

The network for trade, training and development for the book publishing sector in Scotland

Chief Executive

Candidate Briefing Pack



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1. About Publishing Scotland

Publishing Scotland was set up in 1974 by publishers - to represent and support the publishing sector. A membership body from the outset, the organisation has always aimed to respond to the evolving challenges and needs of the publishing sector with a strong steer from the community itself through a main board and several sub-committees.

We receive public funding from Creative Scotland and earn income from annual membership subscriptions and from activities conducted to support, promote, and celebrate Scotland's book publishing sector, such as training, events, international promotion, and marketing.

Currently we have one hundred companies and individuals across Scotland across two main categories – publishers and network members. We are managed by a board of publisher members and other non-executive trustees and have a staff complement of six (three full-time, three part-time).

We aim to support work across the whole spectrum of publishing activity in Scotland, as a key part of the creative industries, through a range of services, with our acknowledged key position in training, information provision, development of infrastructure, and national and international book fair representation. We also collaborate with other areas of the books sector – literature bodies, festivals, retailers, heritage centres and bodies, libraries, schools, and higher education (the latter through having both university publishing degree courses in Scotland as members).

Network membership widens the criteria beyond publishers to these sectors and includes freelance workers in the sector, designers, literary agents, editors and proofreaders, the Society of Authors in Scotland, the Booksellers Association, data providers, digital companies and more.

The remit of the organisation has always included a cultural role: our task is to ensure that publishers in Scotland are best placed to pick up on, develop, and nurture new talent, and to develop strong marketing capabilities to reach audiences in the UK and overseas.

Publishing Scotland is also the parent company of a book distribution company, BookSource, based in Glasgow, and set up by the charity 30 years ago, which warehouses, invoices, and distributes books worldwide for over 160 publishing companies. (It is not necessary to be a member of PS to be distributed by Booksource and this remains an important part of our work – a pragmatic piece of infrastructure and support to publishers – made possible by running BookSource as the trading subsidiary of the charity.)

Our mission as the national agency for the publishing sector in Scotland: created to strengthen and nurture the publishing sector, to raise the profile of publishing, enable publishers to flourish by being as active and creative as possible, to become a diverse, positive and sustainable force for the future, positioning books and the written word as central to every community.

For the period 2025-28 we plan to focus our activities on three strategic aims that build on the work undertaken in the past but crucially which respond to the challenges of today which have evolved or have been sharpened, post-pandemic: the challenges posed by climate change, the disruptive effects of AI, the cost of living, societal changes, and changing reading habits and trends – all these require innovative thinking and practice.

Our new strategic aims are: -

- **Working towards a more sustainable and diverse sector**
- **Professionalising the sector – helping individuals and companies with targeted assistance**
- **Internationalisation – creating international opportunities for the book sector.**

Operations

Publishing Scotland is run by a small office with five staff, headed by the CEO, who reports to the Chair of the board.

Location – we operate from serviced offices in central Edinburgh, close to Princes St.

Publishing Scotland is a registered charity and limited company.

We have a board of 12 trustees, currently headed by our chair, Kate Gibb, who is COO of Canongate Books.

We run three websites -

www.publishingscotland.org/; www.booksfromscotland.com and www.scottishbooksinternational.org

2. Job specification and person specification

Key details

- Job Title: Chief Executive Officer – Publishing Scotland
- Salary: £55-65k, depending on experience + benefits
- Contract: Permanent, full-time role
- Location – Central Edinburgh

Publishing Scotland is the trade, development, and network body for the book publishing sector in Scotland. Based in Edinburgh, the charity exists to support members, act as the voice of the sector, train, host events, and fund publishers, and work in partnership with a wide range of organisations, public and private, to create opportunities and change for the book publishing sector. Mainly funded by Creative Scotland, we work both nationally and internationally to promote the work of the Scottish publishing industry.

We are seeking a new CEO who will oversee and take forward our strategic plan for 2025-2028, extend and deepen our work, lead the team, and elevate our profile both nationally and internationally.

The right person for this role will be an experienced leader, a passionate champion of publishing creativity and business, an effective relationship builder, and someone who will inspire and energise the team as well as the organisation's diverse range of members, partners and stakeholders. This is an opportunity to lead an organisation and team that is highly valued by its community and operating in a challenging business environment where demand for support continues to rise.

Publishing Scotland consists of over 100 publishing and supplier companies and individuals, with oversight from a board of twelve trustees, and there is a separate but closely allied trading subsidiary company, Booksource Ltd, (a book distribution company based outside Glasgow) with its own board and employees.

Key tasks and responsibilities

KEY RELATIONSHIPS:

- Internal - Reporting to the Chair of the Board, the Chief Executive line manages the team and sits on the boards of PS and Booksource.
- External – manages the relationship with the main funding body, Creative Scotland; members of Publishing Scotland and all main creative bodies working within the literature sector in Scotland

KEY TASKS

General - strategic leadership, operational management, financial oversight, stakeholder engagement, and risk management.

- To develop a programme offer which appeals to a wide range of members, demonstrates excellence, and aims to grow appetite and demand for the output of Scottish-based publishers and the writing community.
- To lead on the international working of Publishing Scotland including running the International Publishing Fellowships scheme and the work of Scottish Books International.
- To deliver the organisation's business plan 2025-2028 and to create the next strategic plan for presentation to the Board.
- Be accountable to the Board and to funding bodies, ensuring the sustainability and responsible stewardship of Publishing Scotland, and future-proofing its finances.
- To be responsible for all financial matters including the presentation of management accounts, long- and short-term financial plans, cashflow forecasts and budgets to the board in conjunction with the Finance Officer and Treasurer.
- To represent the sector and organisation to stakeholders, sponsors and funding bodies; in public and industry forums; and in the media.
- To seek and create partnerships with organisations, charities and businesses.
- To create an energised environment conducive to the production of high-quality and healthy working practice from staff and freelancers; to lead staff to maintain effective management and employment policies; to encourage and enable professional development.
- To ensure the implementation of Publishing Scotland's policies, in line with the mission, vision and values.
- To act as Company Secretary, ensuring that the Board is provided with appropriate information to enable strategic decisions and oversight.
- To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation as employer, limited company and registered charity.

As the successful candidate, you will demonstrate:

- Experience of working in the publishing industry would be an advantage
- A strong understanding of the landscape of the publishing industry, and the wider publishing and writing ecology
- Evidence of leading the development of an organisation's short- and long-term strategies and policies
- The ability to develop innovative ideas and partnerships to meet the publishing community's needs.
- Experience in governance, charity administration, and financial management
- Experience of accountability to funders, to the board of directors/trustees or stakeholders of the company
- Proven ability to enhance an organisation's profile through effective external communications.
- A commitment to fostering a positive, inclusive organisational culture that unites teams and aligns them with organisational goals.
- Resilience, adaptability, and strong internal communication skills.

Contract: Permanent, subject to a probationary period of 6 months

Holiday entitlement: 30 days per year, plus 9 bank holidays.

Hours: Full-time, 35 hours per week. Occasional evening and weekend work is expected for this role

Salary: £55-65k, dependent on experience

3. How to apply

To apply for the role of Chief Executive, please submit both a CV and a personal statement explaining your motivation for the application and why you are well-suited to the role.

Please submit the details and two referees and let us know if we are free to approach them. We will not check references without prior approval.

Applications should be emailed, marked 'Publishing Scotland CEO post' in the subject line, to the chair, Kate.Gibb@canongate.co.uk.

The deadline for applications is Friday 9th May 2025.

Shortlisting and panel interviews – mid to late May 2025

Start date for successful candidate – in order to have a transition and handover from the current CEO, we would anticipate the start date to be no later than 31 August, but earlier is preferable.

Publishing Scotland
Scott House
10 Sth St Andrew St
Edinburgh
EH2 2AZ
www.publishingscotland.org
0131 228 6866
Email – enquiries@publishingscotland.org