



Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the role of Chair at the Royal Exchange Theatre.

It is a hugely exciting time to be joining us during a period of transformation. Since January 2025, we have had the privilege of serving as Interim Co-Chairs, overseeing the very start of this programme of change, and before that, we've been proud to help steer the organisation through our involvement on the board. Furthermore, we are currently in the process of recruiting a new Executive Director & Co-CEO who will work with our recently appointed Artistic Director & Co-CEO, Selina Cartmell, and our new Chair to drive forward an exciting new vision for the Royal Exchange.

The Royal Exchange holds a vital place in Manchester's rich cultural landscape, and it continues to grow as an ambitious, critically acclaimed and collaborative theatre rooted in the heart of the city.

Over the past 50 years, the Royal Exchange has built a national reputation for innovation, world-class performances and a deep commitment to nurturing diverse voices. Since we first opened our doors, we've premiered more than 125 new plays and some of the greatest artists in theatre history have made work for our unique theatre.

Today, Selina is committed to building on this rich legacy. Under hers and our new ED's leadership, alongside yours as our new Chair, our theatre will produce bold, adventurous and ambitious work locally, nationally and internationally, placing artistic voices at the heart of everything we will do.

We passionately believe the Royal Exchange belongs to the people of Manchester and the work of our theatre should be accessible for as many people as possible. Each year, we welcome thousands of theatre-goers through our doors, and thousands more engage with us through a rich programme of community engagement and artist development activities. We are a registered charity and support from Arts Council England, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, and our donor base of individuals, businesses and trusts and foundations, is critical to our success.

As we enter this next chapter for the organisation, we want to be transparent. We're in a period of significant and necessary change where we will be evolving and refreshing many of our foundational ideas; our new Chair will be critical to this change programme. We are looking for a visionary and dynamic board leader to work with Selina, our new ED, and the wider board and team, helping us shape a future that is artist-centred, collaborative and daring.

We want the Royal Exchange to continue challenging expectations and championing stories that resonate deeply with the communities we serve. This is an opportunity to play a leading role in shaping the future of one of the UK's leading producing theatres.

Come ioin us.

afshan d'souza-lodhi & Jo Taylor Interim Co-Chairs of the Royal Exchange Theatre









A note from our Artistic Director & Co-CEO

As we approach our 50th anniversary in 2026, the Royal Exchange stands at a pivotal moment of artistic renewal and organisational transformation. Our unique in-the-round theatre module isn't just architecture – it's a statement of intent about how we create and share stories with our audiences and communities.

As we progress through the recruitment of a new Executive Director & Co-CEO to partner with me, we now seek a Chair who can support us and help drive the Exchange forward. This working relationship between Executive, Chair and board is an extraordinary opportunity to redefine what a major regional theatre can be in the 21st century.

Together, we will position the Royal Exchange as a beacon of artistic excellence with deep local roots and global ambitions. The ideal partner will bring personal standing, leadership ability, a depth of experience, and a genuine belief in the transformative power of storytelling and the courage to reimagine traditional theatre models.

We need someone who can lead the board and bring the requisite governance experience, whilst also drawing on their own skillset and networks to be a compelling advocate for the Exchange, and to represent the Theatre and the city.

I look forward to joining you on this ambitious journey of renewal.

Selina Cartmell
Artistic Director & Co-CEO







An introduction to the Royal Exchange Theatre

In 2026, the iconic Royal Exchange Theatre celebrates 50 years of producing award-winning theatre, creating work that is ambitious in ideas, form and scale. We sit at the centre of a fast-paced, diverse and expanding global city with artists, audiences and communities at the heart of everything we do.

Our brave and bold programming, both on and off our stages, has been critically acclaimed and celebrated for its originality, relevance and artistic risk.

Our theatre auditorium in the vast Grade II listed trading hall of the Royal Exchange building is one of the most remarkable theatre designs of the 20th century – a breathtaking must-see for locals and visitors. Our main house has a capacity of 759 yet no seat is more than 9 metres away from the stage. In addition, we have ambitions to re-launch our flexible Studio Theatre which seats 90 and redevelop our studio and rehearsal spaces at our Swan Street building in Manchester's vibrant Northern Quarter.

From our iconic theatre-in-the-round, we welcome audiences and communities of more than 100,000 each year and have established a local, national and international reputation for bringing the world's most powerful stories to life. We make the impossible possible through the extraordinary relationship fostered between artist and audience in our unique architectural and democratic space.

Artists and audiences sit at the heart of everything we do.

The Royal Exchange is proud to provide a platform for directors, actors, writers, designers, and all theatremakers to make radical work at an ambitious scale. Through sustained relationships and deep-rooted investment in artists, we aim to inspire audiences to experiment and take risks, creating a vibrant, diverse and

inclusive platform for the continued development of theatre practice across the UK.

Our innovative creative learning work with communities across Greater Manchester continues to have real and lasting impact on the confidence and creative aspirations of those involved. Through the development of strong creative collaborations with individuals and community groups, we continue to create new and nurture long-lasting relationships between the Theatre and the people on our doorstep.

For nearly five decades, the Royal Exchange has played a crucial role in ensuring the future of theatre and plays an integral part in a global conversation about theatre practice and universal, human stories. For the next 50 years, we will continue to champion the importance of arts and culture as a vital way to reflect our world today.

royalexchange.co.uk

@RXTheatre – X

@rxtheatre – Instagram

rxtheatre – YouTube

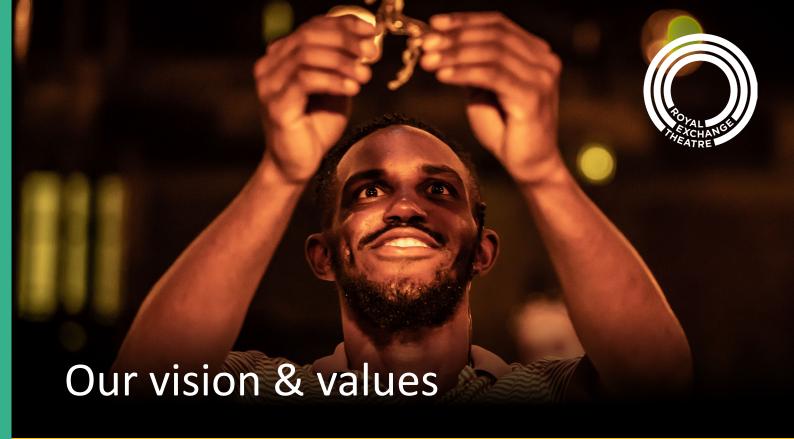
rxtheatre - TikTok

Royal Exchange Theatre – LinkedIn





'If you live near Manchester and went to every single show in the main house and studio at the Royal Exchange, you'd have a pretty good grasp of what was going on in British Theatre.'



Our vision

Our historic building was taken over by artists in 1976. Today, we are an award-winning cultural charity that produces new theatre in-the-round, in communities, on the road and online. The idea of Exchange remains at the heart of everything we make and do. Now, our currency is reinvigorated classics and new work with the boldest artists and a company of highly skilled makers — all brought together in a shared imaginative endeavour to trade ideas and experiences with the people of Greater Manchester and beyond.

The Exchange's unique auditorium is powerfully democratic, a space where audiences and performers meet as equals, entering and exiting through the same doors. It is the inspiration for all we do; inviting everyone to understand the past, engage in today's big questions, collectively imagine a better future, and lose themselves in the moment of a great night out.

Our values

Celebrating Imagination

We encourage and celebrate imaginative thinking and believe in the creative potential of everyone. We think that imagination has the power to help everyone reconsider the world around them.

Open and enabling

We welcome everyone to visit and work in our theatre and encourage everyone to talk to us. We provide platforms that enable everyone; artists, theatre-makers and audiences, to ask questions. We value everyone's opinions and use them to inform our decisions.

Enterprising and Pioneering

We always look for ways to do things differently, push boundaries, test possibilities and lead new developments. We embrace change and bring enterprising thinking to the cultural sector.

Connected

We make theatre for, with, and by the communities of Greater Manchester. We have a passion for collaboration and believe that working in partnership will help us realise our full potential.

Responsible

We work with integrity and respect, are business-like and professional. We are a charity, and public benefit is our business. We exercise a duty of care for our artform, the artists we work with, our audiences, and our building.





Darren Henley, Chief Executive, Arts Council England, from his book 'The Culture Dividend'



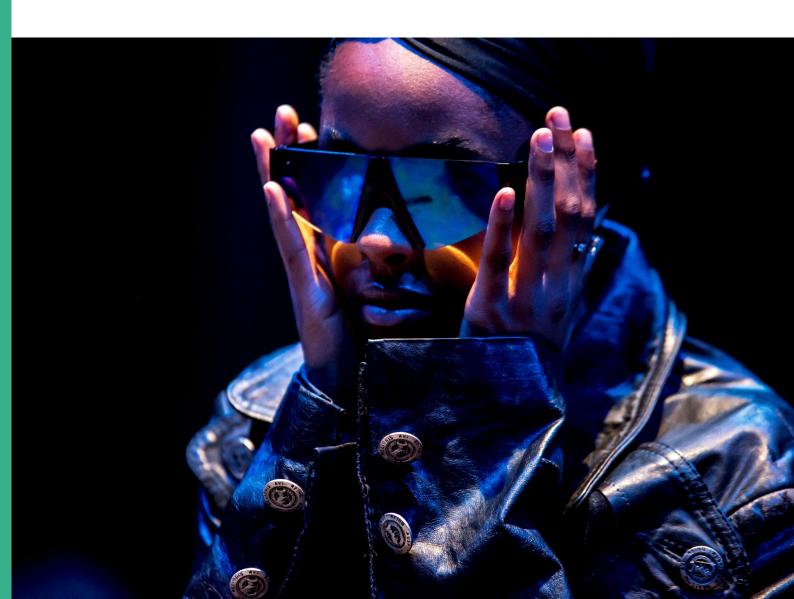
Inclusivity & representation

Our commitment to equity, inclusivity and representation is embedded in everything we do. As a theatre rooted in Greater Manchester — one of the UK's most diverse city regions — we see diversity not only as a strength, but as essential to our work. These values shape our programme, our organisational culture, and how we engage with our audiences.

We champion the right for everyone to see themselves represented in the creative landscape of our city and beyond, striving for change here and across the industry as a whole. We are actively working to address the imbalance in representation in terms of race, gender, disability, class and sexuality in all our work, from our onstage productions and talent development opportunities to our workforce and committed volunteers.

It is vital that the work of the Royal Exchange represents the city, and that stories reflecting the people and ambitions of the city are seen on our stages and in the partnerships we develop.

Most recent examples include LIBERATION, a powerful new play inspired by true events in Black British history, co-produced by Royal Exchange Theatre and Manchester International Festival; SENSORIAL DREAMS, an immersive experience using a multisensory approach to enhance audience interaction in partnership with the University of Manchester School of Digital Arts; and GREAT EXPECTATIONS, a Royal Exchange Theatre and Tamasha co-production.





The cultural offer in Manchester and the North-West has become ever more sophisticated and adventurous. The theatre sector in the city has grown in quality and range and is home to a wealth of different organisations and venues including The Lowry, Factory International, HOME, ATG (the Palace), Opera House and most recently, ENO.

As a full-time producing house, the Royal Exchange offers a unique mix of classic and contemporary plays and brandnew productions of iconic musicals to a wide range of audiences from hyper local city-centre attendees to those attending from across Greater Manchester's ten boroughs and the North-West. In addition to this, a thriving visitor economy in Manchester means the Exchange is well placed to attract an increasing number of national and international visitors through our doors. All of this creates a broad audience demographic for our work. Our most

loyal audiences who attend multiple times a year cite their love for the Theatre as the main reason for attending. These audiences are predominately found in south Manchester with areas of potential in growth seen across boroughs where our Local Exchange programmes run such as Tameside.

We are committed to providing affordable tickets via our reduced-price previews and our famous banquette seats are available for £10, split across online purchasing and day seats, making these as accessible as possible. Growing, diversifying and retaining audiences are core principles in our audience development plan and through the use of MHM segmentation, we are gaining a deeper understanding of our audience's values and motivations, allowing us to create deeper and more meaningful relationships.

61%

Audiences from Greater Manchester

39%

Audiences from outside Greater Manchester

2,219

Number of £10 tickets available across the year

14,125

Low-cost tickets

1,285

Engagement comps (excluding schools)

30

Access performances

1,957

Access seats

2.9m

Instagram views in a year

3.1m

Facebook views in a year

556,600

YouTube views in a year

687,296

Website views in a year





Creative learning & engagement

We believe everyone, regardless of their circumstances, should have access to great theatre and world-class storytelling. At the Royal Exchange, participation is central to achieving our vision and mission. It provides important points of access, extends our reach beyond the walls of our theatre, and deepens engagement for everyone at all levels. Over 9,000 people from a range of ages and backgrounds take part every year in our Engagement programmes both at the Theatre and in areas across Greater Manchester, enabling us to build a lasting cultural exchange between the Theatre and its communities.

We continue to support the next generation of theatre makers through our Young Company, offering a year-long commitment to training and workshop sessions. Our tailored workshops, learning resources and partnerships are valued by schools across Greater Manchester. Our Elders programme recently celebrated 10 years of

creativity in later life and challenging the stereotypes of aging.

Local Exchange is the Theatre's ambitious, long-term programme that sees the Theatre take up residency in communities across Greater Manchester. At the heart of the residency is a community festival in our mobile theatre space, The Den. Inspired by our in-the-round theatre module in The Royal Exchange Theatre, it creates an environmentally sustainable theatre for people to come together, create, learn and share stories in their own community. Through connections with communities and local partners, such as libraries, housing associations, charities and arts organisations, we aim to create a lasting legacy in each area and make our theatre one for everyone.



'The Royal Exchange was the first proper theatre I went to as a kid, and throughout my school and college visits over the years, it became an impossible dream that I could ever perform there. Now, in its current form, with its incredible community engagement programmes, Open Exchange, vibrant studio, commitment to new work and diversity, I feel privileged to call it my artistic home in Manchester. I love this theatre with all my heart.'

Julie Hesmondhalgh





Artist development & new work

The Royal Exchange is committed to shaping and developing the theatre of the future through commissioning new work and developing and nurturing theatre-making talent including writers, directors, actors, designers and makers.

We do this by:

- Identifying and supporting next generation talent to make work;
- Running programmes and initiatives that enable theatre makers of all disciplines at different stages of their careers to develop their skills. These include master classes, mentoring, workshops and supporting artists to research and develop work from scratch;
- Participating in national schemes for developing directors, playwrights and designers, e.g. Hodgkiss Award, Birkbeck Directors Course and forging partnerships with other organisations to co-support and co-develop artists, e.g. Warner Bros Discovery Access Northern Writers Programme in collaboration with Wall to Wall North.

Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting

We also run the internationally renowned biennial Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting – now Europe's richest prize for playwriting, in partnership with property company Bruntwood. Celebrating the 20th anniversary this year, the competition plays a significant role in the new writing landscape and through the dedicated website, we offer continued support and guidance to both new playwrights and writers with form, including live-streamed workshops and commissioned articles from professional playwrights from across the globe.

Since the inception of the Bruntwood Prize in 2005, more than 15,000 scripts have been entered, and the Prize has celebrated 37 winners, with 27 productions staged in venues across the UK. The Prize is now recognised as a launch-pad for some of the UK's most respected and celebrated play and screen writers including Anna Jordan (One Day), Duncan Macmillan (People, Places & Things), Janice Okoh (Sanditon) and Alistair McDowall (Pomona), with nominees and winners going on to win BAFTAs, Emmys, Oliviers and a range of other awards. There have been co-productions with Lyric Hammersmith, Live Theatre, Soho Theatre, Bush Theatre, Orange Tree Theatre, Sherman Theatre, High Tide and the Royal Court Theatre. Work has also gone on to be produced internationally from Australia, USA, Germany, France, Canada and Sweden.







Our board

Our board currently consists of seven trustees whose profiles are outlined below. There are up to twelve positions allowed under the current constitution of the Royal Exchange Theatre Trust. The board has two sub-committees – the Finance Committee and the People & Culture Committee.

More detailed information on the current board members can be found here: https://www.royalexchange.co.uk/about-us/our-team-board/



afshan d'souza lodhi Interim Co-Chair

afshan is a writer of scripts and poetry. Her work has been performed and translated into numerous languages across the world. afshan joined the board in December 2023.



Rachel Fraser Trustee

Rachel is Head of Internal Communications & Inclusion at Manchester United. Rachel joined the board in January 2025.



Jo Taylor Interim Co-Chair

Jo has over 20 years' experience as a Chartered Accountant and Chartered Tax Adviser in Big 4 global professional services firms. Jo joined the board in February 2022.



Gurjeet Singh Trustee

Gurjeet is an actor born and raised in Old Trafford,
Manchester. He trained in the Royal Exchange's Young
Company. Gurjeet joined the board in June 2024.



Alison Loveday Interim Deputy Chair

Alison is a solicitor and works as a self-employed business adviser and legal consultant at Locket Loveday McMahon Solicitors. Alison joined the board in December 2024.



Jo Taylor Trustee

Jo has been working in the cultural sector for 30 years. She launched Fly a Kite in 2024 and was previously Director of Audiences at Rambert. Jo joined the board in December 2023.



Rachel Armstrong Trustee

Rachel is an experienced international energy and climate change professional, with over 20 years of private sector experience. Rachel joined the board in August 2022.



Job description

As Chair of the Royal Exchange Theatre, you will be the spokesperson for the board and will lead on governance requirements, ensuring that the organisation delivers on its objectives as an Arts Council National Portfolio Organisation, and driving forward our model of sustainability, innovation and passion for bringing theatre to our communities and beyond.

The Chair will hold to account the board and Executive for the mission, vision and values of the Royal Exchange. They will bring an inclusive approach to the board, ensuring each Trustee fulfils their duties and responsibilities for effective governance. The Chair will help create the right environment to challenge and support the Co-CEOs (Artistic Director and Executive Director), and ensure the board works collaboratively, functions as a unit and works closely with the Executive.

The Chair will also act as a key figurehead and advocate of the Royal Exchange externally, developing and maintaining relationships with key stakeholders, whilst also playing a key part in supporting the fundraising efforts of the organisation.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

Leadership

- Provide line management of the Co-CEOs (Artistic
 Director and Executive Director) and maintain close and
 regular communication, developing a good working
 relationship, and conducting individual annual appraisals
 of the Joint CEOs according to the Royal Exchange's
 appraisal policy;
- Bring strategic leadership to the board and the Executive, to give clear direction and ensure that the Royal Exchange achieves its strategic aims and meets the needs of its audience and its charitable objectives;
- Lead the Board's scrutiny of Arts Council England and Greater Manchester Combined Authority funding applications and plans and delivery of commitments in line with the Relationship Framework;
- Through working with the Co-CEOs, sustain the financial health and strength of the Royal Exchange, in particular by ensuring there is a clear and credible articulation of the organisation's business model and its implications for future execution and delivery;

- Through working with the Artistic Director & Co-CEO, ensure the Royal Exchange's artistic programme, talent development and educational outreach delivers on its strategic objectives;
- Represent the Royal Exchange at external events and, when necessary, be the spokesperson for organisation;
- Be a visible, credible and approachable leader and act as an ambassador for the Royal Exchange in the city, in the region and beyond to the industry and to the cultural sector as a whole;
- Spend time understanding the cultural context in Manchester and assist in building a presence in the city's social and cultural ecosystem;
- Develop fruitful relationships with other arts and cultural organisations in the North West to help build a greater sense of the concerted cultural offer within the region;
- Foster good relationships with all stakeholders and, in particular, the principal grant funder, Arts Council England.





Job description

Governance

- Work closely with the Co-CEOs so that board meetings are well planned and address all matters that fall within the remit of the board; plan the annual cycle of meetings, agree agendas, ensure minutes are kept and subsequently approved by the Board;
- Ensure sound governance according to the law, regulations and company policies and procedures through ensuring an appropriate board committee structure with fit-for-purpose terms of reference;
- Chair board meetings openly, effectively and impartially, ensuring Trustees work collaboratively to make decisions in the best interests of the Royal Exchange and in accordance with its governing documents;
- Help develop an overarching dashboard that can align and guide the board and the leadership through the strategic change journey;
- Maintain, update and review the board skills matrix and ensure the board has the right balance of skills and experience and, working with the People & Culture Committee, lead on the recruitment of new Trustees;
- Maintain communications with board colleagues between board meetings to ensure alignment and feedback flow;
- Ensure the board and its members are visible with good relationships not only with the Executive but also with the senior management, staff and key stakeholders;

- Working with the Board, review all risks via the risk register and ensure systems are in place to identify and manage risks as well as to take advantage of opportunities;
- Possibly attend as an ex-officio member the Finance Committee and the People & Culture Committee;
- Conduct an annual review of board effectiveness which should at least include consultations between the Chair and members of the board but, which also, from time to time, should include an externally conducted governance review.







Person specification

We are seeking someone with significant personal standing, leadership ability and depth of experience in the cultural or business sector to lead the Royal Exchange's board of Trustees. The successful candidate will have a demonstrable passion for theatre and for the Royal Exchange Theatre in particular and have the time to make the commitment the role demands.

While leading the board and representing the theatre in the city and beyond, a key part of the role is the line management of the Co-CEOs, therefore, an understanding of the demands of senior management roles will be essential. It is important that you are passionate about the role art can play in empowering people's lives and that you are willing to invest your time and energy supporting the Royal Exchange to build its reputation and profile regionally, nationally and internationally. Previous Chair experience is not essential but would be highly desirable.

Manchester is a diverse and youthful city, and we are keen that our board of Trustees represents the city in all its diversity and reflects a wide range of perspectives and people. We are especially keen, therefore, to hear from prospective Chairs who come from diverse backgrounds and can bring different voices into the governance of the theatre.

The ideal candidate will bring all or most of the following attributes:

Personal:

- A demonstrable passion for and commitment to theatre and to the Royal Exchange's mission, vision and values, and to the wider arts in general;
- Intellectual curiosity to learn and discover more;
- Drive and determination for continuous improvement;
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills with the ability to represent the theatre, act as an ambassador, and build positive relationships and develop networks over time;
- Integrity, impartiality, tact and diplomacy;
- A willingness to bring their own networks into play for the benefit of the Royal Exchange, and to create new ones;
- Have the time to attend shows at the Royal Exchange and elsewhere, be it in London or on tour;
- A commitment to attending meetings and engaging deeply with the organisation and the city;
- A commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion across all the theatre's activities, its governance, workforce, audiences and participants.

Experience:

- Senior strategic leadership experience from a relevant context;
- Previous experience as a Chair is highly desirable;
- Governance, especially that of a large charity, and of working with boards of charity trustees is desirable;
- Conducting external relations acting as a visible representative.

Skills & Knowledge:

- Understanding of the balance between governance and management with a clear appreciation of the Chairs role and the boards in the former and how they support the latter;
- Excellent leadership skills and the ability to think strategically and lead a group of influential Trustees;
- The ability to evaluate, analyse, scrutinize and where appropriate challenge information relating to the organisation;
- A broad understanding of financial operations and, in particular, to have or to quickly acquire a grasp of charity finances and funding;
- A familiarity with and understanding of charity governance.



Terms of appointment

The Chair of the Royal Exchange is appointed on a 3-year term, renewable for a further 3 years by agreement with the Board.

The Royal Exchange holds four quarterly board meetings a year (though this cycle may be subject to review by the new Chair) plus the board away day and any extra ad-hoc meetings that may be required.

The Chair may also attend the Finance Committee and People & Culture Committee Meetings (which typically both meet 4 times a year), spend time with the Executive, management and staff, attend performances and events and be visible in the theatre and the city.

The overall time commitment for the role is expected to be around 2-3 days per month. This is an unremunerated role, and reasonable expenses may be claimed.



How to apply

Saxton Bampfylde Ltd is acting as an employment agency advisor to the Royal Exchange Theatre on this appointment.

Candidates should apply for this role through our website at www.saxbam.com/appointments using code JBULB.

Click on the 'apply' button and follow the instructions to upload a CV and cover letter and complete the online equal opportunities monitoring* form. You may also share your application with us as a voice note or video (no more than 3 mins) — to do this, please contact Belinda.Beck@saxbam.com

For a confidential conversation about the role, please contact Todd Heppenstall, Partner & Consultant at Saxton Bampfylde via Clio.Ohalloran@saxbam.com

The closing date for applications is noon on **Friday 11**th **July 2025.**

*The equal opportunities monitoring online form will not be shared with anyone involved in assessing your application. Please complete as part of the application process.

Key dates of the process

w/c 14th & 21st July Preliminary interviews with Saxton Bampfylde w/c 28th July & 4th August

Final conversations and interviews with the Royal Exchange

The Royal Exchange is a Disability Confident employer, a Real Living Wage employer, and a supporter of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter. We firmly believe that a truly creative space is one that thrives on the richness of different perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences. By actively seeking diversity in our team, we aim to create a collaborative and inclusive culture where everybody's voice is heard and respected. We value the unique contributions that individuals from all walks of life bring to our organisation, and we are committed to providing equal opportunities for everyone. We are dedicated to fostering and encouraging an inclusive and creative environment that truly reflects the diverse demographics of Greater Manchester.

Central to pursuing our EDI mission is building diverse and inclusive teams in which everyone has a sense of belonging. We particularly welcome applications from people who are underrepresented in our organisation and sector – people from the global majority, LGBTQ+ people,

D/deaf, disabled, neurodivergent, and learning-disabled people.

Disability Confident Scheme

If you are D/deaf or disabled, neurodivergent or learning-disabled, you indicate that you wish your application to be considered under the Disability Confident Scheme, and you fulfil the minimum criteria by demonstrating this in your application, you will be guaranteed a preliminary interview for this role. We will provide reasonable adjustments as needed and only when requested by the candidate. In some circumstances, due to the volume of applications, we may limit the number of interviews offered to disabled and non-disabled candidates. You must provide evidence in your application which demonstrates that you meet the level of competence for the role and any essential qualifications, skills or experience.

Should you consider yourself eligible to apply for this role under the Disability Confident Scheme, please ensure you fill in the appropriate section of the diversity monitoring form.

Should you require reasonable adjustments to be made to the process, please contact Belinda.Beck@saxbam.com

GDPR personal data notice

According to GDPR guidelines, we are only able to process your Sensitive Personal Data (racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic data, biometric data, health, sex life, or sexual orientation) with your express consent. You will be asked to complete a consent form when you apply and please do not include any Sensitive Personal Data within your CV (although this can be included in your covering letter if you wish to do so), remembering also not to include contact details for referees without their prior agreement.

You can access the Royal Exchange Theatre's GDPR Policy here.

Your application information will be accessed by third parties directly involved in the interview panel. Any data handling during the interview process will adhere to Saxton Bampfylde and Royal Exchange Theatre GDPR guidelines.

Due diligence

Due diligence will be carried out as part of the application process, which may include searches carried out via internet search engines and any public social media accounts.



