

Circusful

Board Recruitment

Spring 2024





Why join us?

"It's everything you want your children to learn - creativity, camaraderie, resilience, and pushing through mistakes to keep learning." Parent Q1 2023-24

"I took my eldest to all manner of classes but not circus. What a mistake! This is easily the best part of my son's week with talented, kind and dedicated tutors making the class fun, interesting and a joyous learning environment. Thank you." Parent 2022

"Massive help to get over shyness - no pressure, encouraged to talk. It really helped when I was a lot younger and a lot shy." Participant

It's not only our participants, their parents, trainers and staff team who have a great time at Circusful, our Board members do too.

Whilst we focus on what's important and take our responsibilities seriously, we also have fun, learn together and work as a team to develop circus as an art form and improve access to community arts across NI.

If this sounds like something you'd like to support, help to develop and get involved in, read on to find out more.



[Circusful YouTube channel](#) – impact, recruitment and more.

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Circusful

What we are looking for

Thank you for your interest in Circusful, Premiere Circus and Festival of Fools.

In preparation for some of our Board members reaching the end of their terms and to replace a couple who have recently stepped back, we are looking for 4 new members, including a Company Secretary.

We currently run three separate but interdependent organisations; Circusful, Premiere Circus and Festival of Fools, which are led by our CEO, Jenna Hall. You can read more about each organisation on pages 6-9.

Currently, the same members sit on each Board. Meetings are held at the same time and last no longer than 2 hours in total (for all three meetings). Festival of Fools Board meetings can take a bit longer around the time of the festival but are shorter at other times of the year. The Boards meet up to 6 times per year in person, online or hybrid. At the moment we alternate between lunchtime and immediately after work. We will review this once new members have been recruited. If you are only interested in joining one of the three organisations we are very happy to explore how that would best work for all.



What we are looking for

We are particularly keen to hear from you if you have any of the following skills or experience:

Priorities

- **Youth participation and co-design approaches** – have you worked for an organisation where young people play a key role in decision making and leadership?
- **Income generation** – do you have experience developing relationships with corporate partners, and generating income for a social purpose?
- **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion** – we want to make circus more diverse and inclusive. Can you work with us to think critically about how we do this in a meaningful way?

We are also interested in hearing from people with:

- **Political awareness and influence** – are you well-networked and could you help us to raise the profile of circus in NI?
- **Working with communities** to bring about social change
- **Digital technology and marketing** - can you help us use technology to develop our existing relationships and develop new ones?
- **Succession planning** – can you help us not to do things just because we've always done them, exploring new models of working and innovative structures?

If your skills and experience don't quite match with any of these, but you can offer new insights and challenge that will help us to develop and learn together, please do apply telling us about the skills and experience you can bring.

What we are looking for

We value a diverse range of experience and skills on our Board. Ideally that means our Board is made up of people who have the relevant:

- skills
- knowledge
- lived and learned experience, and
- background to contribute to the organisation,

and that the mix is representative of the community we serve and wider society.

Previous experience of governance or being a Board member is not essential but if you work well as part of a team, have great listening skills and experience of working collaboratively to make decisions, we'd love to hear from you!

We would like to receive applications from candidates from diverse backgrounds, and experiences, including candidates who identify as LGBTQIA+, have a disability, are neurodiverse, and/or are from a minority ethnic background, from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, under 30, or have taken non-traditional educational pathway.

We are looking for the following from all Board Members:

- commitment to our objectives, aims and values.
- an open and collegiate approach: share your knowledge, challenge us with questions, signpost us to contacts and ideas!
- an understanding of the political and cultural landscape.
- the ability to treat sensitive information confidentially.

Circusful

Circusful has been changing lives through circus since 1985. Circusful started to give young people living in Belfast during the Troubles the challenge and thrill they were looking for – in a positive and safe way.

We continue to work with children and young people from all backgrounds through our social circus work across NI, and classes, workshops and shows from our purpose-built Circus School in Belfast.

Our Vision: A 21st Century where streets, hearts and minds are filled with the wonder and colour of circus.

Our mission: We support people to surprise themselves through circus. We meet them where they are, have fun and build a community together.

Children taking part in circus develop the skills identified by the WEF as necessary for young people to thrive in the 21st Century:

- Persistence
- Curiosity
- Creativity
- Problem Solving
- Initiative
- Adaptability
- Leadership
- Social and cultural awareness

We contribute to the 'active ingredients' that, according to the Wellcome Trust, prevent anxiety and depression in young people:

- Sense of mattering
- Self-evaluation
- Affective awareness
- Emotional regulation
- Perfectionism reduction
- Engagement with the arts
- Self-disclosure

This is what 2022-23 looked like at Circusful

• 679 classes over 37 weeks for children, young people and adults in our purpose-built circus school

230 children and young people took part in our classes every week

160 adults took part in our weekly classes for over 18s

Over 200 outreach workshops with 800 participants across Northern Ireland

Around 1700 opportunities to work for our freelance circus trainers

Children and Young People told us:



Learning circus has made them braver



Because of circus classes they think it's ok to ask for help



They have made new friends through circus



Doing circus makes them feel good about themselves

We work with children and young people from 2-25 in our purpose-built circus school in the heart of Belfast and through social circus across NI including those:

- living in rural locations and areas of social and economic deprivation
- with care experience
- asylum seekers and refugees
- with learning disabilities
- neurodiverse young people

'I think that circus has had a hugely positive impact on my daughter's mental health'
Youth Circus Parent

FESTIVAL of FOOLS

FREE

BELFAST CITY CENTRE
**AMAZING FEATS ON
THE CITY STREETS**



4 MAY – 9 MAY 2024
FOOLSFESTIVAL.COM

Festival of Fools offers a jam-packed weekend of circus and outdoor arts performances. Programmed and produced by Circusful, the line-up features breathtaking acrobatics, gut-busting comedy, jaw-dropping juggling and more!

The festival is the largest free comedy, circus and outdoor arts festival on the island of Ireland, with typically well over 70 performances taking place on the streets of Belfast City Centre and Cathedral Quarter.

The festival is the brainchild of the late Belfast Community Circus School Director, Will Chamberlain, who believed passionately in the power of street theatre and laughter to bring people together regardless of background, religion or language. He established Festival of Fools in Cathedral Quarter in Belfast at a time when the area was a far cry from the bustling cultural centre it is today.

Nowadays the Festival is a firm fixture on Northern Ireland's cultural calendar, bringing thousands of visitors to Cathedral Quarter and the city centre. All daytime shows are free to attend, with no booking is required.

PREMIERE CIRCUS

Premiere Circus is our social enterprise agency that provides artists and performers for events and street animation across Northern Ireland and beyond.

Profits generated through Premiere Circus bookings are donated to Circusful so that we can change more lives through circus.

In 2023/24 we supplied artists for 530 performances at over 250 events generating an income of over £140,000.





Your commitment

Board Membership is for a term of 3 years and for a maximum of 3 terms.

Board Members are encouraged to join Sub-Committees or Working Groups. We currently have one permanent sub-committee, Audit and Risk. Sub-Committees and Working Groups are created, as necessary. For example, we had a Sub-Committee responsible for our Covid policies and procedures and have had working groups looking at recruitment and planning for our 40th anniversary in 2025.

We expect Board Members to do their best to attend all Board Meetings and Sub-Committee meetings, if relevant.

In addition to Board Meetings and Sub-Committee meetings, all Board Members are expected to participate in one Strategy/Workshop Session per year, which usually takes place on either a Saturday or a Sunday. Timings are often roughly 10am-4pm.

We encourage Board Members to attend our events and activities.

Duties and Responsibilities of our Board Members:

- Legal, Risk and Financial - we can organise training in these areas.
- Employment and Personnel - as a trustee you have a responsibility of ensuring the organisation adheres to its legal responsibilities in employment policies and practice. We have specialists on the Board and also have an adviser on a retainer who works directly with the CEO.

Please also refer to the Code of Good Governance for further detail: <https://www.diycommitteeguide.org/>

How to apply

Please email us a **Cover Statement (max 2 sides of A4)** and your **CV by midnight on 23 May 2024** to hello@circusful.org with '**Board Membership**' in the subject line.

In your cover letter tell us:

- why you are interested in joining the Board
- the skills and experience you will be able to share with us
- what you would like to achieve / gain as a Board member.

Please don't agonise over the format of the covering statement or CV. We are much more interested in who you are and what you'll bring to the Board than whether you can succinctly describe your everything you've ever achieved into two sides of A4. Aim to give us a sense of your personality, your strengths and your interest in joining the Board. If you'd rather submit a recording, please do. Up to 3 minutes maximum.

If you have different access needs, let us know how we can help by calling Jenna on 028 9023 6007 or emailing hello@circusful.org

If you have any other questions/comments, email hello@circusful.org and we will get back to you. You can also meet Jenna (our CEO) in The MAC for a coffee and informal chat on 15 May between 12:30 and 19:00hrs. Please email to arrange a specific time.

Our anticipated timeline is:

- Application deadline: **Midnight on 23 May**
- Interviews: **early to mid-June**
- Successful candidate/s attend Crescent Board meeting as Observer in either **July or September 2024**.

With best wishes,
Laura Kelly, Chair
Jenna Hall, Chief Executive