



Head of Operations and Visitor Services Recruitment Pack, September 2022



Thank you for your interest in joining Polka

We are...*"The place to be for children's theatre"* ayoungertheatre.com and *"one of the best-equipped kids' theatres in the world"* Time Out.

This recruitment pack is designed to tell you more about us, the job role you would be doing, the skills and knowledge you would bring to the role and the qualities and values we're looking for. It also explains how you can apply and the interview process.

If you have any feedback or questions about this recruitment pack or require it in a different format, please let us know. We can be contacted on 020 8543 4888 or email ed@polkatheatre.com

If you have any questions or would like more detail about the role we encourage you to get in touch. Please call Lynette Shanbury, Executive Director and Joint CEO on 020 8545 8323 or email lynette@polkatheatre.com

Thank you for reading this pack and, if you decide to apply, we look forward to receiving your application by **Monday 10th October 2022 at 9am.**



Working, Wellbeing and Learning at Polka

Polka's commitment as an equal opportunities employer means we are keen to encourage applications from people from the Global Majority, people across the gender spectrum and people who self-identify as disabled, who are underrepresented in our sector. Our newly redeveloped venue is accessible for wheelchairs and prams/buggies; most spaces can be accessed step-free.

As a children's theatre we are generally open during the daytimes and weekends, rather than evenings, making us well suited to people who have families and/or other caring responsibilities outside of work. As a community rooted venue, we are also well suited to people who live nearby and are looking to work locally, rather than travel into or through central London. Our environment is important to us, and we have radically improved our building's sustainability, and our Green Team help to implement practical operational changes.

We want to help people achieve their potential while working at Polka. We prioritise our mental health and the culture of working at Polka by having regular team days to share and learn from each other, providing the opportunity to work flexibly (subject to the type of role) and a range of social events. We invest in our people through training opportunities which help us learn and understand more about working together. Recently this includes trans-awareness, equality, diversity and inclusion and mental health awareness.

You can find out more about the benefits of working at Polka under the 'Contract Terms and Benefits' section below.



About Polka

Polka is a pioneering national theatre for children based in Wimbledon, South West London. The first UK venue to be created exclusively for young audiences, we celebrated our 40th anniversary in 2019. We are one of just a handful of dedicated children's venues in the UK. Presenting a year-round programme of new work made at Polka, visiting shows, and Creative Learning activities for 0-12 year olds, we continue to pioneer developments in children's theatre, nurture artistic talent in the sector, and maintain an international reputation while serving local communities.

Polka is a charity and Arts Council England National Portfolio organisation. Our mission is to empower children to navigate their world through inspirational theatre and creative experiences. Around 100,000 people visit us each year and a further 18,000+ take part in creative learning and community activities. We involve children at every stage of the creative process and lead the way in Early Years theatre for under 6s together with our academic collaborators and the Culture Europe funded Mapping programme.

Inclusivity is and always has been an integral part of the company's offer. In 2007, Polka pioneered relaxed performances for children on the autistic spectrum, a model which continues to be replicated across the cultural sector. We run a free ticketing scheme, enabling children from deprived areas to experience live theatre for the first time, and a range of initiatives that provide opportunities for children with particular access needs or who live in challenging circumstances to participate in our activities. We offer opportunities for all children and families regardless of age, ability, culture or background, to engage in theatre.

This is an exciting time to be joining Polka. Our redeveloped venue opened to the public in summer 2021. Since opening our Wimbledon home in 1979, over 3.5 million children, parents, teachers and carers have been through our doors and we now have an opportunity to redevelop and reimagine Polka for future generations.

Our website gives you more information about us, including a film giving a tour of the venue (<https://polkatheatre.com/your-visit/>). We are funded by Arts Council England, London, registered charity number 256979.

What sort of people work with us?

We are looking for people who share our mission, vision and values through their work. As part of our team, you will be conscientious, proactive and reliable in your approach to work and have a willingness to learn and adapt to changes. We support and champion each other. You don't need to have a degree, specialist arts qualification or years of experience to work with us. We will support you to fulfil your full potential in your role.

Mission To empower children to navigate their world through inspirational theatre and creative experiences.

Vision Improving children's lives, bringing communities together, creating ground-breaking theatre.

Our values:

Child-centred placing children at the heart of everything Polka does.

Community engaging our diverse communities of children, families, educationalists and artists.

Excellent pioneering, adventurous, offering the highest quality.

Memorable creating magical, meaningful experiences.

Inclusive welcoming, accessible, nurturing, supportive, representative.





What do we need for this role?

This is the role for you, if you:

- Are excited to work at a pioneering national theatre for children as an inspirational senior leader who enjoys managing people.
- Combine an intuitive and data-driven approach that looks to bring continual improvement and commercial success in areas such as retail, food & beverage and hires.
- Have a strong understanding of Health and Safety in a public building.

As a member of the Senior Management Team (SMT), you will lead the Operations and Visitor Services (VS/Ops) team to:

- Make sure there is a friendly and efficient Visitor Services operation and a welcoming and safe environment for Polka's visitors.
- Generate income through commercial activities, including merchandising (shop/auditorium sales), catering (café/private events) and premises hire.
- Maintain a safe, clean and effective working environment for the wider Polka team.
- Manage the upkeep of the premises via planned improvements and reactive maintenance, and drive sustainability through leadership of the Green Team.

Contract Terms and Benefits

This role is a full-time and permanent. We will consider applications for flexible working and job-sharing so please let us know your preference for this in your application. It is normally based at Polka Theatre 240 The Broadway, Wimbledon, London SW19 1SB.

Job title for this role is Head of Operations and Visitor Services. Your manager will be the Executive Director/Joint CEO. You will be responsible for line managing the following roles:

- Senior Duty Manager
- Building and Operations Manager
- Café Manager/ Chef
- Volunteer and Visitor Services Coordinator
- Commercial and Hires Officer

You will have oversight of contractors including cleaners and IT.

Salary is £35,000 – £40,000 per year depending on experience.

Hours of work are 40 hours per week including a lunch break, worked over 5 days Monday to Friday. You are required to be flexible as Polka is open to the public



Tuesday to Sunday. This means you will need to work one in every four weekends. We operate a Time Off In Lieu, known as 'TOIL', system for additional hours worked, including any travel out of London for work.

Holiday 20 days per year plus bank/public holidays (with increase after 1+ year)

Pension and benefits

- After 3 months you will be automatically enrolled into NOW Pensions scheme in accordance with statutory deadlines and contributions.
- Flexi-time – you can start work anytime between 9am and 10am and work the corresponding 8 hours (with one hour for lunch) within the needs of the organisation.
- Complementary tickets for all Polka productions subject to availability.
- Discount in Polka's café and shop.
- Cycle to Work and Season Ticket loan schemes.
- Increase in holiday entitlement and employer pension contributions after 1+ year.
- Regular social activities and team days.

Probationary period your appointment is subject to satisfactorily completing a 6 month probation period. Your notice period during probation is 2 weeks for both you and Polka.

Notice period 3 months for both you and Polka.

Job Description

Here are more details about the responsibilities for this role:

Visitor Services

- Have oversight of recruiting, training, and managing the Visitor Service team (paid staff and volunteers), to make sure there is appropriate and sufficient staffing of the venue at all times.
- When necessary, act as one of the Duty Managers on site for show running and fire safety.

Health and Safety

- Responsible for general Health and Safety (H&S) within the buildings, including fire evacuation procedures for public and staff, making sure regular fire-drills and alarm testing is carried out.
- Manage delivery of H&S, fire, first aid and food hygiene training for staff as appropriate.

- Ensure suitable first aid cover is provided on site, and that accident and incident records are maintained.
- Undertake regular H&S risk assessments for public areas and liaise with other departments to make sure assessments are carried out throughout the premises.
- Keep updated on H&S guidelines with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and ensure all required record keeping is done in a timely and accurate manner.
- Be an active member of the Safety Team, working alongside the Head of Production to champion H&S across the organisation, manage appropriate training delivery, and the annual update of the H&S Policy.

Building & Operations

- Make sure the building and its contents are always secure, manage CCTV records and the implementation of security measures, including keys and lock-up procedures.
- Oversee efficient functioning of IT and phone systems and manage the IT Contractor service delivery and cost efficiency.
- With the Head of Production, coordinate all building maintenance, services, and utility issues for Batsworth Road (Polka's off-site workshop).
- Negotiation with a wide range of contractors for best prices, including utilities, and monitor annual costs and consumption.
- Oversee management by the Buildings and Operations Manager of all contractor services including electrical works, air conditioning and waste.
- Manage the renewal of the premises license and act as the personal license holder – Polka will provide training as a Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS).
- Act as a key holder.
- Liaise with Merton Council and Fire Brigade regarding inspections.

Commercial and Budgets

- Seek to continually improve our retail and café offer.
- Oversee management of budgets for general maintenance, special projects, café and retail – seeking best value for money in the procurement of goods and services.
- Monitor and provide weekly/monthly reporting against targets, particularly earned income for café and retail.
- Liaise with the Commercial & Hires Officer to set pricing and targets for private hires.
- Liaise with the Café Manager to set pricing and targets for catering events.



Human Resources (HR) and Management

- Line-manage the VS/Ops team, to support delivery of their roles and oversee skills development of the team.
- Ensure HR processes are undertaken for casual members of the VS team, including issuing casual contracts, monitoring holiday and sickness/absence using Breathe, our HR management software, and liaising with Finance for weekly payroll.

Environmental Sustainability

- Drive and inspire sustainable practice across the organisation through leadership of the Green Team and create a culture of continuous operational improvement.
- Make sure weekly meter readings are recorded, and measure quarterly and annual energy and water consumption against Arts Council KPI targets and reporting to Julie's Bicycle.
- Annually update the Environmental Policy and Action Plan in liaison with the Executive Director.
- Manage sustainability of building and partnerships with award bodies such as Green Tourism.

Other

- Be a trained first aider and Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Be an active member of the Senior Management Team (SMT).
- Provide information to and attend quarterly meetings of the Operations Working Group.
- Participate in local sustainability and public safety networks.

All team members are expected to

- Champion and honour Polka's vision and values (you can find these on the previous pages).
- Maintain confidentiality and abide by Polka's policies and procedures.
- Follow Health and Safety rules at work.
- Follow Safeguarding rules and legislation.
- Actively ensure Equality, Diversity and Inclusion is part of Polka's culture.
- Contribute to Polka's Environmental Action plan by thinking and working sustainably.
- Contribute towards Polka's fundraising goals, this may include research, writing applications, advocacy and managing relationships.
- Take part in operational teams to help share learning, find joint solutions and drive change.
- Participate in all training, development and wellbeing initiatives as required.
- Undertake any other duties as may be reasonably required.



Person Specification

In your application, please make sure you show us how you would bring the following skills, knowledge and experience, that we are looking, for to this role. We value the different experiences that people bring to a job role and will always look to provide opportunities for you to learn more about your job role and help you gain more experience working at Polka. There are some areas we have suggested are beneficial but not essential to have.

1. Proven ability to organise projects and people, giving the attention required, within a set timeframe or by a deadline.
2. Proven ability to write and speak eloquently and present with confidence in order to build and maintain relationships both internally and externally.
3. Ability to use Microsoft Office: Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint and software (we use PointOne ePOS, NowLogIt - for reporting Fire & Emergency Lighting testing, HeatingSave to remotely manage a Building Management System, IG Tools for Julies Bicycle reporting) on a regular basis.
4. Ability to work well in a team, including in senior leadership teams, and independently where you can think strategically to generate innovative ideas.
5. Ability to deal with a diverse range of people at all levels using tact, diplomacy, and patience.
6. Proven knowledge of H&S legislations and procedures.
7. Proven knowledge of what is best practice in sales techniques and customer service, including how to deal with complaints and difficult situations.

8. Commercial acumen and experience of driving increased sales in terms of retail and, ideally, food and beverage, plus experience of negotiating with contractors to ensure value for money.
9. Experience of managing other people at a senior level and working with external partners and volunteers.
10. Demonstrable experience of working in an operations/visitor services or similar role, ideally within an arts or cultural building or another type of venue (e.g. leisure).
11. Ability to drive and inspire sustainable practice and environmental improvements
12. The following certifications are beneficial but if you've not got them or they've lapsed Polka will arrange and pay for them: First aid, fire marshal, safeguarding, ISOH or similar H&S course, personal licence.

You will be required to have a valid [Disclosure and Barring \(DBS\) certificate](#) or be willing to undergo an enhanced DBS check (at Polka's expense) if a job offer is made subject to this being obtained.

How to apply

Deadline 9am on Monday 10th October 2022

Interview Friday 14th October 2022

Second interview Wednesday 19th October 2022 (if required)

Ideal start date November 2022



Please complete and send the following to Lynette Shanbury at lynette@polkatheatre.com or post it to them at Polka Theatre, 240 The Broadway, Wimbledon SW19 1SB. Remember to include *Head of Operations and Visitor Services* as your email subject line or on the envelope.

- Current CV and short cover letter telling us how you meet the Person Specification.
- If you would prefer, you are welcome to send us a short video or audio file (no longer than 5 mins), telling us about yourself, your current and previous job roles and/or work experience, as well as your knowledge, skills and experience.



Please also complete/send us:

- Privacy notice form – download it, as a Word document, from our [website](#)
- Complete our Equality Monitoring survey by visiting [Survey Monkey website](#).

The Equality monitoring survey is anonymous and is not sent to the person who receives your application. It helps us understand whether we are succeeding in promoting equality of opportunity and encouraging representation. It is completely separate from your application, and we do not connect the two.

Once you have sent us the documents above, by the deadline, we will let you know we have received your application.

Interview Process

We will shortlist the applicants we would like to meet for an interview. Our shortlisters will be looking for you to have done the following:

- Sent us a completed application before the deadline.
- Clearly shown us how you share our values and the things we've mentioned in the 'What sort of people work for us?' section above.
- Given us examples of how you meet the points in the 'Person Specification' section above.
- Given us relevant information about your work history/experience and any training (remember to make sure to tell us about any gaps when you weren't working).

We will offer interviews to the applicants who have shown us these things most strongly.

All applicants will receive a response from us to confirm whether or not they have been selected for an interview. We aim to give at least half a weeks' notice ahead of the interview date.

Interviews will be held in person at Polka Theatre with Lynette Shanbury, Executive Director and Joint CEO and one other member of the team on Friday 14th October 2022. Interviews can be arranged via Zoom if needed in the first instance.

We will let you know if there is anything in particular that we need you to prepare in advance.

All applicants who attend an interview will be offered feedback. It is not possible for us to give individual feedback if you have not been selected for an interview.

POLKA

Where Theatre Begins

Thank you very much for your interest in this role. We look forward to hearing from you.

