

Head of Operations Applicant Information

About Acme

London-based charity Acme has been supporting artists in need since 1972. Over this time, we have provided thousands of artists at all stages of career with affordable studios, work/live space and a programme of artist support through residencies and awards. We support the development and production of art by reducing the practical challenges that artists face, increasing their ability to take creative risks.

Acme is the single largest provider of permanent affordable artist studios in England, supporting over 800 individual artists across 15 buildings in Greater London each year.

acme.org.uk



Background

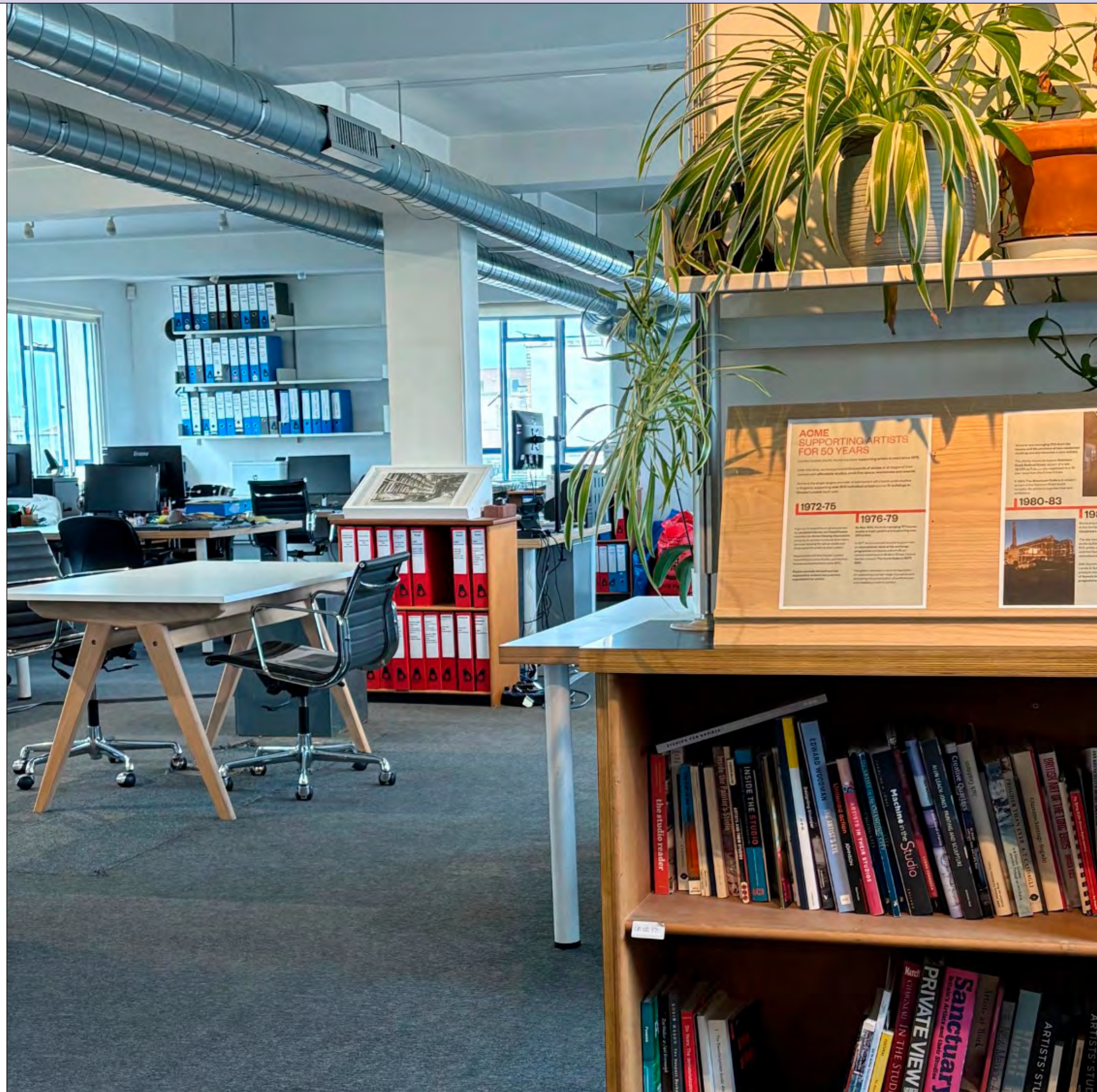
Over the past 3 years, Acme has been carrying out leadership resilience and succession planning, moving from a three-person Executive Co-Director model to one where a CEO is supported by an Executive Management Team (EMT).

Head of Operations is a new role that sits within the EMT, working alongside and in collaboration with our Head of Artist Support, Head of Property and Chief Executive Officer.

In practice, the Head of Operations balances senior, organisation-wide strategic and financial responsibilities with the formation, leadership and day-to-day line-management of the Operations staff team. Staff in this team are experienced in their individual roles but have not previously been brought together as a cohesive unit.

Currently, we are also examining the way we use ICT systems across Acme, looking to positively impact the current and future delivery of our work. This is an exciting time to join us, and a great role for a people-focused systems specialist with financial acumen.

Acme values open communication and collaborative working. We work with purpose and commitment to our organisational mission and values.



Our Values

Artists are essential to society, and we place them at the heart of everything we do. Through our activity, we are committed to ensuring that artists can continue being artists.

Humanity

We strive to make a positive impact

- We treat people fairly and do not exploit artists to fulfill the outcomes of others.
- We value other perspectives, taking time to listen with compassion, and with a commitment to honesty and openness.
- We value diversity in all we do and are committed to equality and social justice.
- We consider the environmental impact of our activity, striving to minimise it in all aspects of our work.

Trust

Trust is the foundation of all our work

- We trust in artists and prioritise their autonomy.
- We operate principled and transparent criteria for selection and allocation, and don't take risks with artists' needs.
- The effectiveness of our team is built on mutual trust and we are motivated by a shared desire to support artists.
- We place trust in partners who share our values and earn their trust through transparency, honesty and integrity.

Stability

Our long term approach creates stability

- We protect and nurture the future of artists in London, prioritising their long term growth and development.
- We evolve and innovate without taking short term decisions that would be detrimental to our long term goals.
- We continue to grow expertise to meet the political, cultural and economic challenges of the future, without compromising our mission or beliefs.

The Role

Job Title:	Head of Operations
Reports to:	CEO
Responsible for:	Accounts, Rents, HR, Records and Archive. Currently six members of staff
Position:	Part of Executive Management Team (EMT)
Salary:	£67,000 per annum

Role Purpose

As a member of Acme’s Executive Management Team, the postholder will provide strategic guidance to the organisation while ensuring the efficient and effective daily operations of all financial and operational functions.

Ruby Swinney’s studio at Billet Road Studios, November 2025 © Hydar Dewachi, courtesy of The Acme Archive.



Main Duties and Key Responsibilities of Postholder

Executive Team Leadership

As a member of the EMT, the postholder will have organisational-wide leadership and management responsibilities including:

- Maintain comprehensive understanding of how Acme operates and supports artists to ensure decision making stays in-keeping with Acme’s values and operations;
- Lead on Acme’s operations, developing strategies to address the priorities stated in Acme’s strategic plan;
- Provide high level input into cross organisation strategies, initiatives and priorities;
- Collaborate with EMT providing operational insight and experience to achieve Acme’s mission;
- Report to EMT on operations issues identifying areas for departmental policy development and review;
- Embrace holistic working practices as part of EMT, ensuring that Acme’s operations develop in sympathy with and to support other core Acme departments, working collaboratively when appropriate;
- Produce management reports as required;
- Respect and incorporate the viewpoint of staff at all levels of Acme to inform and improve decision-making;
- Embrace, uphold and communicate Acme values and policy decisions to staff, correcting misconceptions and behaviours when necessary;
- Proactively address workplace issues that arise which could impact on the harmonious office working environment in line with HR policy.

Financial

Responsible for the finances of the organisation: business planning, strategic finance, budgetary controls, compliance and annual audit. To increase Acme’s financial sustainability to ensure that the organisation can continue to deliver and expand its activities long term.

Acme values relevant financial experience. A financial qualification would be useful, however, it is not essential for the postholder.

- Work with the CEO and EMT in financial decision-making, planning and control;
- Work with Head of Property to ensure reserves are sufficient to maintain our buildings to the level consistent with artists’ studios;
- Manage and set the annual budget, reporting to the CEO/EMT on areas of concern and change;
- Work with the Accounts and Operations Manager on production of quarterly management accounts;
- Maintain long-term projections, identifying risk, working with CEO and EMT to navigate future financial pressures;
- Liaise with external auditors on producing yearly financial statements, supporting and facilitating the financial audit;
- Liaise with department heads and key budget holders, to ensure all income and expenditure are forecast, signed off, recorded accurately and overseen.

Line Management

Responsible for the Line Management of the newly created Operations team.

- Shape and lead the newly established Operations team;
- Line manage the Operations Team (currently six staff members) – Accounts and Operations Manager, Finance Officer, HR advisor, Rent Accounts Manager, Rent Accounts Officer, Data and Archive Manager;
- Inspire the Operations team, coaching performance, identifying training and professional development opportunities, and undertake annual staff reviews.

Human Resources

Responsible for all aspects of HR Policy to ensure legal compliance, strive for best practice, protect the well-being of all staff and ensure the staff team can effectively deliver Acme’s aims. To work with EMT and HR Advisor to ensure that Acme’s values are communicated and embraced at all levels of the organisation.

- Provide strategic oversight for Acme’s HR functions;
- Work with the HR advisor and EMT to ensure Acme’s HR policies and procedures are compliant, fair and balance Acme’s operational need with maintaining a positive and inclusive workplace culture;
- Take advice from Acme’s HR Advisor, and with EMT, take action to resolve escalated HR issues;
- Maintain oversight of payroll and pension functions to provide cover for HR Advisor when needed.

Operations & Office Systems

Responsible for the organisational systems, ICT and beyond, to ensure Acme can function effectively, efficiently and collaboratively, maintaining Acme’s reputation for professionalism against a backdrop of increasing costs and pressures.

- Work with Records and Archive Manager to assess, improve, devise and implement organisational record keeping strategies, including maintaining and expanding Acme’s archive, ensuring the accuracy, relevance and integrity of data held by Acme, to support our operational objectives;
- Oversee the use of Acme’s software systems including but not limited to Office 365, Pyramid (management software), GoodCRM (relationship management software) and Sage (payroll system), proactively developing and refining use, to ensure Acme can function effectively, efficiently and collaboratively;
- Liaise with Acme’s IT support and software external providers to maintain evolution of Acme’s systems when required and provide solution-focused input to improve systems to respond to needs of the organisation;
- In collaboration with EMT, maintaining an up-to-date and realistic risk register;
- Oversee contractual and legal matters to ensure responsibility is delegated to the correct teams and legal advice sought where appropriate. Ensuring that consequential risk is explored and fully understood by EMT.

Governance

Fulfil the role of Company Secretary as described in Acme’s code of governance, including:

- Being responsible for compliance with Acme’s constitution and requirements of relevant governing body (currently FCA);
- Organising and attending meetings of the Board, keeping the minutes of those meetings.

Acme is an exempt charity and is governed by a board of trustees.

General Duties

- Adherence to Data Protection legislation and Health and Safety requirements;
- Attend relevant training courses with colleagues where appropriate;
- Together with other members of staff, handle general enquiries including written, phone and e-mail;
- Attend staff and departmental meetings;
- Attendance at out of hours Acme events when required;
- Voluntary participation in Acme’s Equal Opportunities Working Group or Acme’s Environmental Working Group.

To undertake such tasks as may be required by Acme that is consistent with the nature of this post. This job description reflects the current requirements of the role. As duties and responsibilities change and develop this will be reviewed and will be subject to amendment in consultation with the postholder.

Person Specification

Criteria	Essential/Desirable	How to be measured
Financial Management		
Proven experience in organisational financial management (at least 5 years)	Essential	Application and Interview
Working understanding of company financial statements eg P&L and Balance Sheet	Essential	Application and Interview
Understanding of the legal requirements for charities and companies	Essential	Application and Interview
Leadership		
Experience of managing a diverse / specialist team or multiple staff	Essential	Application and Interview
Experience of working at a senior level in a small/ medium size organisation	Essential	Application and Interview
Strong track record in operational leadership, people development, and cross-functional collaboration	Essential	Application and Interview
Systems and Operations		
Experience in implementing and improving operational systems	Essential	Application and Interview
Experience in devising and implementing policies and procedures	Essential	Application and Interview
Experience of utilising IT software packages to streamline processes	Essential	Application and Interview
Strong IT skills, including accounting, knowledge management and CRM software	Essential	Application and Interview

Person Specification

General		
Effective communication skills – written and verbal	Essential	Application and Interview
Proven good level of numeracy	Essential	Interview
Strong team player able to work effectively with cross departmental colleagues and client groups	Essential	Interview
Ability to work constructively to troubleshoot issues or emergencies	Essential	Interview
Ability to inspire colleagues to provide a positive and professional service to artists and colleagues	Essential	Interview
Empathy with the mission, objectives and values of Acme	Essential	Interview
A commitment to diversity and equal opportunities	Essential	Interview
The ability to meet UK ‘right to work’ requirements	Essential	Pre-employment check

Summary of Terms and Conditions

Position	Head of Operations
Name of employer	Acme Artists' Studios Ltd.
Place of work	44 Copperfield Road, Bow, London, E3 4RR The office is on the 4th floor. There is a lift and access throughout. Your principal place of work is the Company's premises (as above). However, you may, following consultation, be required to work on either a temporary or on an indefinite basis at any premises which the Company currently has or may subsequently acquire or at any premises at which it may from time to time provide services.
Salary	£67,000 per annum
Employment type	Permanent
Benefits	• A commitment to flexible working • Annual leave 28 days plus bank holidays and discretionary Christmas closure • Enhanced sick and family leave pay • Pension scheme • Cycle to work scheme • Interest free season ticket, Childcare and Rent deposit loan • Training and development opportunities • Employee Assistance Scheme • Sabbatical leave
Days and hours of work	Full time, 5 days / 35 hours per week (potential for one day per week working from home after probationary period). There is a requirement for this and other EMT roles to be predominantly office-based/in person.

How to Apply

To apply, please visit our website and complete the Head of Operations application form along with a copy of your CV:

<https://www.cognitoforms.com/Acme10/HeadOfOperationsRecruitmentForm>

Please note: Applicants who do not demonstrate that they meet the criteria outlined in the person specification will not be considered for the role.

The deadline for applications is **Sunday 4 January 2026**. First round of interviews will be held on **Tuesday 20 January 2026**. Second round of interviews will be held on **Tuesday 27 January 2026**.

Anticipated start date is April 2026. Applicant must be in post before 1 May 2026.

After submitting your application you will be redirected to an anonymous Monitoring Form. Completing this form helps Acme monitor how effective we have been in communication to and attracting a diverse range of applicants, and in order to identify possible direct or indirect barriers to application. The information you share with us on this form is optional, not part of any selection process, and is kept completely separate from your application.

Unfortunately, we cannot provide feedback on unsuccessful applications.

Deputy Mayor for Culture and the Creative Industries Justine Simons OBE and David Panton OBE, Chair of Acme's Board of Trustees, at the opening of Acme's new community engagement space, July 2024 © Hydar Dewachi, courtesy of The Acme Archive.



Access Support

As a Disability Confident employer, we are committed to making our recruitment and selection practices barrier free and accessible to everyone. This includes reasonably adjusting the recruitment process for those with disabilities or long term health conditions. If you have any access requirements at any stage of the recruitment process please contact, Natasha O’Brien, HR Advisor by emailing – natasha@acme.org.uk.

Proud member of the Disability Confident Employer Scheme

As Acme is a Disability Confident employer, we commit that we will generally offer an interview to any applicant that declares they have a disability and meets the minimum criteria for the job as detailed in the person specification.

AI Usage

Acme understands the benefits of using AI. However, if you are thinking of using this tool to submit your application, we ask you to think about what value it will add. AI tools tend to lack the personal touch and authenticity we value in candidates. We encourage you showcase your unique knowledge, real life experience, skills using your own voice.

Applications perceived to be significantly supported using Artificial Intelligence (AI) such as ChatGPT to generate, cut and/or paste answers into your application without subsequent personalisation by you are likely to be scored down during the shortlisting process.

We do not use AI during our shortlisting / selection process, this is carried out by us to ensure we select the best person for the role.

ED&I Commitment

Acme exists to support the broadest possible range of artistic practice and creates opportunities for artists to develop and take greater creative risks.

We passionately believe in social equity and the benefits of diversity, seeking to support, encourage and include people, regardless of age, disability, gender identity or gender expression, race, ethnicity, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation or any other equality characteristic.

We particularly encourage applications from disabled people and those from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, as these groups are currently under-represented in the arts and cultural sectors.

Thank you!

If you have any questions about the role or any access requirements, please contact Natasha O’Brien, HR Advisor natasha@acme.org.uk or call the Acme office on [020 8891 6811](tel:02088916811).

