



HODGKISS DIRECTOR AWARD 2026 **INFORMATION PACK**

INTRODUCTION

The Hodgkiss Director Award 2026 will provide an exciting and unique opportunity for an emerging Greater Manchester based director to forge a meaningful relationship with the Royal Exchange Theatre.

Our ambition for the Hodgkiss Director Award is to provide an exciting emerging director with an in-depth experience that is not just focussed on the rehearsal process but also encompasses the range of ways a director might work with a theatre to forge a sustainable career journey. It will provide an opportunity that is becoming increasingly rare in the theatre landscape with many other schemes for emerging and assistant directors closing. Supporting emerging directors to take the next step in their career is something that the Royal Exchange Theatre has a proven track record of delivering in a way that has a lasting impact on the artist's journey and career opportunities.

The aim of the Award is to offer a bespoke programme of work which we hope will provide the Awardee with:

- comprehensive and wide-ranging insights into a major producing house
- a greater understanding of a rehearsal room process working at large scale
- embedded knowledge of how to work with creative teams and build a production
- experience to support yourself to forge a sustainable career as a theatre director in the current landscape

We hope to engage people that have a distinctive voice that is currently under-represented, an energy to generate ideas and the drive to tell ambitious stories that connect with a range of people. The applicants will have experienced a barrier to pursuing their career ambitions and would tangibly benefit from the opportunity of structured support, a bespoke developmental journey and a sense of home.

The Awardee will work with award-winning director Sarah Frankcom and Associate Director Emma Baggott as Assistant Director on a major regional premiere. FUN HOME, is a groundbreaking modern masterpiece based on Alison Bechdel's graphic novel - a tale of grief, love, queer tragedy and queer joy told through soaring revelatory songs.

They will be mentored by Emma Baggott who will provide them with a unique insight into forging a career as a theatre director at a particularly difficult and precarious time in the arts ecology. The Award will also enable them to gain in-depth knowledge of the running of a major regional producing theatre, to learn about the programming of the theatre at this time and to gain a greater understanding of what it means to make work at this scale in Manchester.

Through a close dialogue with the Artistic Director, Associate Directors and New Work Deputy at the Royal Exchange Theatre, the Awardee will have a journey with a long-lasting legacy to understand how to forge relationships and make the most of opportunities with other producing theatres.

They will also have an opportunity to act as Assistant Director to Katie Greenall on a week-long Young Company residency in response to FUN HOME. This project will involve working with an

LGBTQ+ youth group from Greater Manchester to explore the themes of FUN HOME and create a response piece that will be performed at the Royal Exchange Theatre.

Finally, they will also be afforded an opportunity to explore what they have learnt through their placement in a practical way with an opportunity to workshop an idea of their own with two professional actors - this will be shaped through conversations with Emma Baggott and New Work Deputy Rosie Thackeray at the Royal Exchange to enable them to explore something that will have the greatest impact on their creative development.

This placement is open to artists over the age of 18 who have a demonstrable background in directing theatre and are looking to further develop their practice.

HODGKISS DIRECTOR PLACEMENT

When working as Assistant Director, duties will include but are not limited to:

- providing general assistance and carrying out any research that will inform and benefit the production as agreed with the Director.
- observing rehearsals and inputting into discussions with the creative team and production meetings.
- supporting the acting company with line learning.
- when requested, leading on warm-ups and supporting with the pastoral care of the actors and creative team.
- assisting the company in documenting the rehearsal process.
- being a sounding board and active observer in the rehearsal room and to offer notes where appropriate.
- noting the show once a week after press night in consultation with the Director and Associate Director.
- observing and assisting the director in technical rehearsals, through previews to press night.
- providing observations and reflections (either written as blogs or filmed) from the rehearsal room for sharing on the Royal Exchange Theatre website and social media channels.
- supporting and facilitating any shadowing or work experience placements.
- any further duties as required by the Director or Associate Director.

Your creative development week could be testing out a new idea on a preexisting text, holding an R&D for a new play or devising your own work. When working as Director across your own creative development week, duties will include but are not limited to:

- Actively communicating with the Royal Exchange's creative team regarding your desired outcomes and what you hope to learn.
- Leading on your own phase of research and development in negotiation with Associate Director Emma Baggott and New Work Deputy Rosie Thackeray.
- Forming local and national relationships with theatres and creatives via mentorships and facilitated meetings.

The Royal Exchange will also provide:

- At least two 1:1 meetings with the Director during the rehearsal process
- 1:1 meetings with the Artistic Director and Associate Director at the Royal Exchange - giving you the opportunity to plan and shape your residency.
- The Hodgkiss Director will also have the opportunity to meet with other departments in the theatre including our Producing, Production, Audiences and Engagement teams in order to fulfil their specific interests.
- One final 1:1 meeting with the Associate Director at the end of the placement to evaluate the experience.

Continuous learning is vital to our delivery of this Award - it is therefore expected that the recipient will take part in a full evaluation of the Hodgkiss Director Award 2026 at the end of their placement.

WE ARE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE WHO:

- Can demonstrate a commitment to directing and a passion for theatre making.
- Has an interest in queer narratives, musical theatre and/or working with young people.
- Is able to demonstrate a passionate interest in theatre that challenges dominant narratives.
- Is organised, confident, flexible, calm and approachable.
- Has had some experience of directing in a professional capacity and engaging with professional actors.
- Is a good team player who is willing to work collaboratively as part of a team including creatives, actors, stage managers and RET staff.
- Can demonstrate a keen interest in engaging and making work in collaboration with communities.
- Someone who is living in or originally from the Greater Manchester area with a commitment to making work in the region.

We are particularly keen to hear from candidates who identify as LGBTQ+, and who were born and raised in Greater Manchester.

TIMELINE

The Hodgkiss Director Award 2026 placement runs from Wednesday 20 May - Friday 7 August 2026.

12pm Wednesday 01 April 2026	Deadline for applications
Thursday 02 April 2026	Unsuccessful candidates and first round interview candidates informed
Thursday 09 April 2026	First round interview
Wednesday 15 April 2026	Second round interview. Recipient confirmed within 48 hours.
Wednesday 20 May 2026	Prep and induction at the RET
Wc 25 May 2026*	Rehearsals x 5 weeks
Wc 29 June 2026*	Technical rehearsals + begin Previews

Wc 6 July 2026*	Previews + Press x 1 week - Press on 9 July
Wc 13 July 2026 Wc 20 July 2026	Touchpoint days with Emma Baggott and Rosie Thackeray (4 days max across 2 week period) and noting FUN HOME + Rehearsals for Bruntwood Prize x 1 week
Wc 27 July 2026*	Touchpoint days with Emma Baggott and Rosie Thackeray (4 days max across 2 week period) and noting FUN HOME
Wc 3 August 2026*	Creative development week with two professional actors
Wednesday 11 March 2026	Hodgkiss Director Award 2026 announced and open for applications

The successful candidate will be expected to be present full time on the weeks in bold*.

Normal working hours will be 10am – 6pm, 7 working hours a day with one hour unpaid lunch – but there will be evening and weekend working, particularly during tech and preview weeks. Hybrid working is not available as part of this role.

More detail on the timetable and working hours can be provided upon request when shortlisted candidates are invited to interview.

BURSARY

The Hodgkiss Director Award offers a fully inclusive bursary payment of £6,600.00 for the 10-week placement (35 hours per week).

The bursary has been calculated in line with industry guidelines drawn up by Uk Theatre/Equity – more information at <https://uktheatre.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2023/07/130723-UK-Theatre-Equity-Directors-rates-2023-2027-1.pdf>.

TO APPLY

We accept written and video applications. To apply for this bursary, please send us the following:

- An up to date CV – more than one side of A4
- A link to your website or 3-5 images from your work
- Your answers to the questions below

1. Why is this opportunity be useful to you at this point in your Director journey and what would you hope to learn from this placement? (300 words or up to 3 minutes of video)

2. What show have you experienced at the Royal Exchange and how has it influenced you as a director? (300 words or up to 3 minutes of video)

3. The role of Assistant Director often involves giving constructive feedback to a wide range of people. Can you give an example of a time when you've had to give feedback to someone who is older or more experienced than yourself? (300 words or up to 3 minutes of video)

4. Please share an experience of working within a community, with young people or working with non-professional artists and how this interested you and fed your creative practice. (300 words or up to 3 minutes of video)



Candidates need to be 18 and over to apply.

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATIONS - Midday, Wednesday 01 April 2026. Please submit your applications to recruitment@royalexchange.co.uk