive external offering, we pride ourselves in bringing the best programme in various art forms to the North-east direct from the West End and beyond.

Whether already a resident to the city or looking to move to the area - your next adventure starts here!





How to Apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to Aberdeen Performing Arts on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at www.saxbam.com/appointments using code DBYZA. 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 14th May

* The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.

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.

