**Job Title:** Chief Executive Officer  
**Organisation:** Circusful, Festival of Fools, and Premiere Circus  
**Reporting to:** Chair and Board of Trustees

**Location:** Belfast, based at Circusful’s office on Gordon Street, with travel across Northern Ireland.  
**Salary:** circa £54,792 per annum (dependent on experience)

**Holiday Entitlement:** 25 days plus statutory holidays.  
**Contract Type:** Permanent (subject to funding, with a six-month probationary period).

**About the Role**  
Circusful, Festival of Fools, and Premiere Circus are seeking an exceptional leader to serve as Chief Executive Officer, driving forward our shared mission to champion circus as an inspiring and inclusive art form. As CEO, you will be responsible for strategic leadership, operational excellence, and income generation, ensuring our long-term sustainability and impact.

Reporting to the Board of Trustees, you will act as an inspiring ambassador for the organisations, building strong relationships with funders, stakeholders, and partners locally, nationally, and internationally. You will lead a dedicated team, oversee a dynamic portfolio of programmes, and ensure our work reflects excellence and inclusion.

The successful applicant will have outstanding leadership skills with the ability to

inspire and strategically lead and motivate the staff team and performance tutors.

They will role-model the mind-set, values and behaviours needed to drive

transformational change and organisational growth.

**Key Responsibilities**

**Strategic Leadership**

* Develop and implement organisational strategies, business plans, and policies to achieve Circusful’s, Festival of Fools and Premiere Circus’s vision and goals.
* Provide inspirational leadership to the team, promoting a culture of collaboration, creativity, and accountability.
* Represent the organisations publicly, advocating for the transformative power of circus as an art form.

**Festival and Program Delivery**

* Ensure the team are equipped to deliver Festival of Fools each year, Northern Ireland’s largest annual street art festival
* Ensure resources are available for all current and future planned programmes and projects to engage and work with youth across Northern Ireland

**Income Generation & Financial Management**

* Secure and manage grant funding to ensure organisational sustainability.
* Identify and develop innovative income streams, including sponsorships, individual giving, and social enterprise opportunities.
* Maintain robust financial oversight, delivering budgets, forecasts, and transparent reporting to the Board.

**Programme Excellence**

* Expand opportunities for children and young people to engage in circus arts, ensuring pathways for inclusion and achievement.
* Lead the delivery of flagship events, including the internationally renowned Festival of Fools.
* Prioritise safeguarding and ensure the organisation complies with HR and equality legislation.

**Governance & Reporting**

* Act as Company Secretary, ensuring compliance with statutory and charity regulations.
* Provide the Board with accurate, timely reports to support strategic decision-making.
* Maintain a live risk register and implement measures to mitigate risks.

**Team Leadership**

* Oversee recruitment, training, and development of staff and tutors, fostering a positive and inclusive workplace.
* Lead by example, modelling values and behaviours that inspire trust and performance.

**About You**

We are seeking a visionary leader with a minimum of five years’ experience at a senior management level, including at least three years operating at or immediately below Board/Chief Executive level. You will bring a proven track record of leadership within complex organisations, ideally in the charity or arts sector.

**Essential Experience:**

* Financial Management: Demonstrated ability to implement and oversee financial policies, produce timely management accounts, budgets, and variance reports, and manage working capital effectively.
* Strategic Leadership: Significant experience in strategic planning, prioritisation, and execution, with a history of developing robust, measurable operational plans that align with organisational goals.
* Income Generation: Proven success in identifying, negotiating, and securing substantial grant funding and income generation opportunities, with a focus on sustainability and growth. Must have experience securing total income of greater than £250,000 p/a.
* Preparing, planning, and managing high-profile events.
* Communications & Marketing: A track record of delivering high-profile communications and marketing strategies to increase public profile and stakeholder engagement.
* Team Leadership: Experience in leading and managing diverse teams, fostering positive staff engagement, and cultivating a collaborative, values-driven culture.
* Project Management: Significant expertise in managing large-scale projects to ensure alignment with strategic objectives, delivered on time and within budget.
* Partnership Building: Demonstrable success in developing and maintaining relationships with funders, partners, and stakeholders to advance organisational missions.
* Entrepreneurial Approach: Ability to innovate and maximise income and return on investment through new markets and social business opportunities.

**Desirable Experience:**

* Leading and motivating multidisciplinary teams, including working with artists and creative collaborators.

**Essential Knowledge & Skills:**

* A comprehensive understanding of the charity sector, including funding models, governance, and regulatory compliance.
* Exceptional written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to inspire and engage diverse audiences.
* Strong networking and influencing skills, with professional credibility to represent the organisation at public events and key stakeholder meetings.
* Proficiency in IT systems, including Microsoft Office Suite (Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint).

**Additional Requirements:**

* Flexibility to work occasional weekends and evenings, with travel across Northern Ireland and beyond. Circusful is an equal opportunities employer and reasonable adjustments will be considered if required.

**About Circusful, Festival of Fools, and Premiere Circus**

Circusful, Festival of Fools, and Premiere Circus are three interconnected organisations working together to celebrate, promote, and develop circus as an art form in Northern Ireland and beyond.

* **Circusful** is Northern Ireland's leading circus school and creative hub, offering inclusive training, workshops, and performance opportunities for people of all ages and abilities. With a mission to inspire creativity and build community through circus arts, Circusful creates pathways for learning, inclusion, and personal growth.
* **Festival of Fools** is an internationally acclaimed street theatre festival that brings world-class performers to the streets of Belfast each year. This flagship event attracts thousands of visitors, showcasing the joy, diversity, and accessibility of circus arts to wide audiences.
* **Premiere Circus** is a talent agency and resource hub for professional circus artists and performers in Northern Ireland. It nurtures artistic excellence, supports creative collaborations, and provides opportunities for artists to shine locally and internationally.

Together, these three organisations form a unique ecosystem, combining grassroots engagement, professional development, and world-class performance to champion circus as a transformative and inclusive art form.

If you are an accomplished leader ready to take on this multifaceted role, we’d love to hear from you. Apply now and join us in shaping the future of circus arts in Northern Ireland and beyond!

To apply please email [laura@circusful.org](mailto:laura@circusful.org) to receive the application pack or download from our website.