**Job Description**

**Development Consultant (part-time maternity cover)**

**Discover Children’s Story Centre**

Discover Children’s Story Centre is the UK’s first hands-on creative literature space for children aged 0-11 years and their families / carers dedicated to generating a love of language, literature and stories.

At the heart of Discover are two floors of magical Story World and a Story Garden – immersive, exploratory play spaces where children and their imaginations can roam. The Discover team also work alongside bestselling authors and illustrators to create temporary immersive adventures, designed to feed children’s creativity and develop their storytelling and creative writing skills and run a year-round programme of story events on and off site. The busy venue welcomes over 100,000 visitors a year including more than 300 school parties, with ancillary revenue generation from a family café, coffee shack, bookshop, birthday party offer, tenancies and space hires. Proudly rooted in Newham, East London, at least 1 in 10 of our audience's experience Discover for free and we work closely with a wide range of community partners, our children’s, family and teachers' forums to guide our work.

In 2023 we launched a new five-year strategy, ‘Stories For All’, which outlines how we want to continue to put children first, create the extraordinary, keep growing our accessibility and inclusion, play our part in protecting our planet and ensure our organisation is well run. This includes a major capital redevelopment of our site which has already delivered new infrastructure including Air Source heating and cooling, new accessible toilets, improved insulation and a giant inflatable monster on the roof. The next phase of works will take place in spring 2026 and deliver a new ground floor café, 0-2s play and inclusive vertical play galleries, enabling the venue to grow and adapt to serve the next 1 million children and families.

**Title:** Development Consultant (maternity cover)

**Location:** Discover Children’s Story Centre

**Reports to:** CEO

**Responsible for:** Senior Development Manager (1 FTE), Senior Development Manager (new Fixed Term role autumn 2025 – Feb 2027), Development Officer (0.6 FTE), in partnership with the CEO

**Contract:** Fixed term contract (offered as an employment contract or freelance basis), 2 days per week with phased start from October / November ending mid-January 2027 (flexible working will be considered).

**Purpose**

An exciting opportunity has arisen for an experienced and successful fundraising consultant to cover aspects of the operational and strategic responsibilities of the Development and Delivery Director whilst she is on a period of maternity leave. We are seeking a part-time senior Development Consultant who can drive the work of the team in line the strategic plan for the department, and work closely with the CEO. We are recruiting an additional Senior Development Manager for this period to bolster the department during the final stages of a capital fundraising project and to support plans for growth in corporate and individuals fundraising. Our aim is for the Development Consultant to start sometime in Oct / Nov to work closely with the Development and Delivery Director ahead of their maternity leave for an in-depth induction and handover.

The Development Consultant will be part of Discover’s senior management team, responsible for the overall direction and wellbeing of the organisation. The postholder has two core responsibilities:

1. delivering the fundraising strategy that delivers a significant percentage of annual income, enabling us to deliver on our core aims of supporting children with creativity, confidence and connection through story-based play and learning.
2. ensuring that Discover delivers on its social value and financial targets by overseeing critical planning, evaluation, partnership and project work.

**Key Responsibilities and Duties**

**Executive Management**

* Work closely with the CEO and other staff as part of Discover’s executive to determine the overall direction and well-being of the organisation.
* Deliver the fundraising strategy for Discover (as set by the Development and Delivery Director, CEO and Board) in partnership with the CEO, Board and Development Board, and achieving fundraising targets and providing regular reports to the Board, Development Board and executive.
* Support the CEO to manage the Development team during the period of maternity cover, ensuring the team responds to organisational need.
* Work closely with colleagues and partners to create project plans and budgets which meet both strategic and financial objectives for Discover, with unflagging commitment to ensuring the highest possible quality experiences for children and families through our work.
* Act as Board secretary for the Development Board, working closely with the CEO and Development Board Chair to organise and administrate quarterly meetings.
* Being an ambassador for Discover, with empathy, passion and creative commitment to the organisation’s work.
* Supporting other colleagues and Discover with such tasks as may reasonably be deemed necessary.

**Operational and Capital Fundraising (including Trusts, Individuals and Corporates)**

* Manage and build on key relationships with funders including public statutory bodies, trusts and foundations, companies and individuals, identifying and developing new partnerships and keeping abreast of developments in arts, education, children’s wellbeing, fundraising and other fields relevant to Discover.
* Secure on-going revenue and capital funding, delivering written applications and face-to-face presentations to a broad range of funders, supporters and partners, meeting challenging targets with positivity.
* Roll out the plans for the new Story Supporter Individual Giving programme, identify, cultivate and develop a major gift portfolio, and deliver on the organisation’s corporate ambitions for new partnerships, sponsorships and our first corporate membership scheme. This includes further developing the plans for a stewardship event programme.
* Work with the CEO to identify gaps and opportunities for Discover in meeting the objectives laid out in its strategic framework, delivering partnerships – where appropriate – projects that move Discover forward in creating social and / or financial value.

**Statutory and Other Strategic Partnerships**

* Ensure that fundraising reports are prepared accurately and to schedule, including managing the NPO relationship with Arts Council England.
* Help support a range of academic, operational and creative partnerships that support Discover’s excellence in hands-on creative play and learning experiences, promoting and growing our unique practice.

**Person specification:**

The following skills, experience or knowledge is essential:

* High level understanding of organisational delivery in the arts or charity sector, able to work broadly across operational areas to ensure excellent outcomes in line with strategic objectives.
* Strong track record of work in a development / fundraising position, delivering high quality strategic projects and meeting financial targets.
* Extensive knowledge of trusts, foundations, lottery and other funders with reference to the arts, heritage, education and support for children; understanding and appreciation of corporate, philanthropic and other fundraising avenues.
* Excellent bid and report writing, able to create succinct and compelling prose and produce well-presented and professional documents often to tight deadlines.
* Strategic thinker with wide ranging experience of innovative project design, able to work creatively with colleagues to devise work that will continue to grow Discover’s impact, reputation and fundability.
* Great influencing skills, able to inspire partners with a sense of shared mission, develop and maintain relationships that make a difference to what we can deliver.
* Excellent communication skills, with tact, confidence and maturity to liaise with a wide range of people.
* Highly numerate with confidence in creating workable budgets across multiple activity areas, balancing core and project spend, able to support the finance team with appropriate accounting.
* Flexible and self-motivated, able to prioritise and plan a challenging workload, and communicate deadlines and support needs across the Development and Delivery and wider Discover teams.
* Knowledge of policy and priorities across the arts / education / early years and child welfare sectors.
* Positive, proactive and warm, happy to be part of a diverse staff team of creatives and administrators with a shared mission.

**Contract**: This post is a fixed term role offered as an employment contract or on contracted freelance basis. We are looking for someone to start as soon as possible (to be confirmed with the post-holder) and to work with us until mid-Jan 2027. The post is subject to a 2-month probationary period and the post holder will be required to undertake an Enhanced DBS check.

**Working Hours:** This post is advertised as a consultant contract for 2 working days a week. There may be occasional weekend or evening working for which there will be time off in lieu.

L**ocation**: A regular presence is required in Discover Story Centre in Stratford, East London to deliver this role effectively, with potential for a level of flexible working. Discover’s venue and offices are wheelchair accessible.

**Holiday entitlement:**

25 days per annum pro rata’d equivalent, plus bank holiday

**Flexibility:** All jobs at Discover are carried out on a flexible basis, with duties and responsibilities varying from time to time to meet the needs of the organisation without changing the general character of the job or level of responsibility. We understand that work is only one part of employees lives and endeavour to ensure that this flexibility works both ways and can support you with other needs.

**Equality and diversity:** Discover is committed to equal opportunities in employment practices and the provision of services and expects that this policy will be supported by everyone in the organisation. We are very happy to make accommodations you require to support you in your application process, please let us know what we can do to help.