



Executive Director – Application Pack

Hello,

Thanks so much for your interest in this role. A bit of background for you: In July 2024, we appointed Mercy Welbeck as our new Creative Director, replacing our founder Jennie Cashman Wilson who stepped down as CEO after founding the Abram Wilson charity and 11 years at the helm.

Mercy's appointment concluded the first part of our search for new leadership to build on Jennie's successes and take the organisation forward into its next phase. We're proud of all that we've achieved over the last decade and a bit, placing the needs faced by minoritised young people at the heart of our vision and addressing them through our successful music education and career development programmes. For this recruitment process, we are looking for new leadership that shares the passion, commitment and values that have defined our work to date.

Taking inspiration from fellow creative organisations, our plan is for two people to take on Jennie's mantle and lead the organisation in its next phase. Recognising that a small arts charity such as ourselves needs both outstanding creative vision and the funding, systems and networks in place to realise this vision, we have decided upon a co-leadership model of a Creative Director and an Executive Director.

We are now looking to appoint a new Executive Director to take the organisation forward with Mercy Welbeck. For the post of Executive Director, we are looking for someone who understands the vitality of our mission to inspire, connect and open doors to the music industry so that minoritised young talent has an equal chance to realise their creative potential. We are seeking someone who either has personal lived experience or direct experience working with minoritised communities.

Leading Abram Wilson comes with challenges – we’re not an Arts Council England NPO nor in receipt of regular core funding, so every penny that we spend needs to be raised or earned. We’re therefore looking for someone who has considerable strategic, entrepreneurial and commercial expertise to help make our creative plans a reality.

The organisation is being handed over in great health. We have adequate reserves in place and while there is a continuing need for fundraising, we have a multi-year programme partnership in place with a leading Academy chain, strong funder relationships and a network of committed individual supporters and artists. We have a strong staff team and an engaged and skilled Board of Trustees.

It’s a great platform from which our new leadership can start a new chapter. We look forward to receiving your application.

Thanks so much,

Collette Philip

Chair of the Trustees

Abram Wilson Charity



About Abram Wilson

Inspired by the late critically acclaimed and award-winning jazz musician Abram Wilson, the Abram Wilson Foundation was founded in 2012 by his wife Jennie Cashman Wilson to celebrate his legacy and to provide opportunities to young talented musicians from disadvantaged and diverse backgrounds to realise their creative potential, and provide visibility, access and career pathways within an industry which is often closed to all but the most privileged.

Our vision is for a music industry that genuinely reflects and represents the best image of our society so any young person is able to recognise it as a place for them and to collectively contribute to the next generation of talent.

To achieve our vision, we deliver two distinct yet interconnected projects:

Future Sound (FS): Our award-winning music education programme working with young people in secondary schools to develop their music skills while also holistically impacting their wellbeing, mental health and academic development. We currently deliver FS in schools in Newham, London and across the North West, where there is an identified need for additional music provision in schools, high rates of deprivation and diverse demographics. We ensure at least 50% of the young people we engage are on free school meals and at least 50% from Global Majority communities.



Career Development Programme: Offers vital 1:1 coaching and mentoring support for emerging musicians and music professionals in the early to mid-stages of their careers across an 18-month period. Our musicians come from across the UK and are offered personalised coaching, online mentoring and career strategy sessions, as well as industry masterclass workshops to strengthen their understanding of the

sector. Many become our Future Sound workshop leaders, helping us to inspire the next generation of diverse young talent.

Our Organisation and Team

Abram Wilson is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee, managed by a dedicated, small team. At present, the core team includes seven part time staff roles, including the Creative Director, an interim Executive Director, two programme producers, marketing and communications, a fundraiser and a finance consultant.

We are governed by a racially diverse, majority women Board of Trustees, led by our Chair, Collette Philip. She runs award-winning brand strategy consultancy Brand by Me and has worked on the in-house marketing teams for large organisations, including Barnardo's.

Delivering our busy programme of work requires everyone to be collaborative and flexible in taking on different areas of activity and a range of responsibilities, including at executive level. The team regularly expands and contracts around key projects and areas of activity, including a range of casual staff, freelancers and associates.

Among our key stakeholder relationships is Co-op Academies Trust, who are our programme partner for our Future Sound schools programme across the north of England, and Newham Music Service, who are our programme partner for our Future Sound schools programme in London.

Finance and fundraising

Abram Wilson is not an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation and does not receive any regular core public funding. While we currently have a range of smaller project funding agreements in place, sustaining our core organisation and delivering our ambitious programmes of work is dependent on substantial year-round project-based fundraising efforts, led by the senior executive team. This currently encompasses Trusts and Foundations and individual donors.

Since 2021, our turnover has been around £250,000 annually. This currently comprises approximately 75% income from trusts and foundations, 10% from individual giving, and 15% from partnerships and earned income.

Whilst we have in-house expertise and a track-record of success in securing income from trusts and foundations, the main challenge going forward and the focus for our new Executive Director is to develop new income streams to support our impactful programmes that deliver our mission to inspire and support minoritised young talent.



What We're Looking For

We're looking for an ambitious, strategic leader ready to roll up their sleeves, develop a financially secure and sustainable organisation to support our creative vision and take responsibility for co-leading the team and delivering Abram Wilson's next steps. We need someone who appreciates the practicalities of running a small charity, and who has the insight and appetite for the financial, fundraising and day-to-day operational challenges facing an independent organisation without core public support.

The Trustees are committed to Abram Wilson's focus on supporting minoritised talent, inclusivity, creative risk, but we're also open to new possibilities, having given our new Creative Director scope to define what that will look like. Our Executive Director's challenge is to ensure we have the finances, structure, team and systems in place to deliver upon our ambitious vision.

By January 2025, we're aiming for a co-leadership model as we don't expect everything to be achievable by just one person. Given who we are, we are **especially interested in applications from people from minoritised backgrounds.**

We're also really happy for you to show how you meet the role criteria beyond just your day job (e.g. through volunteer roles or in your personal life).

Executive Director and Joint-CEO

Key Responsibilities

- Developing the financial model of the organisation, focussing on diversifying income away from Trusts and Foundations by developing alternative revenue streams
- Ensuring that our creative projects are sustainable and able to generate income and/or attract support from partners, individuals and funders
- Line management of Fundraising Manager, ensuring we develop a robust fundraising pipeline and deliver against deadlines, income targets and reporting commitments
- Ensuring effective systems are in place to manage and recruit team members, artists and freelance consultants, including contracting, fair pay, regular appraisals and professional development
- Developing and delivery of Business Plan with Creative Director and Board of Trustees
- Developing and overseeing internal communications, ensuring effective day to day operation of all aspects of our work
- Ensuring the organisation remains compliant with legal obligations and requirements including and developing appropriate policies to ensure Abram Wilson staff, volunteers work with high standards of safety and integrity
- Setting the agenda and preparing paperwork for quarterly board meetings with Creative Director and Chair of Trustees
- Managing the finance consultant to maintain oversight of financial processes including bookkeeping, payroll and submission of annual accounts
- Planning and accurately forecasting annual budgets, maintaining oversight of income, expenditure and cash flow, with Creative Director and finance consultant
- Co-leadership of the staff team with Creative Director

Key Skills and Experience

- An entrepreneurial mindset and approach to generating income for creative programmes
- Leadership experience including managing and collaborating with key individuals, teams, partners and stakeholders
- Demonstrable experience of sound financial management and reporting
- Demonstrable experience of contract management
- Understanding and strategic thinking around the current context, challenges and opportunities in the independent arts and music education sector
- Music industry experience desirable, a passion for music essential
- Experience and knowledge of charity sector or publicly funded organisations
- Experience working with children and young people and an understanding of schools and the curriculum
- A demonstrable understanding of Abram Wilson's mission either from personal lived experience or from being in tune with the lived experience of our beneficiaries
- A commitment to Abram Wilson's values; creating a caring, inclusive, safe and accessible organisation for minoritised young people, artists, employees and supporters

Key Information

Job Title: Executive Director & Joint CEO

Salary: £60,000 per year pro rata (0.5)

Contract: Part-time (equivalent to 2.5 days per week), permanent

Hours: Core hours are 10am–6pm and we expect the role to be primarily home based. There is some flexibility in hours, and the role will include some early-morning, evening and weekend work.

Probation: 6 months

Reports to: The Board of Trustees

Leave: 5 weeks per year pro rata

How To Apply

Please send your CV and a brief covering letter or email (no more than two pages of A4) explaining why you'd like to apply for the role of Executive Director and how your experience fits what we're looking for, to hello@abramwilson.com.

We'd also appreciate it if you could include a completed diversity monitoring form together with your application – this information will be recorded anonymously.

The deadline for applications is **Friday 8th November at 5pm UK time**. First round interviews will take place in mid November, with second round interviews planned for early December. All interviews will take place online, via Zoom.

If you have any queries or want to discuss the role further in advance of applying, our Interim Executive Director Oliver Carruthers and Chair Collette Philip will be available for brief telephone calls. Please contact hello@abramwilson.com to arrange this.

Best of luck with your application. We very much look forward to reading it!

Access

Please contact our Interim CEO, Oliver Carruthers, on oliver@abramwilson.com if you have any access needs that you'd like to discuss either around this application process, interviews or the roles themselves. We're open to applications being made in different formats and also can provide support at interview stage.