



Appointment of Chief Operating Officer National Portrait Gallery

Saxton
Bampfylde

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Reference PNND





Victoria Siddall
Director, National Portrait
Gallery

Note from the Director

This is an exciting moment in the National Portrait Gallery's history, as we celebrate our 170th anniversary and look to the future following the transformational Inspiring People project and reopening. We recently celebrated the appointment of Ina Sarikhani Weston as Chair of the board of trustees and in addition we have implemented a new executive structure. The recruitment of a Chief Operating Officer is the final element that will complete the Gallery's leadership team.

Founded with a mission to tell the story of the nation through the people who shape it, the purpose of the National Portrait Gallery remains as vital today as ever. The years ahead will see us continue to expand our reach, both in person and digitally; increase our relevance through our collections and programme; build our resilience through our team, our buildings and infrastructure; and ensure financial stability through revenue growth and new initiatives and audiences.

The COO will play a vital role in achieving these aims, ensuring that the Gallery has the culture, systems and infrastructure capability required to deliver our ambitions. The COO will bring a mindset of innovation as well as operational experience and the ability to lead and inspire.

If you are motivated by the opportunity to be part of the next chapter of the National Portrait Gallery's history, I look forward to welcoming your application for this exciting new role.

Warm regards,

Victoria Siddall
Director, National Portrait Gallery

About the National Portrait Gallery

Founded in 1856, the National Portrait Gallery is home to the world's largest collection of portraits and is unique in being both for and about people. Through portraiture, the Gallery tells the story of Britain by exploring the lives, achievements and identities of those who have shaped the nation.

Our Collection comprises more than 250,000 works spanning paintings, photographs, sculptures, drawings and mixed media. Welcoming almost two million visitors annually, we engage audiences through exhibitions, learning programmes, digital content, national and international partnerships, research, publications and loans.

Our ambition is to broaden representation and relevance within our Collection and programming, creating meaningful opportunities for people of all backgrounds to connect with Britain's stories and making the Gallery welcoming and accessible to everyone.

As a national museum, the Gallery is funded through a combination of government support, philanthropic giving, commercial income and fundraising. Collaboration, innovation and public engagement are central to how we deliver our mission.





Transforming the Gallery

The Gallery reopened in June 2023 following the completion of Inspiring People – the most significant redevelopment in its history. This £44 million transformation reimagined the visitor experience through:

- New accessible public spaces and visitor entrance.
- A state-of-the-art Learning Centre.
- A re-presentation of the Collection to tell a broader and more inclusive story of Britain.
- Increased public access, with over 1,000 portraits on display and significantly improved representation of women and ethnically diverse sitters.
- The project has strengthened the Gallery's position as one of the UK's leading cultural institutions and created a platform for future growth.

Looking Ahead

The Gallery is now focused on delivering its next phase of strategic development. Its strategy is centred on four priorities:

- **Reach** – expanding audiences nationally and internationally.
- **Relevance** – ensuring we reflect and engage with the world today.
- **Revenue** – strengthening financial sustainability through diverse income streams.
- **Resilience** – building capability, operational excellence and sustainability.

As the Gallery enters this next chapter, the Chief Operating Officer will play a pivotal role in implementing strategy and ensuring the Gallery continues to thrive as a world-class cultural institution.

The Role

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) will be a key member of the newly formed Executive Leadership Team, working closely with and reporting to the Director, alongside the Chief Curator, Chief Development Officer and Chief Financial Officer.

The COO will help shape not only how the Gallery operates, but how it evolves as one of the world's leading cultural institutions over the next decade.

The COO will integrate strategy, people, technology, data, and operational capabilities, ensuring the Gallery functions as a connected, high-performing, and agile organisation.

Alongside this core remit, the COO will play a pivotal role in the next phase of transformation, leading cultural change and developing an ambitious digital and technology roadmap.

This work will create an outstanding working environment for colleagues and expand how audiences experience and engage with the Gallery, both within the building and beyond its walls.



Key Responsibilities

Direct reports will include People & Culture, Information Technology, Estates and the Audiences Directorate, including Communications, Digital and Visitor Experience.

Core Areas of Responsibility

The COO will provide executive leadership across the following areas:

- Estates, facilities, security and capital planning.
- Gallery-wide planning, risk, compliance and business continuity.
- Technology, digital and data strategy, infrastructure and innovation.
- IT systems, cybersecurity and information governance.
- Audience strategy, including visitor experience.
- Communications and digital engagement.
- People & Culture, including workforce planning, remuneration and employment policy.
- Organisational design, effectiveness and continuous improvement.
- Internal communications, operational policy and process improvement.

Executive Accountability

The COO will hold accountability for:

- Driving performance through effective leadership, planning and delivery.
- Strengthening communication, collaboration and alignment across the Gallery.
- Ensuring colleagues are connected to the priorities and direction.
- Leading innovation and transformation across systems
- Prioritisation of investment across technology, digital, data, estates and infrastructure.
- Partnering with the Director and Executive Team to strengthen financial performance and navigate complexity.
- Building a high-performing organisation that values accountability and innovation.
- Driving cohesion across the Executive Leadership Team, ensuring clear priorities and joined-up decision-making.
- Championing delivery of the 10-Year Plan with a particular focus on Reach and Resilience.



The Person

Knowledge and Experience

The successful candidate will ideally bring all or most of the following knowledge, skills and experience:

- Leading transformation within complex, values led or mission driven organisations, working collaboratively with creative, intellectual or specialist leaders to translate ambition into sustainable change and impact.
- A strong track record of turning strategy into delivery, creating clear priorities, roadmaps and measurable outcomes while building capability and resilience.
- Modernising systems, infrastructure and ways of working, balancing innovation with stability, operational effectiveness and sustainability.
- Overseeing complex technology, digital, data and operational transformation programmes, with an understanding of how digital can extend reach, enhance audience engagement and improve effectiveness.
- Leading significant estates, capital or infrastructure programmes, balancing investment decisions, operational continuity and multiple stakeholder expectations.
- Working effectively within complex, multi-funded organisations, with the ability to engage confidently with Boards, Trustees, executive colleagues and external partners.
- Strong financial and commercial acumen, including experience of managing significant budgets, prioritising resources and making sound investment decisions to maximise impact.
- Creating inclusive, high-performing cultures through effective leadership, workforce planning, design, performance management and continuous improvement.

Leadership and Personal Attributes

The successful candidate will be:

- A strategic and collaborative executive leader, able to shape direction while maintaining a strong focus on delivery and impact.
- A trusted partner to the Director and Executive Leadership Team, able to work effectively alongside creative, curatorial and specialist colleagues.
- An adept relationship builder who creates credibility and trust across all levels and with external stakeholders.
- Comfortable leading through complexity, ambiguity and change, bringing clarity, confidence and momentum to major transformation programmes.
- A visible, authentic and inclusive leader who fosters accountability, collaboration and continuous improvement.
- An excellent communicator, able to influence, challenge constructively and build consensus with colleagues, Trustees, partners and stakeholders.
- A systems thinker with sound judgement, able to connect people, culture, processes, technology and infrastructure to strengthen effectiveness.
- Committed to equality, diversity and inclusion, with the integrity, discretion and political awareness required to navigate complex environments.
- Passionate about the role of the National Portrait Gallery as a public institution, with a commitment to building an organisation that is accessible, resilient, innovative and fit for the future.

Terms of Appointment

Role: Chief Operating Officer

Reports to: Director of the National Portrait Gallery

Salary: c.£100,000–110,000 per annum

Location: National Portrait Gallery Offices, Central London

Benefits:

- Flexible and hybrid working arrangements (min. 4 days in the office)
- Generous annual leave, including birthday leave
- Enhanced family-friendly policies
- Three days' paid volunteering leave each year
- Employee Assistance Programme and wellbeing support
- Learning and development opportunities, including reimbursement of professional membership fees
- Interest-free season ticket loans, Cycle to Work and rental deposit schemes
- Staff discounts, including 30% in Gallery shops, free exhibition tickets, Perkbox discounts and discounted CSSC membership
- Eye care vouchers and additional lifestyle benefits

Pension: Defined contribution pension scheme with Legal & General, with employer contributions of 10%, rising to up to 14% depending on employee contributions (which start at 3%). Candidates who are currently members of the Civil Service Pension Scheme may choose to remain in that scheme, with the necessary arrangements supported by the organisation.





How to apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to the National Portrait Gallery on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at **roles.saxbam.com** using code **PNND**.

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 **Friday 4 September**.

The Gallery is committed to equality and is a member of the Disability Confident Scheme. We are deeply committed to fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace. As part of our commitment to inclusivity, we recognise the importance of accommodating individual needs to ensure that all candidates have a fair and equal opportunity during our interview process. If you require specific accommodations to participate in our interview process, please do not hesitate to let us know during the recruitment process.

* 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.

