



SHEFFIELD DIGITAL MEMBERS BOARD INFORMATION ABOUT THE BOARD JUNE 2024

Introduction

Sheffield Digital has been running for nine years and, thanks to the support of our members, has become an important part of the regional tech scene. The organisation has grown and evolved but now we want to enable more input and engagement from our members. We are therefore restructuring our governance to include a new Members Board and we are looking for representatives to join that board.

Background and rationale

Sheffield Digital is a company limited by guarantee that operates on a not-for-profit basis. Sheffield Digital's purpose is to help develop the best possible environment for starting up, working in and growing digital tech businesses in Sheffield and South Yorkshire.

The company has six directors. They are Mel Kanarek, Chris Dymond, Saul Cozens, Andy Mayer, Neill Birchenall, Tom Wolfenden and Emma Marshall. The directors are responsible for the legal and financial aspects of the company and oversee the day-to-day operations, which are carried out by the freelance team.

Up to now, the directors have also been responsible for setting the strategic direction of the organisation, with the support of a couple of additional representatives of the company's founding members. The directors now wish to develop the strategic governance of the company through greater involvement from the organisation's members.

To achieve this, we are re-organising into two boards: an executive board and a members board.

The executive board will be made up of the directors of the organisation and will continue to be responsible for the legal and financial aspects of the organisation and overseeing the day-to-day operations.

The new members board will be made up of representatives from the organisation's members and partners (see below for more detail on how that board will be constituted). The role of the members board is to provide strategic input to the organisation and influence its direction, to ensure that Sheffield Digital continues to meet the needs of its membership and the South Yorkshire digital tech cluster in general. Representatives on the members board will not have any legal responsibilities for the organisation. The members board will meet three times a year (every four months).

The role of the members board.

The members board will meet to discuss and debate ideas and issues that relate to the development of the region's digital tech ecosystem. It will focus on how to address issues through action – we don't want it to be “just another talking shop”. Representatives on the members board will be speaking for the membership as a whole, not just for themselves.

Ideas and/or policies that are universally approved and can be easily implemented will be agreed in the meeting and rolled out to the freelance team via the executive board. Larger or more complex initiatives that need more thought may be workshopped after the meeting by volunteer groups and brought to the executive board for final approval.

The members board will operate under Chatham House rules. Representatives will be expected to be respectful of others' opinions and to act in service to Sheffield Digital's ethos of openness, inclusiveness and community.

How will the members board be constituted?

The members board will be made up as follows:

- 2 representatives of the organisation's individual and freelance members
- 1 representative of the organisation's micro company members
- 1 representative of the organisation's start-up company members
- 1 representative of the organisation's small company members
- 1 representative of the organisation's medium company members
- 1 representative of the organisation's large company members

- At least 1 representative of the organisation's enterprise company members – all enterprise members will be invited to have a representative on the members board.
- At least 1 representative of the organisation's regional partners – all regional partners will be invited to have a representative on the members board.
- The directors of Sheffield Digital.

The board will be chaired by one of the directors of Sheffield Digital.

What is involved in being a representative?

The members board will meet three times a year (once every four months) for 2.5 hours during a working day. In addition to attending the meetings, representatives will need to make time to review papers and comment on the proposed agenda prior to the meeting. There may also be occasions when a representative is asked to attend an external meeting or participate in an event on behalf of the members. Representatives may also choose to participate in ad hoc working groups or be required to carry out tasks between meetings.

Membership of the board is for a term of two years. Representatives can serve up to two terms.

What is the process for joining the members board?

If you would like to be considered as a representative for the members board, please send an expression of interest by email to Mel Kanarek (mel@sheffield.digital). Please tell us why you are interested in joining the members board and what you hope to bring to the organisation.

When thinking about your application, please remember that your role will be to represent the interests of all members in your category.

If you would like to discuss the role before putting yourself forward, please contact Mel (via email or Slack) to arrange a time for a chat.

The deadline for expressions of interest is Sunday 7th July 2024.

After this, the Sheffield Digital directors will review all the expressions of interest and decide who to appoint. It will be up to the directors whether to hold interviews or whether to poll members in a category to decide who their representative should be. The directors' decisions

will be communicated to everyone who expressed an interest by Friday 9th August and the representatives for the members board will be announced publicly w/c 19th August.

The first meeting of the members board will be held in the second half of September, with papers issued two weeks before.