

EX-OFFENDER ARTS WORKER

Introduction

At the Koestler Trust we aim to help offenders lead more positive lives, and we value highly the contribution that offenders themselves can make to our work. **Our team** includes ex-offenders as paid staff and volunteers, and at any one time we have 3 or 4 serving prisoners with us on day licence for work experience. The offenders benefit with new skills and confidence, and the Trust benefits from the first-hand knowledge and experience of the people we aim to help.

This is especially true in our Arts Team, which processes the thousands of artworks submitted by offenders, secure patients and immigration detainees to the annual Koestler Awards. **Ex-offender Arts Workers** understand just how precious Koestler entries are to the offender-artists who have made them; they bring credibility in responding to the hundreds of enquiries we receive from prison staff and inmates; and they can speak from inside knowledge of the role of the arts in prisons, eg. to our funders and to members of the public visiting our exhibitions.

This is why we have created two full-time Arts Worker posts specifically for ex-offenders – or for any other person who is or has been eligible to enter the Koestler Awards, eg. a remand prisoner, immigration detainee or secure psychiatric patient. (We can change the job title if needed to “Ex-Patient Arts Worker” or “Ex-Prisoner Arts Worker”. Anyway, on a day-to-day basis you will usually be known simply as an Arts Worker.)

The role is designed as a **training opportunity** – we are ready to give plenty of coaching and support, and may send you on external training days. The job is ideal if you want to gain some experience to go on to a career elsewhere in the arts or charity sector. The contract is fixed to a duration of 2 years, so that you do not become “stuck” under a label of “ex-offender”, and so that we can then offer the opportunity to others.

We also need to **carry out careful checks** on you. We are not afraid to take risks on people who have made mistakes in the past – our whole basis as a charity is believing that people can change. But we need to feel sure that you have a good chance of making a success of your time with us. We don't want to set anyone up to fail.

If your prison sentence or probation has been in the last 2 years, we need one of your referees to be a **prison officer or probation officer** who can tell us about your risk of future re-offending.

If you are currently in prison, your referee also needs to tell us how this job would fit with **your resettlement plan** – eg., when you will be able to start (by June 2010 at the latest), where you will be living (affordable accommodation within commuting distance of the Koestler Arts Centre), and who will be giving you emotional and practical support outside work.

As the job involves working with vulnerable people, we **cannot accept applications from people who have been convicted of a sexual or serious violent offence**. We may consider applications from people who have had some history of aggressive behaviour, as long as you and your probation officer can convince us that this is well and truly in the past.

We realise that many people have little experience of job applications, so we will make the **recruitment process** as welcoming and friendly as we can. We are offering an information

day so that you can come and meet us informally before deciding whether to apply. And you are welcome to contact us with questions at any time.

The posts are funded especially by the Westminster Foundation and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation: we are very grateful to them for enabling us to offer these opportunities.

Tim Robertson
Chief Executive

Fiona Curran
Director of Arts

January 2010

How to apply

- We are holding an **information day** at the Koestler Arts Centre in west London **Thursday 25 February 2010**, 11 am – 2 pm with sandwich lunch. The day is not part of the formal application process, and you do not have to attend in order to apply for the job. It is an informal opportunity to meet our team, look round the building, get a sense of what the job involves, and ask any questions you like. Please let us know if you are coming. We can reimburse travel expenses if needed.
- Find the **application form** on our website www.koestlertrust.org.uk, or phone or write for us to send you a copy. Make sure you complete all sections of the form. In Part 6, the Personal Statement, follow the numbered points of the Person Specification, showing how far you meet each point. Return the form to us **by Friday 12 March**.
- Do NOT send us a CV or any other materials.
- We will let you know by Tues 16 March if you have been short-listed for interview.
- **Interviews** will take place on **Friday 19 March**, and we will also invited applicants to spend a day with us at the Koestler Arts Centre.

If you have any other questions about the job, please get in touch.

We can provide reimbursement for reasonable travel expenses: please get in touch with Joyti on 020 8740 0606 to discuss it before making any arrangements.

Post:	Koestler Trust, FREEPOST RRKU-XLRJ-UHTS, 168a Du Cane Rd, London W12 0TX (no stamp needed)
Phone:	020 8740 0333
Email:	info@koestlertrust.org.uk

EX-OFFENDER ARTS WORKER

Job Description

Salary:	£17,290 per annum (paid monthly in arrears)
Hours:	35 hours a week, Mon – Fri 9 am to 5 pm (with 1 hour lunch break). Work will often be required at evenings and weekends to meet deadlines and run events. The post-holder may request time off in lieu, which can be agreed by the line manager.
Line manager:	Director of Arts (Fiona Curran)
Duration of contract:	Fixed term contract for 2 years (including an initial probationary period of 6 months).
Staff managed:	None, though will give guidance and support to volunteers or students on placement.
Base:	Koestler Arts Centre, 168a Du Cane Road, London W12 0TX (adjacent to Wormwood Scrubs Prison, near East Acton tube station).
Holidays:	25 days a year
Pension:	On completion of the 6 months' probationary period, every member of staff is invited to join the Trust's pension scheme.

Main aims of the post

- To work as part of the team that handles and organises the thousands of artworks entered every year for the Koestler Awards by offenders, secure psychiatric patients and immigration detainees across the UK.
- To help develop the team's practice so that the Koestler Awards become an arts response service which responds efficiently and effectively (i) to all submissions artworks for awards, feedback and sales and (ii) to all requests for exhibition and publication of offender art.
- To act as an ambassador for the Koestler Trust, speaking from personal experience to the media, external organisations and general public.

Duties

1. Working as part of a team, to **receive, carry, pack, unpack, organise and display** the **thousands of pieces of work** entered for the Koestler Awards from prisons, special hospitals and probation services – including non-visual arts such as creative writing and CDs of music.
2. To keep accurate **records** of all entries, following the Trust's administrative procedures.
3. To handle all entries with the utmost **care and respect** for the artists, and to record and help mend any breakages.

4. To receive **sales** orders and despatch sold artworks and merchandise.
5. To stuff hundreds of envelopes for **mail-outs** throughout the year, and to help with other administrative tasks such as photocopying and filing.
6. To welcome **visitors** to the Koestler Arts Centre, and to help Koestler exhibition openings and other events in London and, occasionally, elsewhere in the UK.
7. To deal in a friendly and efficient manner with **enquiries** by phone, email and letter, eg. from prison education departments, awards entrants and exhibition visitors.
8. To help keep the **Koestler Arts Centre** clean, tidy and well-presented at all times.
9. To help explain and promote the Trust's work especially by **speaking from personal experience of arts in the criminal justice system** - eg. leading tours of the Koestler Arts Centre and exhibitions, giving interviews to the media, and speaking at events and to potential funders.
10. To participate in **team meetings** (usually on Tuesday mornings) and regular one-to-one Support and Supervision meetings with line manager.
11. To assist with other **practical and administrative tasks** as and when required.
12. To follow the Koestler Trust's **procedures**, eg. for health and safety and equal opportunities.

Person specification

Everyone applying for the job will be assessed against the following criteria. To be invited for interview, you will need to show on the application form how far you meet each of the numbered points. We realise that you may not be able to meet all the points from the outset: we are ready to give training and support – so please be honest if there are areas of the job you would need help with.

Qualifications

No specific qualifications are required.

Experience

1. First-hand experience of being in prison or in another secure establishment, and/or of being on probation.
2. Paid or voluntary experience of carrying out defined tasks within an organisation, eg. an office, business, warehouse or shop.
3. Experience of working alongside others as part of a team.

Knowledge

4. Sufficient literacy and numeracy to read letters and emails, and to work with entry forms, lists, prices, labels and files.
5. Working knowledge of computers for email and word-processing. Knowledge of software

for data storage or images is an advantage, but not essential as training can be given.

6. An interest in at least one form of art – eg. visual arts, music or writing.
7. Understanding of the need for confidentiality when working with offenders and other vulnerable people.

Skills and abilities

8. Manual handling skills for carrying large and fragile items, with sufficient physical strength and dexterity to work throughout a 3 storey-building without a lift.
9. Practical skills, eg. to wrap parcels carefully, hang artworks safely and keep rooms clean and tidy.
10. Attention to detail, eg. to put the correct labels on artworks and packages, and patience to work through repetitive tasks, eg. stuffing hundreds of envelopes.
11. Interpersonal skills for working constructively with a wide range of people, including team colleagues, Koestler Awards entrants, prison staff, funders, and members of the public visiting Koestler exhibitions.
12. Ability to speak articulately and confidently to groups of people about the experience of custody or offending, and the role that the arts can play in the criminal justice system.

Attitudes and values

13. Excellent time-keeping and reliability.
14. Enthusiasm for the aims of the Koestler Trust.
15. A can-do attitude to solving practical problems.
16. A commitment to equal opportunities.

Staff team: Jan 2010

