

The Common Room: Advisory Panel Brief

Thank you for your interest in The Common Room's Advisory Panel. This brief will outline what this role entails, in relation to The Common Room's mission and strategic aims.

1. The Common Room

'Using our unique heritage to inspire the next generation of innovators'.

The Common Room is a charitable entity established in 2017 to redevelop and preside over the Grade II* listed Neville Hall in Newcastle Upon Tyne, home to the North East's Mining Institute since 1872.

The Common Room now manages this historic building, along with its archive and collections documenting centuries of mining, engineering, and wider innovation in the region. We also deliver a programme of public engagement and participation to deliver our mission: promoting the role of innovation and industry in the past, present and future of the North East.

We aim to provide a unique space and historic context to catalyse and support new research, collaborations, and networks to work towards tackling the significant environmental and socio-economic challenges facing the region.

The Common Room is:

- Supporting equity of knowledge and understanding around the region's industry then and now.
- Supporting skills development, promoting employability, and highlighting opportunities within the region's workforce.
- Inspiring the career choices of young people, supporting the talent pipeline of local businesses.
- Undertaking partnership within the business community and across sectors to support regional collaboration and boost economic activity.

Given that our building's legacy is heavily entwined with the growth of the coal industry, we have a responsibility to ensure that climate discussion and action is facilitated here.

2. The Common Room Advisory Panel Members

Our aim is for a new Advisory Panel to play an active role in influencing The Common Room's decision-making over how we deliver our mission through our core engagement programme by:

- Helping to shape our knowledge on the issues and challenges affecting our region's industry, environment, and workforce.
- Helping to develop our strategy and approach to engagement and stakeholder relationship building.
- Supporting the resilience, sustainability, and prosperity of the charity.



We are seeking to appoint individuals with an interest in becoming further involved within regional leadership, strategy, and policymaking, who can advise and support The Common Room, directly influencing decision over our programme strategy and delivery.

We anticipate that applicants to this role will have a passion for some of the following:

- Innovation and technology, engineering and industry, energy security and net zero.
- Culture, heritage, the charitable sector, education, community engagement or participation.
- Fundraising, accounting, law.

Skills and fields of work are not limited, we will consider any experience you believe would add value to the panel.

Please note that this is a voluntary role. The responsibility of the Advisory Panel is to act in an advisory capacity, without any of the legal responsibility associated with that of being a trustee.

Additionally, one member of the Advisory Panel will be nominated by members to sit on the Board of Trustees. This is to ensure there is representation on the main board so that discussions can be brought forward, the nominee will also be responsible for reporting the relevant information back to the Advisory Panel from the Board of Trustees. This person will be selected by the Advisory Panel to be the group representative, anyone wishing to be on the full board will put themselves forward and a private vote will be cast for more than one nomination.

3. What is a Board of Trustees?

It is a legal requirement for a charity to have a Board of Trustees. Trustees usually work in a voluntary capacity, overseeing the governance and running of a charity, carrying out the following roles and responsibilities:

- Shaping strategic objectives and organisational values
- Risk management and financial controls
- Protecting assets
- Making decisions and providing accountable leadership
- Observing the progress of deliverable objectives and KPI's

We are committed to ensuring our strategy, programming and purpose reflect a wide range of views that are relevant to our local and regional communities and contexts. The Advisory Panel will not be a Board role. However, members will be key to supporting decisions made by The Common Room's governance structure.

4. The Role of Advisory Panel Members

4.1 Tasks

- To have knowledge of The Common Room's activity and mission.
- To actively support and advocate for The Common Room's core values and programming.
- To support stakeholder growth and relationship building, helping us to ensure it is reflective of the diversity of the region.



- To offer advice and accountability to The Common Room's governance.
- To share personal convictions whilst respecting the range of views across our organisation and stakeholders.
- To have professional integrity and treat sensitive information confidentially.

4.2 Time Commitment

To be present and actively involved when attending:

- Attend 4 Advisory Panel meetings per annum between February and November.
- Attend at least 2 away days and training and development sessions on topics such as governance, financial and project management as arranged by The Common Room.
- Zoom attendance to meetings is possible when necessary to avoid barriers to attending, such as weather, transport strikes and childcare commitments – though we invite you to bring children along to meetings.

4.3 Decision Making

- One Panel Member will be elected by the Panel to sit on the Board of Trustees.
- The Panel Representative will be responsible for also attending Board meetings and feeding back discussion from Panel meetings to the Board.

4.4 Reimbursement

- The Common Room will provide financial reimbursement for agreed out of pocket expenses, as agreed with Lauren Dunbar, Programme and Engagement Manager.
- No fees will be paid for time spent attending meetings, or for volunteer work done as an Advisory Panel member.

5. Appointment process

Applications to join the Advisory Panel will consist of:

- Your CV
- A letter or video of interest, explaining why you would like to be on the Advisory Panel and what you would bring to the role (maximum 1 A4 side or 2-minute video).
- The Common Room Youth Board Skills Audit, blank copies of which can be obtained from Lauren Dunbar, Programme and Engagement Manager at The Common Room.

The application process may also include an informal chat.

Panel Members must consider themselves to be either in study/training, a young professional, or in their early career. The lower age limit for membership is 16; it is expected that applicants under the age of 18 years old will provide a note from a trusted adult to confirm and endorse their application.



6. Timeline

- Applications to become an Advisory Panel Member to be submitted to lauren.dunbar@thecommonroom.org.uk
- Invitation to join the Advisory Panel upon successful application process.
- Appointments to the Advisory Panel will be made on a rolling basis.

