

Producer Recruitment Pack January 2023



(Photo: Hufton+Crow)

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 tells you about our perks and benefits, for all employees and 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

We are holding an **online question and answer session about this role** on our social media channels on **Monday 30 January at 1pm** with our incoming Artistic Director, Helen Matravers. If you would like to have a chat about this role in more detail, please call Helen on 0208 5434321 or email helenM@polkatheatre.com

Thank you for reading this pack and, if you decide to apply, we look forward to receiving your application by **12noon on Wednesday 15 February 2023.**

About Polka

Polka is a pioneering national theatre for children based in Wimbledon, the first UK venue created exclusively for young audiences. Opened in 1979, we are one of just a handful of dedicated children's venues in the UK. Since then over 3.5 million children, parents, teachers and carers have been through our doors. Following our £9m redevelopment in 2020/21 we now have an opportunity to reimagine Polka for future generations.

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.

Our website (www.polkatheatre.com) gives you more information about us. We are funded by Arts Council England, London, registered charity number 256979.



Image: *In the Winter Wood* – coproduction with Apples & Snakes (photo: The Other Richard)

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.



Image: The Y C Chan Play Den at Polka (Photo: Hufton+Crow)



Perks and Benefits

We continually strive to make Polka an even greater place to work. We listen to feedback and conversations with staff at our team days. By doing this, we recently reviewed our perks and benefits package and are delighted to make enhancements and add new ones, which are:

- Flexi-time – after your first day, 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.
- Extra holiday – after 1+ year of service an extra day per year, up to 5 extra days.
- Volunteering days – up to 2 days off per leave year (pro rata).
- Sabbatical unpaid leave – after 3+ years service.
- Cycle to work scheme.
- Season ticket loans.
- Emergency small loan scheme for salaried and regular casual staff.
- Pension – after 3 months you will be automatically enrolled into NOW Pensions scheme in accordance with statutory deadlines and contributions.
- Additional pension – an additional 1% of employer pension contribution above statutory minimum after 1 year of service.
- Complementary tickets – for all Polka productions subject to availability.
- Polka's Café and shop – generous discounts.
- Local discounts on shopping, dining and entertainment through Love Wimbledon card membership.
- Leisure centre and spa – corporate discounted rate with local gym, swimming pool and spa around the corner from Polka.
- Discounted parking if you need to drive to work, subject to availability.
- Regular social activities and team days.



Image: Polka Youth Theatre, 2018 (Photo: Ali Wright)

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.



Image: *I'll Take you to Mrs Cole* – coproduction with Complicité (photo: Ali Wright)

This is the role for you, if you:

- Would like to work for a pioneering national theatre for children.
- Enjoy working with people and managing relationships.
- Are accurate with administration, good at problem solving and able to think innovatively.

You will play a vital role in achieving the creative transformation of our business and operating model, acting as the central point of communication for all performance activity within the company. You will be responsible for producing and enabling delivery of all aspects of Polka's artistic programme at the theatre in Wimbledon, locally, nationally and internationally. You will work closely with the Artistic Director and Executive Director, who are Joint CEOs, and other Heads of Departments. You will supervise the Producing Assistant, who is also line managed by the Artistic Director/Joint CEO.

Job Description

Programming, producing and co-productions

- Support the Artistic Director/Joint CEO in identifying and generating a programme of work that realises the artistic vision and strategic ambitions of Polka.
- Produce all Polka productions, co-productions or tours, which involves:
 - Leading on the planning, development and management of co-productions with oversight of the Executive Director/Joint CEO.
 - Negotiating, contracting and managing creative teams.
 - Taking overall show budget responsibility.
- Oversee induction and integration of creative teams and visiting companies at Polka, supported by the Artistic Director/Joint CEO.
- Support in actively seek out investors and co-producers for Polka's work, and develop and deliver the future life potential of projects.
- Lead the contractual negotiations with co-producers and visiting companies in all spaces and venues, including festivals.
- Work with the Sales and Marketing team to:
 - Identify audiences for work and work for audiences.
 - Ensure marketing and press campaigns reflect the artistic vision for the show and that sales targets are being met.
- Support the assessment of the technical and financial capacity of each season of work, with the Head of Production or Production Manager and Head of Administration and Finance.
- Produce the PolkaLAB artist development programme.

Budgets

- With the Executive and Artistic Directors arrange, monitor and update the following budgets throughout the year:
 - Production and programming budget
 - Commissions budget
 - Research and Development (R&D) budget.

Cross-departmental relationships and line management

- Lead on evaluation of productions, to feed into future planning and monitoring requirements of funders, supported by the Producing Assistant.
- Support the Development team to find funding opportunities for Polka projects.
- Attend weekly Production/Producer meetings.
- Support the Artistic Director with the management of staff within the Artistic and Programming department, and the welfare of creative freelancers working with Polka.

- Supervise work by the part-time Producing Assistant who supports with all aspects of producing Polka's artistic programme and leads on key administrative areas including:
 - Standard contracts.
 - Travel, flights, work permits and accommodation.
 - Contact sheets.
 - Production schedules and meeting minutes.
 - Actor availability checks and liaises with agents.
 - Producing selected R&D workshops, PolkaLAB showcases, rehearsed readings and other events outside of the main programme.

General

- Attend press shows and meet guests at performances as required.
- Network, maintain and develop relationships with companies/co-producing partners.
- Maintain strong knowledge of, and relationships with, major theatre unions and their agreements.

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.



Image: *Plastic Drastic Fantastic*, 2022 – coproduction with Akademi. (Photo: Brian Hartley)

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 with investors, professional companies and co-producing partners.
3. Ability to use Microsoft Office: Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint on a regular basis.
4. Proven ability in drafting and managing budgets.
5. Ability to work well in as a team (in a group of people) and independently (alone) where you can form effective partnerships both internally and externally and deal with a diverse range of people at all levels using tact, diplomacy and patience.
6. Experience working at a level with autonomy within a producing theatre venue or company, including touring.



7. Experience of liaising with agents and artists to negotiate contracts and a good working knowledge of relevant contracts.
8. Experience of working directly with creative teams and facilitating artistic processes.
9. Experience in the charity/not for profit sector is beneficial but not essential.

You may 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. We are happy for this to happen through the sensitive applications route for transgender applicants, as described [here](#).

Contract Terms and Benefits

This role is 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 Producer. Your manager will be the Artistic Director.

Salary is circa £30,000 per year.

Hours you will need to work are 35 hours per week excluding a lunch break of 1 hour, worked over 5 days Monday to Friday. You may need to work some additional hours, including evenings and weekends, and travel out of London when required (we operate a Time Off In Lieu, known as 'TOIL' system).

Holiday 28 days per year including bank/public holidays.

Probationary period your appointment is subject to satisfactorily completing a 3 month probation period. Your notice period during probation is 2 weeks for both you and Polka.

Notice period 2 months for both you and Polka.

How to apply

Deadline

12noon on Wednesday 15 February 2023.

First interview

Thursday 23 February 2023.

Second interview

 tbc

Ideal start date as soon as possible.



Please complete and send the following to Helen Matravers, Artistic Director at helenM@polkatheatre.com or post it to them at Polka Theatre, 240 The Broadway, Wimbledon SW19 1SB. Remember to include *Producer* 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 Helen Matravers, Artistic Director and one other member of the senior management team, on Thursday 23 February 2023. Interviews can be arranged via Zoom if needed.

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.

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



Image: Cinderella: the AWESOME truth! – coproduction with One Tenth Human (photo: Tasha Best)