

Job Description

Job Title: Chief Operating Officer (COO)	Salary Range: £90–95k
Reports to: Chief Executive Officer	Number of Direct Reports: 4
Department: Operations/CEO Office	Job Type: 1 Year FTA (with a view to extension) Onsite – Hours as required

About us

We are the QEII Centre – central London’s premier venue for domestic and international events. Located in the heart of Westminster, our award-winning Centre offers modern, flexible spaces for all types of events from conferences and exhibitions to award ceremonies, dinners and fashion shows.

We host hundreds of events each year, ranging from high-profile international conferences to bespoke corporate meetings. At the heart of everything we do is a steadfast commitment to exceptional customer service

As a government-owned trading fund, we operate commercially while remaining accountable for the responsible use of public funds and compliance with Government public spending guidance.

Our people are central to our success. From our acclaimed in-house caterers, QEII Taste by Levy, to our expert Audio Visual (AV) and Event IT teams, every employee plays a vital role in delivering outstanding experiences.

As of 2025, we’ve proudly achieved over 50 industry awards since 2014—an ongoing recognition of our excellence in the events sector. Most recently, we were awarded three Gold Eventex awards for Best Venue, Most Versatile Venue, and Best Event Space. These accolades reflect our unwavering commitment to delivering outstanding experiences for every client and delegate.

Job Purpose

The Chief Operating Officer (COO) is responsible for the strategic and operational leadership of the QEII Centre, ensuring the effective delivery of world-class events and the achievement of commercial, operational and organisational objectives. As the principal deputy to the Chief Executive Officer, the COO will provide visible leadership and organisational resilience, ensuring continuity of senior decision-making, effective cross-functional delivery and a strong, aligned Senior Leadership Team (SLT).

Working closely with the Chief Executive and Board, the COO will translate strategic priorities into high-quality operational delivery, driving performance, people development, efficiency, and continuous improvement across all functions. The role is critical to ensuring that the Centre remains a leading national and international conference and events venue, delivering exceptional client experiences while maintaining robust governance and financial sustainability.

Date of review: October 2026

As the principal deputy to the Chief Executive, the COO provides visible organisational leadership, ensuring business continuity, operational resilience and effective cross-functional delivery. The role is accountable to the Chief Executive and Board for the operational performance, governance, organisational resilience and delivery capability of the QEII Centre, ensuring operational decisions support the organisation's long-term strategic objectives and financial sustainability.

Strategic Responsibilities

Operational Performance & Service Delivery

- Lead and deliver the Centre's operational strategy, ensuring the successful delivery of world-class events and exceptional client experiences.
- Drive operational excellence across all venue functions, maintaining the highest standards of quality, efficiency, safety and customer service.
- Maximise operational performance, utilisation and value through effective planning, resource management and continuous improvement.
- Ensure seamless operational delivery across the full client journey, from event planning through to execution and post-event evaluation.

Executive Leadership & Governance

- Act as the executive lead for all operational matters, advising the Chief Executive and Board on operational performance, organisational capability, governance, business continuity and strategic investment.
- Present operational performance, organisational risks, major projects and strategic recommendations to the Board and relevant Committees.
- Support the Chief Executive in developing and delivering the Centre's long-term organisational strategy and business plan.
- Provide executive leadership across the organisation, ensuring operational priorities remain aligned with the Board's strategic direction and corporate objectives.

Governance, Risk & Compliance

- Ensure robust governance, compliance and assurance frameworks are embedded across all operational functions.
- Lead operational risk management, business continuity planning and organisational resilience.
- Ensure compliance with Health & Safety legislation, public sector governance requirements, procurement and financial controls.
- Provide assurance to the Chief Executive and Board that operational risks are appropriately identified, mitigated and managed.

Operational Transformation & Continuous Improvement

- Lead organisational transformation and continuous improvement initiatives across operational functions.
- Drive process optimisation, digital innovation and operational efficiency programmes.
- Lead the operational evaluation of major capital investment and refurbishment projects, ensuring operational considerations support the Board's long-term strategic objectives.

- Identify opportunities to improve productivity, sustainability, service quality and value for money.

People & Organisational Capability

- Build organisational capability through strategic workforce planning, talent development and succession planning.
- Develop leadership capability across operational teams, ensuring resilience and succession for critical roles.
- Foster a high-performing, inclusive and values-led culture focused on collaboration, accountability and continuous improvement.

Key Responsibilities

Leadership & People Management

- Provide clear, visible and values-led leadership across all operational functions, creating a unified operational vision aligned with the Centre's strategic objectives and business plan.
- Build a high-performing, inclusive and supportive culture where individuals and teams are empowered to succeed.
- Lead and inspire the operational leadership team, fostering accountability, collaboration, innovation and operational excellence.
- Ensure effective communication, engagement, coaching and performance management across operational teams.
- Lead talent development, succession planning and organisational capability to strengthen resilience and future leadership capacity.
- Role model QEI values and act as a senior ambassador for the Centre, taking accountability for operational performance, organisational culture and the delivery of strategic objectives.
- Act as a key member of the Executive Leadership Team, contributing to organisational strategy, transformation initiatives, investment decisions and long-term planning.
- Deputise for the Chief Executive as required, providing executive leadership, organisational continuity and confident representation of the Centre with the Board, Government stakeholders, clients, partners and employees.

Operational Strategy & Delivery

- Translate strategic priorities into operational plans, KPIs and delivery frameworks.
- Oversee all operational functions, including Event Delivery, Venue Operations, Facilities Management, Health & Safety and Security.
- Ensure effective deployment of people, resources and assets to optimise operational performance and value for money.
- Drive continuous improvement across operational systems, processes and service delivery.

Client Experience

- Provide executive oversight of operational delivery to ensure exceptional customer experiences across all events.
- Act as the executive escalation point for complex operational issues and major client events.

- Support business development through strategic engagement with key clients and major accounts.
- Ensure operational delivery supports the Centre's commercial objectives, brand reputation and customer retention.

Financial & Resource Management

- Oversee operational budgets, resources and assets, ensuring effective financial management and value for money.
- Work closely with Finance to support forecasting, cost optimisation and long-term financial sustainability.
- Provide assurance to the Chief Executive and Board that operational resources are aligned with strategic priorities and organisational objectives.

Governance & Risk

- Ensure robust governance, operational assurance and compliance across all operational functions.
- Lead operational risk management, business continuity, disaster recovery and resilience planning.
- Ensure effective reporting of operational performance, governance and organisational risks to the Chief Executive and Board.

External Relationships

- Build and maintain strong relationships with Government stakeholders, clients, partners and suppliers.
- Represent the QEII Centre externally at Board Committees, Government meetings, industry forums and stakeholder events on operational matters.
- Work collaboratively with the Chief Commercial Officer to ensure seamless integration between commercial strategy and operational delivery.

Additional information

Key Relationships

- Chief Executive Officer
- Board / Non-Executive Directors
- Senior Leadership Team
- Chief Commercial Officer
- Government stakeholders and sponsors
- Clients, partners and suppliers

The above is not exhaustive and other duties not outlined may form part of the employees' job description.

Person Specification

Experience:

- Proven senior leadership experience operating at executive level, including deputising for a Chief Executive, Managing Director or equivalent senior accountable officer.
- Strong operational leadership with the ability to translate strategy into delivery
- Experience of leading operations management at senior level, including oversight of service delivery, resources, facilities, health and safety, risk, business continuity and performance improvement across complex operational environments.
- Commercial acumen with experience managing revenue-generating services
- Exceptional leadership, communication and stakeholder management experience, with the credibility and judgement to lead through QEII Centre values and behaviours.
- Experience of managing high-profile clients, partnerships and strategic commercial relationships, with the credibility to influence senior stakeholders and secure positive outcomes.
- Demonstrable experience of developing organisational talent pipelines and credible succession plans for business-critical roles.
- High level of personal accountability, with a proven track record of owning decisions, delivering results and taking responsibility for the performance, culture and outcomes of their area, while operating strategically and maintaining strong operational oversight.
- Experience operating within a regulated, public-sector or publicly accountable environment, with strong understanding of governance, assurance, risk management, value for money and responsible stewardship of public funds.
- Significant experience of operations management at senior level, including oversight of service delivery, resources, facilities, health and safety, risk, business continuity and performance improvement across complex operational environments.

Desirable:

- Experience of leading complex, multi-disciplinary operations in a high-profile venue, visitor attraction, events, hospitality or comparable customer-facing environment, ensuring safe, resilient and commercially focused service delivery.

Technical Skills and Qualifications:

- A relevant finance, accounting or business qualification, or equivalent senior-level financial management experience, would be an advantage.

Behaviours and QEII Values (Team QEII C)

The successful candidate will be required to demonstrate the following behaviours and values in practice:

- **Leadership / Team:** provide clear, confident and visible leadership; set direction and expectations; nurture and develop others; build trust and engagement; and create a culture where people are supported, challenged and held to account.
- **Seeing the Bigger Picture / Quality:** think strategically about the long-term operational needs of the Centre; Takes an enterprise-wide view, balancing operational delivery, commercial sustainability, public sector governance and the long-term reputation of the Centre.
- **Delivering at Pace / Innovation:** take ownership for outcomes, make sound business decisions in a timely way, respond effectively under pressure, and drive continuous improvement by ensuring agreed SLT decisions are translated into clear action and delivered with discipline.
- **Working Together / Managing a Quality Service / Integrity / Collaboration:** work constructively across teams and with SLT and HODs; role model positive, professional behaviours; take personal accountability for actions and decisions; address issues directly; and ensure services are delivered with consistency, fairness, professionalism and a strong stakeholder focus.
- **Changing and Improving:** Leads improvement with self-awareness, adaptability and constructive challenge, encouraging innovation while maintaining alignment, trust and confidence across the SLT and wider organisation.