Manchester City Council
Role Profile

Senior Operational Lead (Galleries)
Libraries, Galleries and Culture, Neighbourhoods Directorate
Reports to: Head of Libraries, Galleries and Culture

Band SS1 (Senior Operational/Technical Lead)

Key Role Descriptors

The Senior Operational Lead (Galleries) co-leads Manchester City Galleries alongside the Senior Creative Lead (Galleries) and holds personal accountability for financial sustainability, the operation and development of gallery buildings, and the long-term stewardship of the collection.

The role provides strategic leadership for the operation and development of Manchester Art Gallery, Platt Hall, and Queens Park Conservation Studios, ensuring that the Gallery's buildings, collections, people, and resources are managed effectively, sustainably, and in accordance with statutory, regulatory, and professional standards.

As custodian of the gallery's operational infrastructure, the role is responsible for safeguarding and developing the city's nationally significant collections and built assets, including the management of collection care, conservation, storage, documentation, security, environmental monitoring, and compliance with Museum Accreditation standards and best practice.

The role leads the gallery's commercial and income-generation activities, including retail, catering, venue hire, commercial events, fundraising, sponsorship, and philanthropic development, ensuring that commercial performance supports both financial sustainability and the Gallery's wider cultural and civic mission.

Working in partnership with the Senior Creative Lead, the postholder develops and delivers the Gallery's strategic vision, translating ambition into operational delivery, organisational change, and measurable outcomes that contribute to Manchester City Council priorities, the city's cultural strategy, and the ambitions of the National Portfolio Organisation partnership.

The role provides inspirational leadership to multidisciplinary teams across Operations, Collections Management, Conservation, Commercial, Fundraising, and associated support functions, creating an inclusive, high-performing culture that embeds the Our Manchester values and enables colleagues to thrive, innovate, and deliver excellence

Role Context

The role operates within Manchester City Galleries' co-leadership model, working in equal partnership with the Senior Creative Lead, to provide shared strategic leadership for the organisation. Together, the roles shape organisational vision, performance and culture, combining complementary expertise to deliver cultural impact, organisational resilience and long-term sustainability.

The role reports to the Head of the Libraries, Galleries and Culture Service and works closely with them to build relationships across the city and develop strong partnerships with organisations within Manchester to develop successful outcomes for Manchester residents.

The role sits as a director on the board of Manchester City Galleries Trading Company co Ltd, and Manchester Art Gallery Exhibitions Co Ltd and is accountable to the Manchester Museum Partnership (NPO) Oversight Group, Art Galleries Committee, and other boards and bodies as required.

The role manages the ‘Operations and Enterprises’ teams of the gallery – Building Services, Commercial, Development, Conservation, and Collection Management.

Key Role Accountabilities

The role is responsible for operational compliance with all relevant legislative, regulatory, health and safety, security, and professional requirements and leads on business continuity, emergency planning, disaster preparedness, and incident response arrangements.

The role is responsible for risk management and compliance across all Gallery sites and services, ensuring effective risk identification, mitigation, monitoring, and reporting arrangements across buildings, collections, operations, and commercial activity.

The role acts on behalf of Manchester City Council as steward of the gallery’s collections, ensuring their acquisition, disposal, loans, conservation, documentation and access arrangements are managed in accordance with legislation, professional standards, and Museum Accreditation requirements.

The role is responsible and accountable for the development, management, monitoring, and delivery of the Gallery's annual revenue and capital budgets, ensuring resources are deployed effectively to achieve strategic priorities while maintaining financial resilience.

The post holder ensures the financial, operational and organisational infrastructure necessary to enable the Senior Creative Lead to deliver the Gallery's artistic, cultural and public engagement ambitions. Working in close partnership, they ensure that creative vision is underpinned by robust planning, governance, resources and operational systems that support sustainable and effective delivery.

The role provides strategic leadership for the management, development, preservation and enhancement of the Gallery's estate and infrastructure, including capital investment programmes, major building projects and long-term asset planning, ensuring the estate remans fit for purpose, accessible, sustainable and resilient.

The postholder, alongside the Senior Creative Lead, will lead organisational improvement and transformational change, fostering innovation, continuous improvement and commercial resilience while ensuring the gallery remains responsive to evolving social, cultural, environmental and financial challenges.

Our leaders should be exemplars of the Our Manchester behaviours in action: demonstrating them through their interactions with colleagues and partners day-in-day-out and their overall approach to delivering for the people of Manchester. They should be confident in challenging others who are not demonstrating these behaviours and open to challenge when others feel they are not working in this way.

Through personal example, open commitment and clear action, the role will ensure diversity is positively valued, resulting in equal access and treatment in employment, service delivery and communications.

Where the role holder is disabled, every effort will be made to supply all necessary aids, adaptations, or equipment to allow them to carry out all the duties of the role. If, however, a certain task proves to be unachievable, job redesign will be given full consideration.

Role portfolio

Manchester City Galleries are proudly part of Manchester City Council and belong to the people of Manchester. We believe that creativity can be a powerful force in making a healthy society and achieving positive social change. We meet the needs of Manchester’s varied communities, connecting art and people through exhibitions, engagement, and education. Art can expand our knowledge of the world and our sense of place within it.

The Gallery sits within the Libraries, Galleries and Culture Service as part of the Neighbourhoods Directorate of Manchester City Council (MCC). It has two public venues - Manchester Art Gallery (in the heart of the city centre) and Platt Hall (in Rusholme, a centre for creative health and well-being developed with the local community). A third site - Queens Park Conservation Studios in Harpurhey - serves

as the ‘engine-room’ of the gallery, providing essential collection housing for the designated costume collection, and conservation studios.

The Gallery works in strategic partnership with the Whitworth Art Gallery and Manchester Museum as an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation to deliver the city’s cultural objectives and promote Manchester as a centre of knowledge and creativity.

The Gallery’s 45,000-strong collection spans six centuries of art, craft and design, and fashion and dress, with a particularly rich, and much loved, collection of 19th-century art, including many Pre-Raphaelite paintings. The collection belongs to the people of Manchester, with the city council - under the terms of the Greater Manchester Act 1981 - as sole trustee. The gallery develops, conserves, display and interprets the city’s collection and works collaboratively with communities across Manchester to rethink and use these collections to reflect wider histories and experiences - developing a long-term public programme that uses public space in diverse ways and brings people and collections together to share thinking, to inspire creativity, and to change lives. By working collectively, we can unlock the rich potential of the collection to foster belonging, togetherness and understanding. To unite cultures and communities through shared experience, common purpose, and mutual recognition. To create the conditions for new understandings, ideas and knowledge that will make a tangible difference to people’s lives.

MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

Behaviours, skills, and technical requirements

Our Manchester Behaviours

- We work together and trust each other
- We are proud and passionate about Manchester
- We take time to listen and understand
- We 'own it' and are not afraid to try new things
- We value our differences and treat each other fairly

Generic Skills

Communication Skills: Ability to build and maintain strong networks of support both internally and externally and to forge effective partnerships with external agencies, voluntary and statutory, and key stakeholders for the continuous improvement of services. Ability to harness the full commitment and responsibility of key stakeholders in delivering the vision of excellence for the city.

Analytical Skills: Application of strong analytical reasoning skills and intellectual focus, taking in the wider external and internal environments. proactively think through problems rather than reactively following a procedure-driven approach

Creative Skills: Ability to think creatively to proactively about potential future scenarios and to develop a range of creative solutions that meet the strategic needs of the business and are new and original.

Strategic Thinking: The ability to translate vision into strategy and strategy into action

Project Management: Ability to control numerous projects simultaneously to budget and deadline, whilst maintaining excellent quality control and working with a wide range of partners.

Research and Intelligence: Produce intelligence output in line with customers' requirements and actively collaborate across the wider analytical community to test and challenge.

Policy Skills: Builds collaborative and trusting relationships with decision makers

Commercial Skills: Demonstrates sound business intelligence and ability to identify commercially viable opportunities and secure value for money in service delivery.

Financial Management: Excellent financial planning skills to develop short-, medium- and long-term financial plans with an ability to budget proactively with large, high-risk, or volatile elements being identified and cross-referenced to operational activity.

People Management: Effective development, management, and motivation of staff within service area, providing leadership and planning for the work of a service-

based function or Council wide team. Establishes clear targets and monitors progress to ensure continuous improvement in service delivery.

Technical requirements (Role Specific)

- Minimum 5 years' experience working at a senior level in museum and/or art gallery organisations.
- Experience of managing nationally significant collections and heritage assets, including accountability for governance, risk management, operational compliance, commercial performance, and organisational sustainability.
- Professional knowledge of the national museum sector and current issues, and familiarity with standards and best practice required for museums accreditation
- Proven ability to manage change as an effective leader who can create an environment where people can thrive and deliver agreed outcomes.