

THE PLAY HOUSE

GENERAL MANAGER

APPLICATION PACK

www.theplayhouse.org.uk

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Job Description

Job Title: General Manager

Reporting to: Artistic Director

Salary: £38,000 per annum.

Work schedule: 37 hours per week, 30 mins unpaid lunch per day. Normal office hours are 9.00 a.m. to 5 p.m. Some hours outside of office hours may be required, for which overtime is not paid but TOIL (Time Off In Lieu) can be taken. We anticipate some evening and weekend work and travel within the UK.

Employment type: Permanent contract.

Probationary period: 4 months.

Holiday allowance: 30 days Annual Leave as standard, before Bank and Public Holidays. 38 days Annual Leave including holidays normally observed in England and Wales.

Pension: Auto-enrolment via The Pensions Trust with 3% employer contribution.

Location: Action for Children Centre, 2-4 Guild Close, Ladywood, Birmingham, B16 8EL.

Line manages: Freelance contractors

Application closing date: Midnight on 15th June 2026

Interview dates: w/c 29th June 2026

Anticipated date role will commence: 1 September 2026 [or to be agreed with the candidate]

Purpose of the role

Responsible for providing excellent leadership alongside the Artistic Director to ensure that the charity continues to deliver a financially viable and visionary programme for children and young people.

Strategic leadership of the Charity

- Working with the Artistic Director and the Board to devise an annual Business Plan and set the budget
- Working with the Artistic Director and the Chair to ensure a strong Board and good governance of the charity
- Taking the role of Company Secretary and producing papers and minutes for Board Meetings.
- Working with the Artistic Director to motivate and lead the staff team, maintaining a high professional standard of performance.

Establishing a sound financial base for the charity

- Working with the Artistic Director and Trustees on a sustainable fundraising strategy and diverse income streams.
- Contributing to applications to Trusts, Foundations and individual donors, working closely with the Artistic Director
- Working with the Artistic Director to develop the company's case for becoming an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, or for identifying an equivalent long-term funding base.

Developing effective relationships with key partners and stakeholders

- Liaising with key partners to develop the work of the charity
- Developing, alongside the Artistic Director, a network of strategic partners who are aware of The Play House
- Raising the public profile of The Play House and specifically the profile in the arts and education sector alongside the Artistic Director
- Improving awareness and visibility of The Play House's work and creating new opportunities.

Responsibility for the day-to-day management of the charity

- Budget creation and monitoring
- Producing management accounts, cash flow and regular forecasting
- Supervise the day-to-day financial transactions and payroll as per Financial Regulations
- Acting as a card holder and being a named signatory on the bank accounts.

Management of the office space

- Acting as Health and Safety Officer for the office space
- Acting as a key holder for the office
- Liaising with West Smethwick Enterprise regarding the needs of the office licence
- Overseeing any maintenance and necessary tasks to enable working from the office.

- Acting as Data Controller and ensuring all data is held in compliance with General Data Protection Regulations.
- Seeking opportunities for a possible change of office location, if it represents improved facilities or opportunities for the company.

Overseeing delivery of the artistic and educational programme

- Working with the Artistic Director to oversee the planning and production of a schedule of work for The Play House taking into account available resource, finances and staffing capacity.
- Planning and overseeing the marketing and booking of the school touring programme and other activities
- Negotiating all contracts and service level agreements relating to the organisation. Including the agreed licence for the office and storage space within the Action for Children building.
- Compliance with Safeguarding regulations
- Alongside the Artistic Director, ensuring effective monitoring and evaluation of the work.
- Ensuring compliance with all statutory, local authority, health and safety and other regulations and obtaining all necessary licences and insurances
- Carrying out any other duties as required

The Play House is committed to ensuring all employees find it to be a safe space to work and will give any grievances or concerns due attention. The General Manager has a responsibility to maintain and support this safe space.

The Opportunity

The Play House is seeking to appoint an organised, passionate and committed General Manager to enable the company to carry forward the company's work. This is a crucial senior role working alongside the Artistic Director in a partnership which can ensure that The Play House thrives artistically and financially.

A belief in the value of children and young people's participatory theatre work is essential and is at the heart of The Play House's practice.

This is an exciting and challenging time to join The Play House as the company celebrates 40 years of work, and is moving on from a period of change, with ambitious plans for growth that will be steered by the Artistic Director and General Manager. The Artistic Director role will be filled by Peter Wynne-Willson, until the appointment of a new permanent AD towards the end of 2026, and the Board is keen that these two key appointments will result in a team that will give the company some much-needed stability for the foreseeable future.

Leading The Play House alongside the Artistic Director you will be supported throughout your time at the company. You will have autonomy over your role and make decisions to benefit the communities we serve as well as The Play House.

We're seeking someone extremely capable, who understands and believes in the work of the company, who is organised and enjoys organisation; with an ability to work independently and collaboratively, and to manage people and systems in an open and thoughtful way. Ability and desire to take on the many challenges of funding and supporting Theatre-in-Education is more important than any specific experience of fundraising, marketing, or the arts and education sectors, though knowledge of any of these areas would of course be welcome.

We want to be the change we want to see in the arts. The Theatre Industry is disproportionately represented by people who are white, able-bodied and from a narrow range of socio-economic backgrounds. We seek to encourage applications from those who are currently under-represented in the Theatre Industry and within The Play House.

We are committed to increasing the diversity of those working in and for our organisation, in whatever capacity. We believe that inviting and supporting applications from people with a diverse range of backgrounds, identities and life experiences strengthens and enriches the work that we do, as well as enabling us to speak to and reflect our audience.

The Play House supports the More than a Moment pledge, and as such is committed to a number of actions to support Black* artists and theatre makers, especially in the Midlands. This includes representation across the organisation, and as Black people are currently under-represented within The Play House, we particularly welcome applications from anyone from these groups.

**(Black African, Caribbean, Afro-Latinx and African American heritage and those of mixed Black heritage who identify as such [definition as adopted by the Black Ticket Project]).*

The Play House is committed to inclusion and equal opportunities in the workplace. The Play House makes appointments based solely on ability to fulfil the duties of the post, however we actively encourage applicants from all backgrounds, of different ages, genders, social and economic backgrounds, ethnicities, religions and sexual orientations and people with and without disabilities.

About the Organisation

Mission Statement: Bringing creativity into learning; empowering children and bringing their worlds to life through stories and participatory theatre.

The Play House Theatre in Education company has been helping schools bring the wonder of the world into classrooms for over 40 years.

The Play House works primarily with Birmingham primary schools in lower socio-economic areas of the city and an engagement with The Play House is often a child's first experience of live theatre. We are passionate about making that experience have as much impact as possible both creatively and educationally. It is our aim to expand children's aspirations and inspire their curiosity no matter what theme or story we are telling.

The Play House's style of Theatre in Education involves high levels of participation and, because we work with small groups, never bigger than class size and sometimes much smaller, we can offer every child the opportunity to shape the drama. We often put our participants in a role in order to immerse them further in the drama and give them agency over the story and dilemmas within.

Play House projects and workshops can take place in school halls, classrooms, parks, libraries, heritage sites and children's centres. We employ a repertoire of techniques such as interactive storytelling, imaginative play and dramatic problem solving.

The Play House also creates bespoke projects in partnership with schools and other organisations. We also create bespoke professional development in using drama and storytelling.

It is our ambition to engage participants in a creative and imaginative process that will be both unique and memorable and that will stimulate inquiry and learning within the fictional worlds we create.

We want better to reflect the Birmingham communities we serve.

The company is currently led on an interim basis by Peter Wynne-Willson, and Actor-Teacher Malcolm Jennings, who along with the General Manager and new Artistic Director [replacing Peter by the end of the year] will form the core team going forward.

Plans for the future

The Play House comes to this period of recruitment with solid foundations. Forty years of work has built a distinctive participatory practice in theatre-in-education, an established reputation, and deep relationships with primary schools across Birmingham — many of whom describe the work as core to their curriculum rather than an add-on. The company has a clear mission, a small skilled team, and reserves that allow it to plan rather than fire-fight.

The Board also recognises the challenges. In recent years the company has become fragmented through under-funding and through the extensive use of freelance practitioners and part-time posts. Since January it has been in a period of refocusing, with the aim of returning to some key principles of operating as a theatre-in-education company: recruiting teams on extended contracts, raising funds to extend rehearsal periods, employing actor-teachers as company members with responsibilities beyond acting, and moving towards a model with a clearer and larger core team at its heart.

The longer-term goal is to get back to employing a full-time company including those delivering the work — through becoming an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation, or by identifying an equivalent long-term funding base. The reserves will underwrite the process while fundraising work is stepped up.

There is no three-year plan in place. There is room, and indeed need, for the new General Manager and Artistic Director to make their own sustainable plans.

These aims were drawn up in the recent past, and help give a sense of some of the key issues going forward:

- Strengthen the company's resilience through diverse income streams.
- Create new and relevant work for our Schools Touring Programme, expanding the understanding of the power, potential and value of our work in schools.
- Deepen, grow and strengthen the artistic ambition and quality of our work
- Expand the core team and range of freelancers we work with in line with the company's strategic artistic, educational and diversity & equality aims.
- Develop new and wider partnerships to showcase The Play House's work in new and relevant settings.
- Seek to more truly reflect the demographic of Birmingham and the diverse experiences of the people of Birmingham.

About our Work

What people say

“After a workshop, children were independently playing a game outside where they were sharing feelings and pretending to put these into the well. It has genuinely struck a chord with our children.”

Headteacher, Raddlebarn Primary School

“We have noticed a profound impact on the children’s ability to express themselves by using drama as a vehicle for communication. The sessions are interactive and inclusive of all abilities, needs and dispositions. As a school, we find the range of contexts for the sessions a key benefit, as they expose pupils to new learning experiences which has enriched our curriculum.”

Assistant Headteacher, Montgomery Primary Academy

“This is not just a bolt on, this is core to our PSHE, OWLS (our wider learning) curriculum.”

Headteacher, Colmore Junior School

“You had them entranced from the start, they were so enthralled!”

Teacher, St Catherine of Siena School

“...in terms of learning the Playhouse is gold dust.”

Rachel Gartside, Education Associate, Royal Shakespeare Company

Person Specification

Essential Skills, Abilities and Attributes

- Excellent organisational, business and administrative skills
- Ability to manage a portfolio of responsibilities
- Strong leadership skills
- Collaborative – with the ability to bring out the best in a team
- Committed to equality and diversity
- Effective networker and influencer
- Tactful and diplomatic

Essential Experience and Knowledge

- Experience of planning, project management and operational delivery
- Experience of evaluations and report writing
- Experience of financial management and budget control, and the ability to maintain day-to-day financial records

Desirable Experience and Knowledge

- Experience of income generation and fundraising
- Experience of managing and leading a team
- Experience of marketing and public relations
- Experience of Strategic Development, Business Planning and developing Charity policies
- Understanding contract law and legal responsibilities
- Knowledge of ITC/Theatre UK/Equity contracts and terms and conditions
- Familiarity with accounting packages, ideally Xero
- Experience of servicing a Board of Trustees
- Knowledge of Charity and Charity legislation
- Knowledge of Birmingham and the West Midlands
- Knowledge of the Education Sector
- Knowledge of the Arts sector.

How to Apply

If you are interested in applying, please submit a CV and cover letter (no longer than 2 sides) or video or audio file (no longer than 5 minutes) highlighting your relevant experience and how you would approach the role to: director@theplayhouse.org.uk

Please use the subject line 'General Manager Application' and include a completed equal opportunities form. Email the letter, cv, Equal Opps form and video/audio file if you are opting for this, as attachments to the email.

Application closing date: 1 June 2026

Interview dates: w/c 15 June 2026

Equal Opportunities

The Play House is committed to inclusion and equal opportunities in the workplace and we actively encourage applicants from all backgrounds, of different ages, genders, social and economic backgrounds, ethnicities, religions and sexual orientations, and from people with and without disabilities. Please contact us should you have any access requirements or need any reasonable adjustments to be made in order to apply or attend an interview.

Our recruitment process is open to all, but we are particularly keen to hear from applicants who may have faced racism, discrimination and/or cultural barriers due to their ethnicity, disability or D/deafness, as these groups are currently underrepresented in our team and the wider theatre sector.