



## Development Assistant Recruitment Pack April 2025



### Thank you for your interest in joining Polka

We are...**The UK's Most Welcoming Theatre**, *Uk Theatre Awards* and **“one of the best-equipped kids' theatres in the world”** *Time Out*.

Polka Theatre is a pioneering and unique children's theatre venue, staging exceptional productions and developing industry-leading Creative Learning experiences which are accessible for all children to enjoy. In 2024 we won the UK Theatre Award for Most Welcoming Theatre, as well as Merton Best Business.

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 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 [boxoffice@polkatheatre.com](mailto:boxoffice@polkatheatre.com). If you would like to have a chat about this role in more detail, please contact Jemima Unsworth, Development & Events Manager, on [JemimaUnsworth@polkatheatre.com](mailto:JemimaUnsworth@polkatheatre.com)



Thank you for reading this pack and, if you decide to apply, we look forward to receiving your application by **9am on Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2025**.

## 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 4 million children, parents, teachers and carers have been through our doors. Following our £9m redevelopment in 2020/21 we have reimagined 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](http://www.polkatheatre.com)) gives you more information about us. We are funded by Arts Council England, London, registered charity number 256979.





## 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 wheelchair accessible.

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.



## 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.



## The Polka Team

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.



## **This is the role for you, if you:**

- Would like to work for a pioneering national theatre for children
- Are passionate about every child having the opportunity to access the arts
- Want to build a career in arts fundraising and events
- Want to develop skills in planning and delivering events
- Have excellent administrative skills and attention to detail and take pride in working together with a team to look after our valued supporters
- Want to learn how to build strong corporate partnerships within the local community to enhance Polka's events and fundraising activities
- Want to develop skills in creating and writing compelling donor communications
- Are creative, organised and with good attention to detail.



## **Job Description**

We are seeking a Development Assistant to join the team at Polka Theatre. This is an exciting and varied role, ideal for someone looking to develop a career in the arts and/or arts fundraising. You'll be line managed by the Development & Events Manager and work with all the Development Team and staff across the organisation.

You'll have the opportunity to work on a range of events for current and prospective supporters and provide essential administrative support to ensure accurate record keeping of donations.

We think the role will suit you if you are creative and organised with good attention to detail. Fundraising at Polka is crucial to help raise money to support Polka's charitable activities as a leading children's theatre. This makes a lasting difference to children who benefit from Polka's shows and creative learning activities. You'll experience first-hand the impact of your work.

### **Events**

- Work closely with the Development and Events Manager on a range of events, including behind the scenes receptions and Polka's big annual festive fundraiser (The Big Bash). This will combine some events that you will oversee and others which will be led by the Development and Events Manager.
- Support with tasks such as managing guest lists, sending invitations, preparing briefing notes and event plans, event logistics, risk assessments, and liaison with suppliers.
- Play a key role in Polka's big annual festive fundraiser (The Big Bash) including support liaising with external suppliers, sourcing raffle/auction prizes and goody bags, organising festive décor and props.

### **Fundraising Administration**

- Support accurate financial record keeping including Gift Aid and tracking of donations made through different payment providers and via direct debits, payroll and other schemes.
- Process donations on Spektrix (CRM database) from individuals and from fundraising events.
- Ensure the security of personal prospect and donor data and managed in line with the latest GDPR (data protection) guidance and Polka's Privacy Policy (GDPR training will be provided).



- As a member of the Development Team, support with other tasks to help with fundraising at Polka.

### **Donor communications**

- Draft and proofread fundraising communications, proposals and reports. This will include researching and planning content for quarterly supporters' newsletters.
- Support timely communications with donors, tracking regular gifts, and thank you letters.
- Ensure appropriate thanking of people who add donations when they buy tickets, and of other agreed supporters.

### **Depending on skill set and opportunity to learn/train in this area**

- Create various communication tools for events and donors including save-the-dates, signage, impact boards, and thank you cards on Canva.
- Support with video editing for campaigns including the Big Give.
- Support with updates to the development pages of the website.
- Support with e-newsletters and donor updates using Dot Digital.

### **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.

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We are happy to hear about experience that you have gained outside of the workplace or in a voluntary role.

1. Proven experience in an administrative role – it doesn't have to be in the arts/theatre or a paid role. If this has included administering donations/ using databases that would be beneficial but not essential.
2. Proven experience of organising events and event planning – it doesn't have to be in the arts/theatre or a paid role.



3. Proven ability to organise projects and people, giving the attention to detail required, within a set timeframe or by a deadline.
4. Proven ability to write and speak confidently and able to present in front of team members and other colleagues when required.
5. Ability to use Microsoft Office. If you know how to use a CRM/ Database system (we use Spektrix), Canva (design programme) and video editing software that would be beneficial but it's not essential.
6. Ability to work well in a team and independently (alone), with a range of people at different levels.
7. Ability to deal with a diverse range of people at all levels using tact, diplomacy and patience.
8. Direct experience of fundraising or development work for a theatre or an arts project or a charity would be beneficial but it's not essential.

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.

## Contract Terms

This role is part-time (3 days per week) and permanent. We will consider applications for flexible working 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. You may be able to work from home up to one day per week depending on the needs of the company operations.

**Job title** for this role is Development Assistant. Your manager will be the Development and Events Manager.

**Salary** is £25,750 per year pro rata (equivalent £15,450 for 3 days per week).

**Hours** you will need to work are 21 hours per week. This can be worked as 3 days per week or 21 hours worked over 4 shorter days per week (please state your preference in your application). 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 pro rata including bank/public holidays.

**Probationary period** your appointment is subject to satisfactorily completing a 3 month probation. Notice during probation is 1 week for both you and Polka.

**Notice period** 1 month for both you and Polka.

## How to apply

**Deadline** 9am on Tuesday 22 April 2025

**Interviews** Tuesday 29 April 2025

**Ideal start date** as soon as possible



Please complete and send the following to Jemima Unsworth, Development & Events Manager, on [JemimaUnsworth@polkatheatre.com](mailto:JemimaUnsworth@polkatheatre.com) or post it to them at Polka Theatre, 240 The Broadway, Wimbledon SW19 1SB. Remember to include 'Development Assistant' as your email subject line or on the envelope.

- Application form – download it as a Word document from our [website](#)
- 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 <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XZJ77YW>

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 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 Georgina Davey, Head of Development, and Jemima Unsworth, Development and Events Manager. Initial 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 for your interest in this role. We look forward to hearing from you.

