



LEEDS PLAY HOUSE

FAIR PLAY ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Recruitment Pack

**FAIR
PLAY**
RTYDS

If you require this Recruitment Pack in a different format, please go to the [RTYDS website](https://www.fairplay.org.uk/rtys). Deadline to express an interest is 10am, Thursday 18 September.



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



**THE LIZ & TERRY BRAMALL
FOUNDATION**



SHAWAB IQBAL & TOM WRIGHT
CHIEF EXECUTIVE & ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

WELCOME

THIS **SHORT FILM** WILL
HELP YOU UNDERSTAND
WHAT WE'RE ALL
ABOUT.

'Dear Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the role of Fair Play Associate Artistic Director at Leeds Playhouse.

This is a very special moment for the Playhouse. We're stepping into a new chapter, with a renewed sense of purpose, ambition and creative vision. Thanks to the support of Fair Play and RYTDS, we're looking for a bold, imaginative and collaborative artist to help shape what comes next, contributing not only to the future of the Playhouse, but also to the vital work of our two partner organisations.

The Fair Play Associate Artistic Director will play a key leadership role here, working closely with me, Shawab Iqbal (Chief Executive), and the wider team to help define and deliver an artistic programme that is adventurous, inclusive and grounded in our community. You'll help shape the vision of the organisation, nurture emerging artists, lead our artist development programme (Furnace), and direct a mid-scale production of your own.

We see this role as a space for creative growth. For you to stretch your practice, develop your leadership and build meaningful relationships with artists and audiences. We're not expecting you to arrive with all the answers – but we are looking for someone with curiosity, courage, and a commitment to making theatre that matters.

You'll be joining a team who care deeply; about each other, about this place, and about the power of theatre to change lives. If that resonates with you, I really hope you'll consider applying.

Warm wishes,

Tom Wright'

Artistic Director

leedsplayhouse.org.uk

  @leedsplayhouse



WHO LEEDS PLAYHOUSE ARE

Leeds Playhouse has been one of the UK's leading producing theatres for 55 years. We are an award-winning cultural hub, a place where people come together to share stories, spark creativity and experience world-class theatre in the heart of Yorkshire.

At the heart of our purpose is a belief in the transformative power of theatre. We are driven by a social mission – to create work that speaks directly to the people of Leeds, reflects their lives, and opens up new possibilities for everyone who calls this city home. Our productions, projects and partnerships are rooted in the belief that culture should be accessible to all, and that theatre can be a catalyst for change.

The Playhouse has a proud history of inclusive practice, community connection and civic responsibility. We work closely with people across our region to ensure our work is representative, relevant and resonant. Our commitment to inclusivity is embedded in everything we do, from our artistic programme to our participation work and building design.

This warm, open approach has been recognised nationally. In 2022, **Leeds Playhouse** was named **Most Welcoming Theatre** at the **UK Theatre Awards**, a testament to our commitment to creating an accessible, inclusive and creative space at the heart of the Leeds City Region. Our productions continue to receive national acclaim, including the Olivier-nominated *Animal Farm*. For three consecutive years, Playhouse performers have won **Best Performer in a Musical**, and in 2024 our production of *Oliver!* was named **Best Musical**.



THE ROLE

The Associate Artistic Director (AAD) is a senior leadership role at **Leeds Playhouse**, working closely with the Artistic Director to deliver an ambitious, diverse and compelling artistic vision at the beginning of an exciting new chapter for the theatre.

The AAD plays a central role in shaping and delivering the Playhouse's programme, developing new projects, nurturing creative talent, and supporting the theatre's strategic, operational and cultural ambitions.

Reporting to the Artistic Director and working closely with the Chief Executive, the AAD is a key member of the Senior Management Team (SMT), attends Board meetings, and deputises for the Artistic Director as required.

They take a lead on delivering the Playhouse's ambitious Artist Development programme (Furnace), overseeing the teams responsible for its planning, creation and delivery.

This role is designed to support the development of the AAD's creative practice and leadership skills over an eighteen-month period. This post is kindly supported by the *Regional Theatre Young Director Scheme* (RTYDS) *Fair Play* programme, more information about the programme can be found on the next page. The postholder will work closely with RTYDS and *Fair Play* to help shape and implement vision, strategy and policy across both organisations.

This is a fixed-term training opportunity for 18 months, and not a permanent job role.

FAIR PLAY ASSOCIATE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



We are very excited to be one of three organisations who are partnering with *RTYDS* to host a **Fair Play Associate Artistic Director Residency**, alongside **Bristol Old Vic** and **Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse**.

RTYDS is committed to the development of directors and theatre makers as cultural leaders, and their **Fair Play Associate Artistic Director Residency** sees regional building-based theatre companies partnering with them to host a mid-career working class or low socio-economic background director or theatre maker for 18 months.

There continues to be a significant lack of diversity in those who lead organisations. If only 13% of workers in the arts sector come from working class or low socio-economic backgrounds, the percentage of those in leadership positions is even lower.

The structures, practices, and models that dominate our industry continue to exclude, undervalue, and limit opportunities for artists from these backgrounds. There is a pressing need to provide training and progression routes for people from working class and low socio-economic backgrounds that continue to be under-represented in the arts.

This is why we're partnering with *RTYDS*, along with two other regional theatres, to lead this industry change and support mid-career artists from working class and low socio-economic background to thrive as artistic leaders.

At each theatre the successful candidate will join the senior management team, contribute to the strategic planning and delivery of the theatre's artistic programme, and direct a mid-scale production. They will develop their craft as a director while learning about the role of an artistic or creative director in cultural leadership.

The *Fair Play* Associate Artistic Director will work 80% with **Leeds Playhouse** and 20% with *RTYDS* as part of this training opportunity. The time spent on the residency with *RTYDS* will deepen their understanding of the sector on a national level, as well as build relationships with other regional theatres and contribute to class equity advocacy work.

WHAT IS ON OFFER

At **Leeds Playhouse** they will be mentored by the Artistic Director to gain a wide range of experience. Over 18 months the *Fair Play* Associate Artistic Director will:

- Become a member of the senior management team and learn about fundraising, managing stakeholders, financial planning and governance
- Contribute to the conception/development and delivery of the theatre's artistic vision and programme
- Gain knowledge in artist development and commissioning of work
- Expand understanding of creative learning and participation
- Deliver a distinct project that drives a strategic objective of the theatre. An example might be a discrete creative project, establishing a new strand of work, expanding an existing department e.g. literary etc
- Direct at least one fully resourced show on the mid-scale (a chance to make work that is a step change; whether this is characterised by the size of the stage, production values and resources, cast size, the stature of the actors, the complexity of the design, prominence within the programme/season etc.). This will be provided ideally within the 18-month period or within six months of completion of the residency

At **RTYDS** they will work predominantly with Artistic Director and Co-Creative Leads and they will:

- Deepen their understanding of the ecology of the UK theatre industry and create relationships with buildings and companies across England
- Build a national network of connections
- Contribute meaningfully to the debate on equality, inclusion and diversity on class and socio-economic inequity at a national level
- Experience leadership and governance in a small sector support organisation and contribute to strategic planning at a national scale

The time spent with RTYDS will be agreed to suit the theatre's planning cycles and the Associate Artistic Director's directing and project commitments. It will largely be remote working.

ELIGIBILITY

HOW DO I KNOW IT IS FOR ME?

We recognise the complexity around identification of class, economic and social background and also of experience level.

We offer the following as a starting point to thinking about whether this is an opportunity for you.

- You identify as working class, or from a low socio-economic background, and work professionally in theatre.
- You claim Universal Credit, Jobseekers Allowance, Housing Benefit, Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), Council Tax Reduction (CTR) and/ or other welfare benefits linked to low income. You might identify with having lived experience of poverty or long-term experience of the benefits system.
- Do not have an annual family household income of more than £33,000 or more than £40,000 with mitigating circumstances (caregivers, care leavers, are receiving Disability Living Allowance for a child you care for, Jobseekers Allowance or a Carers Allowance).
- You attended state school and received free school meals.
- You may have lived experience of the care system or the criminal justice system.
- You may have stopped formal education before further and higher education, or you may have been the first in your family to go to university.
- You are a migrant or refugee who experiences economic marginalisation both in your home country and the UK.

We understand you may identify with many or all these experiences. We know it is complex.

In terms of level of experience, we suggest the following guidance:

- You want to become an Artistic or Creative Director and can indicate a commitment to leadership. You might have established your own company or initiative, have gained transferable experience outside theatre in management or previously run a department.

ELIGIBILITY

- You would like to make work on the mid-scale (a chance to make work that is a step change; whether this is characterised by the size of the stage, production values and resources, cast size, the stature of the actors, the complexity of the design, prominence within the programme/season etc.)
- You will have a demonstrable body of work and be in a position to lead on artist development initiatives and indicate a commitment to leadership. You might have established your own company, have gained transferable experience outside theatre in management or previously run a department.
- Interested in advocacy and activism and contributing to RTYDS's *Fair Play* programmes.

HOW DO I KNOW IT'S NOT FOR ME?

- You identify as lower middle class, middle class, or upper class
- You have family already working in the arts
- You went to private school not on a bursary
- Have an annual family household income of more than £33,000 or more than £40,000 with mitigating circumstances (caregivers, care leavers, are over 18 and receiving Disability Living Allowance, Jobseekers Allowance or a Carers Allowance)
- You are at an early stage of your career

There is no upper age limit but all applicants must be resident in the UK at the point of application .

We recognise the intersectionality of class background and are particularly keen to receive applications from people who are also Black and Global Majority, Deaf and disabled, and LGBTQIA+.

This can be a full-time or part time role and will be flexible to accommodate the needs of the individual, for example caring responsibilities or access requirements relating to a disability. All Deaf or disabled directors/theatre makers who demonstrate that they meet the essential criteria will be invited for interview.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

FOR LEEDS PLAYHOUSE

ARTISTIC

- Work in close partnership with the Artistic Director to shape, deliver and evaluate the name theatre's artistic strategy including generating ideas for new productions, commissioning and directing work where appropriate.
- Support visiting directors and creative teams and attend read throughs, rehearsals, dress rehearsals and previews.
- Represent theatre at industry events, forums and panels, activity contributing to the national cultural conversation.
- Collaborate with the Artistic Director the Director of Producing and the Technical Director on the planning, budgeting and recruitment of cast and creative teams.
- Help extend the life and reach of productions by identifying opportunities for touring, transfers and co-productions.
- Work with the Audiences department to offer artistic insight that strengthens and deepens engagement with audiences.
- Work alongside our Furnace Coordinator to develop our artist development programme.
- Lead on vision and delivery of artist development nurturing individuals and companies with a focus on local talent, equity, inclusion and representation. Be the key point of contact for artists and line managing relevant staff.
- Review and respond to proposals and script submissions from agents, building meaningful relationships.
- Support the work of the Playhouse Connect department, delivering masterclasses and workshops as appropriate.

MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

- Deputise for the Artistic Director internally and externally when appropriate.
- Help define and deliver the theatre's strategic objectives, business plan and contribute to the upcoming NPO application.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Attend all regular management group meetings, scheduling, finance meetings and support the internal communications of our programme, ensuring all our teams are aware of and connected to the artistic programme.
- Support our fundraising and development work, feeding into applications as appropriate.
- Attend all Board meetings, away days and contribute at a high level to organisational decision making.
- Work collaboratively with Chief Executive, Artistic Director and Senior Management Team to ensure excellent working relationships with key funders and stakeholders.
- Model inclusive values-led leadership and people management that inspires confidence and trust.
- Support the development of a team that reflects the diversity of our communities and fosters a culture of belonging.
- Undertake any other duties reasonably required by the Artistic Director or the Chief Executive.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

FOR RTYDS

RTYDS will tailor the role around the interests of the artist and the role they are undertaking at the theatre.

- Work with the Artistic Director and Co-Creative Leads to shape *Fair Play* programme of activity and directly contribute to some activity such as Class Assembly, Networking Bursaries.
- Contribute to *Fair Play*'s advocacy and the debate on equality, inclusion and diversity on class and socio-economic inequity at a national level
- Attend organisational meetings and Board meetings where possible.

ANY OTHER DUTIES

This Role Description is indicative and not exclusive or exhaustive, and it will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it is tailored to and reflects the evolution of the individual over the course of the 18 months as well as their skills and interests.

The post-holder may be required to undertake other reasonably determined duties and responsibilities within the organisation which are appropriate with the level of the role without changing the general character of the post. The post-holder would be given appropriate training and equipment to carry out any duties of this kind.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Please refer back to the eligibility section to ensure you are eligible for this role before applying.

Required skills and experiences include:

- A demonstrable interest in creative/artistic leadership and you want to become an Artistic or Creative Director. You can indicate a commitment to leadership. You might have established your own company or initiative, have gained transferable experience outside theatre in management or previously run a department.
- Are committed to advocacy and activism and contributing to RTYDS's *Fair Play* programme promoting class equity
- A track record of developing and directing professional theatre productions of quality and ambition across a range of scale and contexts
- A demonstrable track record of developing and directing new work and an understanding of the dramaturgical process
- Interest in creating work that reaches out to new audiences and reflects the diversity of geographical location and the UK
- Experience of mentoring and working with early career theatre makers and supporting their development and embedding inclusive practice
- Excellent inter-personal skills with ability to relate to and communicate effectively with a wide range of people
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills and ability to articulate fresh and compelling artistic ideas
- Experience of developing creative partnerships
- An awareness of current trends, debates, policy and artists within the theatre industry and arts more generally
- Ability to manage a varied workload in a dynamic environment and respond flexibly to changing priorities

PERSON SPECIFICATION

- The ability to work collaboratively and form effective partnerships internally and externally
- An affinity for the mission, vision and work of the theatre
- A genuine and demonstrable commitment to broadening of cultural diversity and access across all areas of the theatre
- Knowledge of UK theatre landscape – particularly in the West Yorkshire area and regional theatres A proven track record of developing and delivering professional theatre productions to a high standard.

Leeds Playhouse is looking for a director or theatre maker who lives and/or makes work in Leeds or the surrounding West Yorkshire areas, or who is excited to base their practice here for the duration of the residency. We are able to provide expenses related to relocation.

To apply for the Associate Artistic Director Residency at Leeds Playhouse, you must either already live in Leeds or West Yorkshire, or be willing to relocate here for the duration of the residency.

SUMMARY OF TERMS & CONDITIONS

CONTRACT

Fixed-term, full-time contract for 18 months, starting in January 2026.

Any offer we make is subject to:

- receipt of 2 satisfactory references
- proof of eligibility to work in the UK
- successful completion of a 12-week probation period
- Completion of a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check

SALARY

£35,000 per year, pro rata, funded by RTYDS.

HOURS

Full time of 35 hours per week, but open to possibility of flexible working and part-time applications, to accommodate access needs and caring responsibilities.

Standard hours will be Monday to Friday during usual office hours, although you may have to work such additional hours as reasonably required by the Employer, with some evening and weekend working to be expected as required.

NOTICE PERIOD

4 weeks.

LOCATION OF THE OPPORTUNITY

Your main place of work will be Leeds Playhouse. You may be required to work permanently or temporarily at other locations in the Leeds City Region. You may be asked to work temporarily in other locations in the UK.

* In line with the Playhouse's Safeguarding Policy, any appointment will be made subject to a satisfactory enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. Disclosure information will be treated in the strictest confidence and shall only be seen by those who need to see it as part of the recruitment process. Only relevant information will be taken into account. The Playhouse will not discriminate unfairly against any convictions or other information revealed.



BENEFITS

PENSION

Auto-enrolment in a Standard Life Pension, unless you opt out, with 3% employer contribution

HOLIDAYS

5 weeks per holiday year, plus Statutory Bank and Public Holidays, rising with length of service

BENEFITS

- 2 paid wellbeing days a year
- Free employee assistance service
- Corporate gym and swimming discount
- Staff ticket discount
- Staff discount in Playhouse food and drink outlets
- Inhouse counselling services with a BACP counselling professional on site (by referral)
- Voluntary Cash Health Plan (optional)
- Contribution towards relocation expenses offered

HOW TO EXPRESS AN INTEREST

TO FIND OUT MORE,
PLEASE CONTACT
MANLI SIU AT
rtyds@rtyds.co.uk

EXPRESSING AN INTEREST

If you would like to express an interest in the *Fair Play* Associate Artistic Director Residency, you can either send us a written application, or a video or audio file via WeTransfer.

If you would like to complete a written application, please go to this **ONLINE FORM**.

To apply via video or audio, please send an mp3 or mp4 file (no more than four minutes) via WeTransfer to **application@rtyds.co.uk** answering the following questions:

- Name
- Email
- Where you are based
- Short expression of interest, telling us:
 - What do you hope to gain from the residency?
 - Tell us more about why you are interested in leadership.
 - If you could launch a campaign or commission a piece about class inequity, what would it be and why?
 - What aspects of Leeds Playhouse's work most connect with your own creative identity as a director?

For both written and video applications, we ask that you also email us your:

- CV
- Our recruitment access rider (as appropriate)

Please send to **application@rtyds.co.uk** (preferably in Word or PDF format).

The theatre packs and application form in an accessible format are available on the **RTYDS website** or email Manli Siu on **rtyds@rtyds.co.uk**.

You can express an interest in more than one of the theatres but please fill in an application for each theatre as the recruitment processes will be run separately. Please check the person specification for each of the theatres.

FIND OUT MORE

TO FIND OUT MORE,
PLEASE CONTACT
MANLI SIU AT
rtyds@rtyds.co.uk

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

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Page 3: *Wendy & Peter Pan*,
photography
by Marc Brenner

Page 14: *My Fair Lady*, photography
by Pamela Raith

Page 18: *The Lives We Carry* at
Furnace Festival, photography by
Steffi Njoya

**Deadline to express an interest: 10am, Thursday
18 September.**

The recruitment for the *Fair Play* Associate Artistic
Director Residencies is run centrally by
RTYDS. Your information will be held by RTYDS
and shared with the theatre you apply with. It will
not be shared with any third parties. Find out more
about how RTYDS uses your data [here](#).

Your application will be retained by Leeds
Playhouse securely for 3 months before being
destroyed if you are unsuccessful, and for up to 12
months if you are successful.

RTYDS will also ask you to complete a diversity
monitoring form. Data from your diversity
monitoring form will be shared with the HR&L team
at Leeds Playhouse. The data will not be shared
with the recruitment panel.

ONLINE Q&A

If you would like to find out more about the
opportunity and ask questions, RTYDS is holding a
Zoom session on Monday 1 September at 4pm.
There is space on the sign-up form to submit any
questions you might have in advance to make sure
we cover relevant topics.

You don't have to attend in order to express an
interest. **[SIGN UP HERE](#)**

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Leeds Playhouse is committed to promoting equality
and opportunity in its employment practices. In
particular, the company aims to ensure that no
potential or actual employee receives more or less
favourable treatment on the grounds of race, colour,
ethnic or national origins, marital or civil partner status,
sex, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, age, or
religious beliefs. Disabled candidates will not be treated
less favourably on the grounds of their disability.

SAFEGUARDING

The Playhouse takes safeguarding seriously, and
operates an environment where all staff are expected
to report any concerns about children, young people or
adults at risk, or about the behaviour or practice of
colleagues and other people they come into contact
with.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

TO FIND OUT MORE,
PLEASE CONTACT
MANLI SIU AT
rtyds@rtyds.co.uk

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

Members of the RTYDS team and the Artistic Directors of the host theatres will read the applications and then meet to select a longlist of applicants to meet at interviews.

Following first round interviews there will be a second round of interviews as laid out in the overview timeline below. The first-round interviews will take place online and the second round will be likely to happen in-person. For those attending a second-round interview, an honorarium of £50 will be provided and we will cover any travel expenses.

TIMELINE

w/c 18 August - Applications open to directors and theatre makers

1 September - Online Q&A to find out more about the residency

18 September - Deadline for director and theatre maker applications

w/c 13 October - First round interviews for directors and theatre makers

w/c 27 October - Second round interviews for directors and theatre makers

January 2026 - Start of *Fair Play* Associate Artistic Director Residency

If you have known commitments the weeks commencing 13 and 27 October, please let us know at point of application.

We look forward to receiving your application, but in the meantime, if you have any questions or you would like a formal chat regarding the *Fair Play* Associate Artistic Director programme, please contact RTYDS Programme Producer Manli Siu on rtyds@rtyds.co.uk or 0161 883 0296.

A photograph of a man and a woman looking at a smartphone together at night. The man, on the left, has dark curly hair and glasses, wearing a teal polo shirt and a lanyard that says 'LEEDS PLAYHOUSE'. He is smiling and pointing at the phone. The woman, on the right, is wearing a yellow knit beanie, a colorful patterned scarf, and a purple sweater. She is holding a glass of beer. The background is dark with some blue lights. A large, semi-transparent orange vertical bar is on the left side of the image.

THANK YOU

FIND US AT

Playhouse Square,
Quarry Hill, Leeds LS2 7UP
leedsplayhouse.org.uk
0113 213 7700