

Learning & Participation Director Recruitment Pack

DECEMBER 2025

WELCOME

As Stratford East closes its 140th year we are looking for an exceptional Learning and Participation Director to work closely with our recently appointed Artistic Director, Lisa Spirling and Executive Director, Hanna Streeter, who bring a wealth of experience in arts leadership and strategic development.

This dynamic leadership marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter for the organisation. Their shared vision will build on Stratford East's strong foundations, guiding the theatre into its next era with renewed energy, ambition, and purpose.

The successful candidate will bring energy, enthusiasm and imagination, leading and delivering across four main strands of work - Young People, Schools Programme, Newham Neighbours (Our local community programme) and Talent Development.

Stratford sits in the heart of East London, in the dynamic London Borough of Newham. Our community is vital, and Arts Council England has identified Newham as one of only four London boroughs that they classify as Priority Places. The regeneration in the Olympic Park, alongside huge investment and development across the borough, makes Newham a place with a growing population and offers new and stimulating opportunities which we can grasp as the much-loved theatre in the borough.

“Good theatre draws the energies out of the place where it is and gives it back” - Joan Littlewood

The Wonderful World of Dissocia Photo: Marc Brenner



ABOUT STRATFORD EAST

Stratford East is here to make truly great theatre in an atmosphere that welcomes all, with extraordinary shows that are affordable for all in the beating heart of East London.

Stratford East is a producing theatre, built in 1884, in the London Borough of Newham, situated a short walk from Stratford station. We have a proud history and face an exciting and challenging future. Our culturally and socially diverse community are represented in the work we make, the people we employ, the audiences we attract and the participants in our learning programmes. We tell stories that are current, political and representative of the people in our part of London.

From 1953 – 1979 the theatre was the home of Joan Littlewood's legendary Theatre Workshop Company. The Company received international recognition with their acclaimed productions of shows like *Oh, What a Lovely War!* and *A Taste of Honey*. Recent shows programmed in our 140th anniversary season that have received 4 and 5 star reviews include *The Harder They Come*, *Mama Goose*, *Animal Farm*, *The Women of Llanrumney* and *Lovestuck: A New Comedy Musical*. Many leading actors, writers and directors have been part of the Stratford East family including Meera Syal, Barbara Windsor, Don Warrington, Sheila Hancock, Indhu Rubasingham, Tanika Gupta, Roy Williams and Cynthia Erivo.

Stratford East has a 455 seat auditorium, a vibrant bar, and a rehearsal space. In 2024-25 we welcomed over 67, 275 audience members over 217 performances.

OUR VISION:

We believe that brilliant quality theatre should be available to everyone

OUR MISSION:

We make theatre both for, and inspired by, our community in Newham, East London. We continue the political and revolutionary ethos of our founder Joan Littlewood as a leading London theatre and civic hub for East London. We are driven by our art, which is inclusive and bold. We tell stories that provoke discourse about the world we live in and our place within it.

OUR VALUES:

- Revolutionary – we are confident in leading change
- Inclusive – our doors are open to all
- Bold – we are willing to take risks
- Excellent – we strive to make everything of outstanding quality
- Relevant – the work we do is relevant to the place we are in, and the times in which we live
- Eclectic – we are informed by a wide range of thoughts, styles, tastes

Our full programme of work – past and future - can be found on our website. Our produced and co-produced work from the past few years include:

2025

Mama Goose
The Harder They Come
Lovestuck
Tambo & Bones
The Women of Llanrumney
Animal Farm

2023

Jack and the Beanstalk
Beautiful Thing
Tambo & Bones
Village Idiot

2021

Red Riding Hood
Shining City
Extinct
The Sun, The Moon and the Stars
Press Play Here (online only)

2024

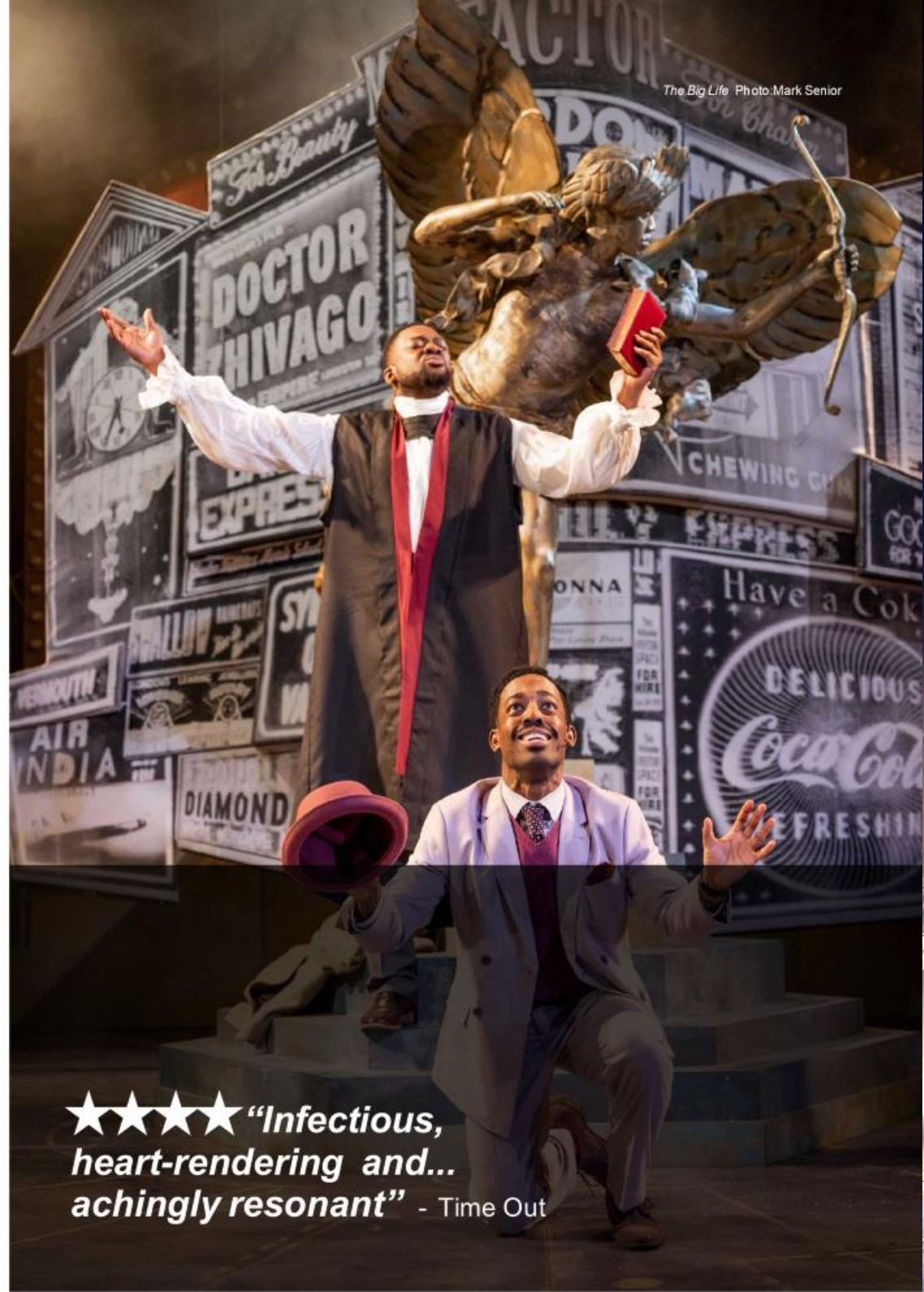
Pinocchio
Abigail's Party
Now, I See
The Big Life

2022

Cinderella
The Wonderful World of Dissocia
Burn It Down
After the End

2020

No Masks (film)
846 Live
846 (online only)



The Big Life Photo: Mark Senior

★★★★★ "Infectious,
heart-rendering and...
achingly resonant" - Time Out

LEARNING & PARTICIPATION

Alongside our work on stage, we run a Learning & Participation programme that is accessible and inclusive to all. Our range of programmes creates a lasting impact for our local community and aims to:

- Provide routes into the industry, across all theatre departments, with a particular focus on diversifying those coming into the workplace, ensuring the theatre workplace of the future is a diverse and skilled one
- Provide opportunities to people of all ages to develop their creative talents and engage with the work of the theatre, ensuring that there is a creative outlet open to the widest possible constituency

Key projects include:

Junior Youth Theatre (11-15 year olds) and Youth Theatre (16-21 year olds): A year-round programme for young people to develop their acting and creativity.

Young Company: A 10-month programme for 18-25 years who are interested in developing their acting skills. Working with a range of industry freelancers, and led by a professional director, the programme culminates in a full production on the Stratford East stage.

Young Techs: A short course to develop the technical theatre skills of 18-25 year olds. The course leads to paid work experience, and potentially paid work as a technician at Stratford East or elsewhere.

Adult Drama: A termly course for any Newham adult above 26, to develop their acting and creative skills in a friendly environment.

Schools Programme: A programme specifically for Newham Secondary Schools. This includes technical theatre insight days, as well as bespoke programmes

Community Ambassadors: A volunteer programme, supporting volunteers to work with groups in the community to introduce them to the theatre, as well as to run heritage tours of the theatre.

Community Socials: Regular light touch events to introduce local people and community groups to the theatre.

Freelance Royalty Scheme: A free membership scheme to support all theatre freelancers living or working in East London. Membership includes access to space, free tickets, workshops, networking and surgery events.

“Our children aren’t able to afford theatre trips so this was particularly important for us. I loved the diversity in the cast also. It allowed the students to see themselves.”

- Newham Primary School Teacher



Young Company in *SCREAM FIRE*. Photo: Greta Zabulyte

REPRESENTATION, JUSTICE AND BELONGING

We want Stratford East to reflect the community in which we work and the programming on our stage to speak to the people who come to our theatre. We want everyone who works with us to feel empowered and supported, and we want our theatre to feel accessible to anyone, no matter what their background. Stratford East's programme of work has always championed a diversity of stories, so that any audience member might see their story on our stage. We are committed to our anti-racism and anti-ablism work as a continuous journey of change and progression. This work is spearheaded by Closing The Gap, our anti-racism working group, which leads on policy, training and accountability across the organisation.

For seven years Stratford East was part of the first Ramps on the Moon consortium, a group of theatres working to increase D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent representation. We worked with five other theatres around the country, elevating the presence of D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people on and off stage to enrich the stories told by them and the way they are told. Whilst the official consortium has ended, we are committed to continuing this work. We now carry the momentum forward through RADAR, our disability and accessibility working group, which guides inclusive practice and ensures barrier-free experiences for artists, staff and audiences alike.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

We need and aspire to be an environmentally sustainable organisation and are embedding our environmental work across all departments. We want to reduce our carbon footprint by ensuring that our buildings and processes are as efficient and sustainable as possible. We are in the process of updating our environmental policy in alignment with our values and with the Theatre Green Book and have a short-term and long-term set of KPIs which we are working to achieve. We are also updating our Capital Maintenance and Renewal Schedule, which has identified some key areas for renewal over the next five years and are looking at how we can do this to further our sustainability ambitions.

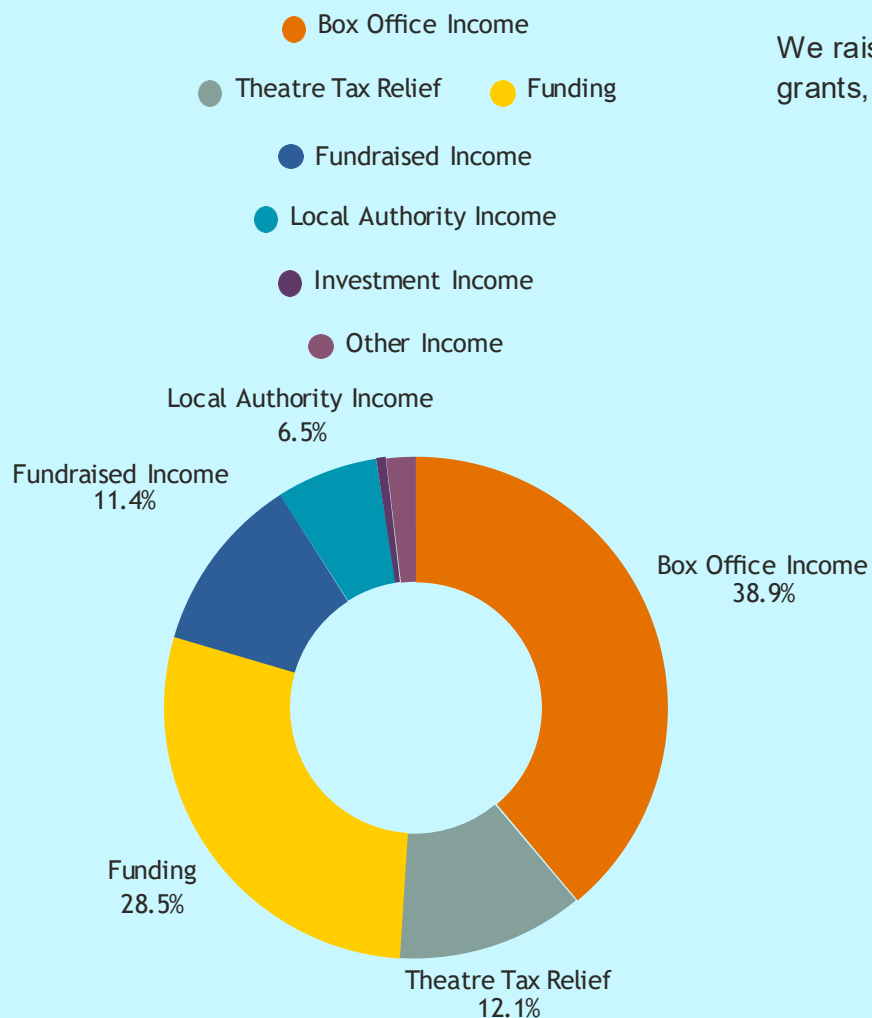
★★★★★ *"As timeless
as ever"* - Evening Standard



Beautiful Thing Photo: The Other Richard

FINANCES

Stratford East Income Year Ended 31 March 2025

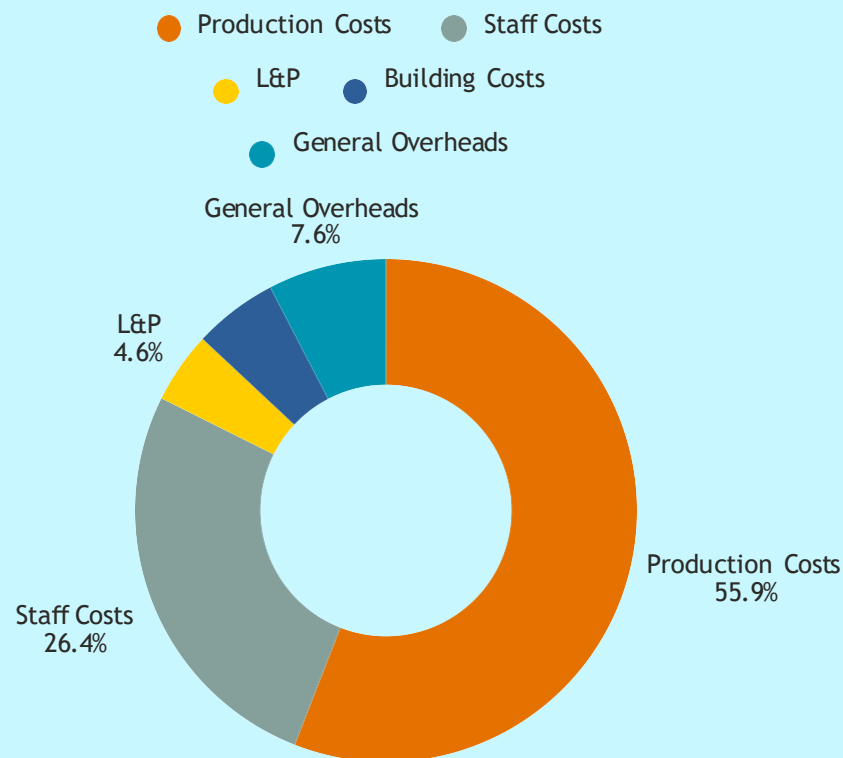


Our annual turnover is just over £4m. We successfully secured Arts Council England National Portfolio Funding for the 2023-2027 period. Additional income comes from ticket sales, fundraising, Theatre Tax Relief and other revenue sources.

At year end March 2025 our general reserves stood at £787,472, plus designated funds of £670,000 (two funds for three months' operating costs plus capital building maintenance).

We raise around £500k each year from fundraising from Trusts and Foundation grants, some major donor relationships and a small but growing membership base.

Stratford East Expenditure



GOVERNANCE

Stratford East is registered as Pioneer Theatres Limited with Companies House (Company number: 556251) and with the Charity Commission (Charity Number: 233801). The Charity is led by a highly experienced Board of Trustees. The Board includes skilled individuals from the world of arts, local government, finance and communications. We have two Young Trustees who have come through our Learning & Participation programmes.

We have a trading subsidiary, Stratford East (Trading) Limited which operates our bar. We also have a Development Board, which has no formal role in governance, but supports our fundraising, and is chaired by one of our Board Members.

Bindi Karia was announced as Chair of the Board in September 2025.

PEOPLE

Senior Management Team

Stratford East is led by the Artistic Director and Executive Director, reporting to the Board. They are supported by the Senior Management team of nine including the Learning & Participation Director, Associate Artistic Director, Finance Director, Operations Director, Director of Producing, Head of Production, Head of Marketing & Communications, Development Director and General Manager.

Staff Base

We have a 40-strong central staff base and a customer facing casual team of 60 working across front of house, bar and box office. We also engage a large number of freelancers to work on and off stage in our productions, as well as casual technicians.



Fantastically Great Women Who Changed the World Photo: Pamela Raith

FACTS AND FIGURES FOR THE 2024-25 FINANCIAL YEAR



209

FREELANCERS ENGAGED

217

PERFORMANCES

11

PRODUCTIONS

1 GREAT
THEATRE

1500

MEMBERS OF OUR

FREELANCE
ROYALTY
SCHEME

67,275

AUDIENCE MEMBERS

10,104

YOUNG PEOPLE
ENGAGED WITH US

55,394

AVERAGE MONTHLY WEBSITE VISITORS

25 ONE OFF
NIGHTS

9 COMMUNITY
AMBASSADORS

ROLE

- Job Title:** Learning & Participation Director
- Reporting to:** Artistic Director & Executive Director
- Direct reports:** Community & Participation Producer, Assistant Producer (Young People), and freelancers
- Working with:** Senior Management Team

MAIN PURPOSE OF THE POST

We are looking for a creative and entrepreneurial Learning & Participation (L&P) Director to lead the L&P department as we embark on a new business plan for 2026 and beyond. The L&P Director will join the organisation at an exciting time of change and renewal, following the recent appointment of new Co-CEOs Lisa Spirling (Artistic Director) and Hanna Streeter (Executive Director), Associate Artistic Director Jade Lewis, and new Chair of Trustees Bindi Karia.

The successful candidate will bring energy, enthusiasm and imagination, leading and delivering across four main strands of work - Young People, Schools Programme, Newham Neighbours (Our local community programme) and Talent Development. You will work closely with the Co-CEOs to develop the strategy for the department, and closely with the Development Director on maximising fundraising opportunities.

The L&P Director is responsible for strengthening relationships in the local community and across the education and creative sectors, as well as collaborating with artistic and production departments to produce L&P productions, creating synergy between community work and main stage productions.

The L&P Director is an integral member of the Senior Leadership Team and will act as an ambassador of the company, ensuring that equity, diversity and inclusivity is embedded across all the department's work.



PRINCIPAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



STRATEGIC

- Develop and deliver an annual programme of work across learning and participatory projects across four main strands – Young People, Schools Programme, Newham Neighbours (Our local community programme) and Talent Development
- Work closely with the Artistic and Executive Directors and other members of the senior management team to set the strategy for L&P within Stratford East's business plan
- Balance delivery with long-term planning and ensuring strategies meet the needs to provide a dynamic and eclectic mix of programmes
- Develop and initiate relationships and partnerships with the education and training sector, with community and youth organisations and with other theatres and arts organisations
- Use and grow an understanding of both the local context and education context in which they are working, and ensure that policy developments are built into the department strategy
- Plan and deliver Stratford East's engagement with local schools and colleges
- Ensure that inclusion is embedded in all L&P programmes
- Set and oversee departmental budgets and authorise project expenditure, ensuring that project reconciliation is done promptly
- Report quarterly on the department's financial position to the Executive Director and Finance Director

CREATIVE

- Produce all L&P projects to a high artistic standard recruiting and appointing professional creative teams as required
- Build relationships with creative teams and artists at Stratford East to align the work of the department with the artistic programme
- Develop legacy programmes for participation projects to underpin the desire to develop talent
- Work with the Head of Production and other members of the senior management team to develop technical training and apprenticeships
- Conceive and create ambitious projects, subject to funding
- Work with the Producer and Associate Artistic Director to design and deliver Stratford East's Royalty Scheme
- Work closely with the Director of Marketing and Comms to ensure effective communication of the programme to audiences and participants

FUNDRAISING & REPORTING

- Play an active role in fundraising, developing project proposals and overseeing reporting and evaluation of projects to funders
- Work closely with the Development Director to identify new fundraising opportunities
- Attend donor cultivation events as required
- Ensure monitoring and evaluation are embedded throughout all projects and that the department evaluation strategy is adhered to
- Create reports for the Board, Arts Council England and all/ any L&P project funders as required
- Ensure GDPR policy is adhered to

PRINCIPAL DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES



MANAGEMENT

- Manage the L&P team, holding weekly team meetings and one-to-ones, providing professional development opportunities, setting objectives, monitoring performance and providing support and guidance
- Work collaboratively with the L&P team to devise, develop and lead the main L&P programmes and initiatives, setting clear objectives for each programme
- Lead on the school and technical theatre training programmes with support from the team
- Oversee the recruitment and management freelance staff to deliver L&P sessions
- Manage any departmental HR issues with support from General Manager
- Oversee work experience and placement programmes across organisation
- Play an active role in Stratford East staff led committees and Health and Safety Committee, and take responsibility for the health, safety and wellbeing of the department

SAFEGUARDING

- To act as Designated Safeguarding Lead at Stratford East working with the Director of Operations to ensure safeguarding policy and procedures are up to date and providing advice to other staff members on safe-guarding issues where necessary
- Provide Safeguarding training to staff and freelance facilitators
- Ensure DBS checks are carried out in time for all projects where required

GENERAL

- To play an active part in the running of the organisation as appropriate, with full engagement as a member of the senior management team.
- To represent the theatre at some events, conferences and meetings etc
- To maximise income and minimise expenditure wherever possible, without jeopardising the quality of the work or the reputation of Stratford East
- Be familiar with and abide by all Stratford East's Company Policies including, but not limited to, our Equal Opportunities Policy, Dignity at Work Policy, GDPR, Safeguarding and Health and Safety Policy and ensure that they are implemented across the department
- Support and advocate for Stratford East, its mission, aims and activity
- Maintain an active role in Stratford East's anti-racism, anti-ableism and environmental sustainability work, ensuring it is embedded throughout the L&P programmes
- To undertake any other duties as appropriate to the post

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Personal Attributes

- Ability to work under pressure in a busy environment
- Flexibility of thought and approach and the ability to collaborate effectively with colleagues
- Passion & enthusiasm for theatre and the arts
- A passion for theatre education and the opportunities it offers to participants and partners
- Demonstrable alignment with Stratford East's core culture and values
- A good understanding of diversity and inclusion and proven experience of working towards diversity and inclusion objectives

Skills

- Excellent project and budget management skills
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to write and speak persuasively
- Strong interpersonal skills and the ability to build relationships with a wide range of partners, individuals and groups

Knowledge

- Thorough knowledge and understanding of theatre, including producing and technical areas
- Knowledge of artists, educators and organisations working in the theatre learning sector
- In-depth knowledge of theatre and drama education including experience of both formal and informal learning, and an understanding of the current context for cultural learning

Experience

- Extensive experience of devising, leading and/or producing and delivering high-quality creative learning and participation projects and programmes in the performing arts sector
- Experience of line managing staff and freelancers
- Experience of working with creative team members and artists

★★★★★ *"Funny, heart-warming
& splendidly staged"* - The Daily Mail



INFORMATION

- Contract type:** Full Time, Permanent
- Salary:** £45k - £50k per annum, depending on experience
- Hours of Work:** 40 hours per week (we will consider part time versions of the role pro-rata). Our office hours are 10am - 6pm Monday to Friday. Given the nature of our work and this role additional evening and weekend work will be required. We do not pay overtime but a Time Off In Lieu Policy is in place.
- Holidays:** 30 days per annum including bank holidays. This will increase by one day for each full holiday year of service completed to a maximum total of 33 days.
- Probation:** 6 months
- Notice Period:** 3 months after probation
- Pension:** Up to 5% matched pension contribution after qualifying period
- Other Benefits:** Season ticket loans, Cycle to Work scheme, complimentary theatre tickets, staff catering discount, Employee Assistance Programme (support and advice via phone and online for on various matters including legal, debt, counselling etc.)



HOW TO APPLY

Stratford East is committed to a policy of equal opportunities embracing diversity in all areas of activity and positively welcomes applications from disabled people and people of all ethnicities.

If you'd like to have an informal conversation about the role, please contact Flo Paul, current Learning & Participation Director on fpaul@stratfordeast.com

To apply, please upload a CV (of no more than 2 pages) and a covering letter (of no more than 2 pages) setting out why you want to work with us and how you meet the person specification. Please upload your application on our [BreatheHR portal](#).

The deadline for applications is 9am on Monday 19 January.

First round interviews will take place during the week commencing 26 January with second round interviews week commencing 02 February.

Please also complete our Equality and Diversity monitoring form to help us assess this recruitment process. Please complete the form [here](#)

If you need any reasonable adjustments or support when completing this process, please contact on recruitment@stratfordeast.com and they will facilitate.

★★★★★ **"Outrageously funny"** - The Times

★★★★★ *"Powerful, emotional intimacy"* - The Stage

STRATFORD
EAST



stratfordeast.com

020 8534 7374

Now, / See. Photo: Camilla Greenwell