



THE BIRCH COLLECTIVE

Connecting people to the natural world as a source of resilience and inspiration

The Birch Collective (Maternity Cover)

Operations Manager

- Role Description -

Organisation:	The Birch Collective CIC
Responsible to:	Director Tim George
Place of work:	30-64 Pennywell Road Bristol BS5 0TG
Hours of work:	15 hrs per week (2 days) This may include occasional extra paid days of work
Days of work	Wednesday/Thursday
Contract Type:	9 month maternity cover (19th Feb 2025 - end of October 2025)
Annual leave:	28 days pro rata (inclusive of bank holidays)
Probationary period:	3 months
Salary:	£36,600 - £40,039 pro rata depending on experience (PAYE salaried employment including paid holidays, NI contributions & optional pension contribution via the NEST scheme.)

About us

The Birch Collective work alongside 16-25s experiencing mental ill-health or social isolation. Through nature-based creative groups, we support participants through their transition to adulthood, unlocking their potential to be resilient, motivated, and empowered individuals who can make positive changes in their lives.

We believe in the efficacy of nature based mental health interventions and to that end host a range of programmes including:

- **Fresh Air Thursdays:** a weekly land-skills and wellbeing session
- **Camp Birch:** A 4-night transformational woodland residential
- **1:1 Nature Based Mentoring:** for participants in recovery from mental health crises/suffering from persistent health needs (commissioned by the NHS)
- **Therapeutic Forest School:** Working alongside partners we have developed this offer for young adults with profound disability (United Response) and ESOL students (The City of Bristol College), many of whom are asylum seekers & refugees.

- **Partnership work:** Bespoke nature-based workshops for partner organisations such as the Princes Trust, OTR and others.
- **Steering Groups:** a series of participatory workshops exploring loneliness/ social action and a chance to have a say in what direction the Birch Collective takes in the following year.

All of our programmes aim to build community and engender feelings of belonging, purpose and resilience. We co-design our programme with participants and offer space and support for them to develop practical and interpersonal skills via delivering mini workshops, and becoming peer representatives and volunteers.

As a staff team we have experience in psychotherapy, eco-therapy, Forest Schools & play, community music, group work, heritage craft, forestry and ecologically-sensitive food growing.

The Birch Collective (Birch) is now 4.5 years old. We are seeking someone to replace one of the co-founding directors during their maternity leave.

For more information about who we are and what we do, have a look at our [website](#)

Role Outline

In this vital role, the Operations Manager will support and work directly with the existing team and particularly the Director, reporting directly to them and replacing one of our Directors while they are on maternity leave. As this is a broad role, encompassing a number of different aspects that the outgoing Director has held responsibility for, we are looking for someone who is driven, fast to learn and has wide ranging experience.

You will have excellent communication skills and the ability to empower our board to take a more active role in the organisation and to place the views of 16-25 year-olds at the heart of our work. The Director will lead on finance and fundraising and will hold the strategic oversight of the business. You will lead on the smooth running of our operations including:

- Develop and implement a strategy for making the most of our board, empowering them to become more involved and take more responsibility within the organisation
- Set up a youth shadow board in collaboration with the Director so the people we serve are at the heart of our organisation
- Diversity and inclusion - a review of our current policies and practises and advice on how to improve them
- Oversee Birch's key governance documents, including the Articles of Association and the organisations Strategic Objectives, and will be the policy manager for the organisation.
- Supporting the Director with finance, fundraising and strategic overview of the business

If you don't meet these criteria but you feel would suit the role and have all of the relevant experience then please do apply.

As part of The Birch Collective you will:

- Be part of a small team where we employ sociocratic decision making where possible
- Have the opportunity to shape your role and make your mark on the organisation
- Be part of an organisation that is making a positive difference in the lives of 16-25s
- 28 days annual leave entitlement, plus bank holidays (pro rata)
- Training opportunities and time for personal development/reflection
- Have flexibility in working hours

Operations Roles and Responsibilities:

Governance Lead

- Organise and attend 3 x annual board meetings including logistics, preparing agendas, and overseeing proposals and reports. One of these will be the AGM.
- Support the board to take on more responsibility for the strategic overview of the organisation by developing their knowledge and training
- The development and review of governance policies and processes
- Build an effective working relationship with the board of directors and the youth shadow board and hold them accountable to fulfilling their roles and responsibilities.
- Make recommendations and design a strategy for future board membership recruitment
- Liaise with management consultants to organise and plan training days

Shadow Board Lead

- Set up a youth shadow board in collaboration with the Director (who will be in a consultant role for the youth engagement side of this task) to meet in advance of the board 3 x year including recruitment, induction, training and ongoing support to put young adults at the heart of our decision making processes.
- Train the youth shadow board so they can best use their skills and opinions to input into the board and the running of Birch.
- Build a committed group of young people (with support on youth participation from the Director)

Diversity and Inclusion Lead

- Review our current practices around diversity and inclusion
- Create a strategy including recommendations for the Birch team to implement
- Offer general advice on all things related to diversity and inclusion

Monitoring and Evaluation Lead

- Oversee and hone our Monitoring and Evaluation system across the organisation
- Ensure staff are familiar with M & E tools and how to record
- Process data gathered and present in both visually appealing and easy to digest formats to be used both internally and presented externally
- Evaluate M & E system periodically and work with consultant to amend accordingly

Due Diligence Lead

- Ensure that Birch's policies and risk assessments are reviewed, improved and maintained on a regular basis and that staff and participants comply with internal policies, best practice, and legislation. ● Safeguard lead: communicating with Young adults and other professionals, writing reports and following up on recommendations
- Responsible for DBS procedures

- Staff and volunteer safeguarding training
- Update insurance annually

HR and Internal Systems lead

- Ensure effective day-to-day management of HR administration, IT, health and safety, and data protection
- Oversee staff wellbeing including organising monthly supervision and regular staff breaks, get togethers, check ins and conflict resolution support
- Organise staff training and oversight of any requests for staff training
- Recruitment lifecycle management and implementation including contracts, legalities, overseeing marketing of role, interview process and induction of new staff including cover staff and zero hours workers
- Keep the office stocked with stationary/ paper etc

Internal Management

- Participating in peer to peer management

Finance Support

- Oversee cash flow forecasts and budget variance created by Finance lead - Director
- Support finance lead with predicted and actual project budgets
- Oversee production of management accounts and annual reports created by Finance lead
- Support finance lead in preparing quarterly finance reports for the Board, including analysing budget variance, forecasts and ad-hoc reports, as necessary

Funding Support

- Collaborate with Director to create a bid writing schedule and strategies for multi-year bids
- Update financial/funding stewardship document
- Report writing for all bids
- Support Funding lead to edit and write bids as necessary
 - Attend webinars/learning groups/check-ins with funders to gain information and build relationships

Programmes Project Management responsibilities

Camp - Lead administrator until end of July (camp delivered September 2025)

- Follow and have the overview of the camp project plan and undertake duties assigned to this role, not held by the Director, such as:
 - Work alongside the communication and marketing lead to disseminate camp application forms and info pack
 - Compile list of applicants/relevant details for Director and other facilitators to decide on final intake
 - Organise and book staff for planning meetings, camp debrief and pre/post camp meetups - Book transport (mini-bus) for all participants to camp

General

- Commit to working Wednesdays/ Thursdays at our Bristol office (occasional remote working can be

negotiated)

- Facilitate internal meetings, according to agreed processes
- Participate in weekly operational meetings
- Attend quarterly board meetings (worked as TOIL)
- Is familiar and aligned with The Birch Collective's values and mission
- Work collaboratively with the Birch team and prepared to take on extra tasks as needed
- Seeks timely support with Birch Collective related issues
- You will need access to your own computer for this role

Skills, Experience and Interests (Essential):

- Significant experience in operational management, strategic development and managing multiple and complex projects
- Sound understanding of how an 'active and accountable' non-executive board/board of trustees functions, governance best practice and legal parameters, preferably in the social enterprise/charities sector
- Experience of successfully leading, managing, motivating and developing staff and board members ● Demonstrable and successful experience in diversity and inclusion including creating a diversity and inclusion strategy and advising directors and staff on best practice
- Tangible experience of monitoring and evaluation and data analysis and presenting findings in a visually appealing and digestible format
- A proven track record of writing, reviewing and overseeing adherence to policy and risk assessments and complying with best practice and legislation
- Experience of creation and analysis of cash flow forecasts, budget variance, management accounts and finance reports
- A proven track record of securing funding bids including creating a funding strategy and compiling, editing and submitting bids
- Good communication and interpersonal skills, including the ability to write high quality reports ● Confident organisational and project management skills: time management, communication, goal setting, self-motivation, work prioritisation, ability to work to deadlines

Skills and Experience (Desirable):

- Experience of running Youth Shadow Boards
- Safeguarding lead (we can also provide training for this)
- Experience working in the community mental health/outdoor learning sector or experience working with 16-25's with diverse life experience
- Experience of successful collaboration in small teams
- Experience of developing and delivering HR, IT, Health & Safety, and data protection policy and procedures
- Existing relationships and contacts within community organisations/social prescribers/related professionals working with 16-25's in Bristol and the surrounding area

Personal Qualities:

- Enthusiastic about this role and with capacity to take it on
- Honest and committed to relationship building in a small team- able to communicate clearly and sensitively about needs, to ask for help and know capacity

- Reflective in your work - able to learn new skills and to learn from mistakes
- Collaborative and flexible - willingness to muck in and support each other within this small team
- Commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility
- Passionate about community mental health and offering nature based services to 16-25's
- A love of nature and spending time outside

Apply for this job:

To apply email james@thebirchcollective.co.uk the following:

- Your CV including name, address, contact number, employment and education history
- A cover letter explaining why you would like to work with us, outlining relevant skills and experience in relation to the desirable and essential criteria.
- Two referees, one of which should be your most or recent employer. We will only take up references for candidates chosen for interview.

Closing dates for applications: **Tues 26th Nov 5pm**

We are holding a drop in hour **Monday 4th November 5-6pm** at **St Werburghs City Farm** where you can meet us and have an informal chat. Please email james@thebirchcollective.co.uk for address/ directions
Interviews will be on: **Wednesday 4th December** in Bristol

Start date: **Wednesday 19th Feb 2025**

We are a small team and don't have capacity to respond to all applications, if you do not hear from us then you have not been shortlisted this time. Thank you so much for the time you have taken on writing an application to us.