

# General Manager

*"acta community theatre is a national treasure"*  
**Baring Foundation**

acta is seeking a General Manager to join a highly-regarded company respected for innovative work and a successful track record in community theatre in Bristol.



## acta Community Theatre | An Introduction

**acta was founded in 1985, and occupies a unique position in its field, respected for its commitment to personal and community development through participatory community theatre and arts.**

The company operates an extensive programme from a well-resourced building in the heart of South Bristol, and has developed a national and international reputation for instigating and coordinating significant partnerships, programmes and events.

(A recent documentary on acta can be heard here - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m000bnb1>)

The company engages marginalised communities and vulnerable people in making theatre, using a collaborative creative process through which they are able to tell their own stories, use their imaginations, and express their lives in the creation and performance of original, relevant and compelling theatre. Through this process, individuals and communities gain social benefit: improving confidence, emotional well-being, new friendships and understanding. acta has pioneered and refined this approach over 35 years, and leads a series of initiatives aimed at sharing learning.

acta has a successful track record of securing funding from diverse sources, currently; ACE NPO, Bristol City Council, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, BBC Children in Need, DCMS/Big Lottery, and local and national charities. Further resources available at [www.acta-bristol.com](http://www.acta-bristol.com).





## Our Values

**Access & Participation** - acta exists to provide access to participation in the arts for the most marginalised and excluded sections of society.

**Ownership** - acta is committed to co-creation of all artistic product, with participants and professional facilitators sharing equal status.

**Excellence** - excellence in facilitation, in performance process, in co-production and in the product.

**Inclusiveness** - acta is committed to providing equality of opportunity to people without privilege, engaging marginalised people and promoting intercultural and intergenerational dialogue through theatre.

**Partnership** - acta is committed to proactively developing collaborations and partnerships within arts and wider sectors at local, national and international levels.

**Valuing people** - acta is a caring organisation that listens to and supports vulnerable people, valuing their stories, cultural heritage and life experiences and enabling them to share through making new theatre.



## Our Aims

**Be a learning and reflective organisation**, seeking to influence development of community engaged theatre practice at national and international level.

**Produce an ongoing programme** of high quality theatre at the actacentre, including national and international guests.

**Create original and innovative theatre** which voices untold stories and which excites, entertains, enthral, and moves audiences.

**Bring together people** from different cultures and generations to share and create work together.

**Create opportunities** for new participants and workers from diverse communities, while providing a consistent service for existing participants.

**Explore and develop new digital-based artistic product** through new partnerships.

**Change the way people see theatre** as an elite and expensive art form; to make it accessible, relevant and fun to the majority of people.

# Open Day Invitation

**This Autumn, acta will be recruiting for both a new General Manager and a Communications Coordinator.**

With these exciting appointments in mind, acta is keen to encourage applications from Black, Asian, and ethnically diverse people, who are not currently represented in the core staff team.

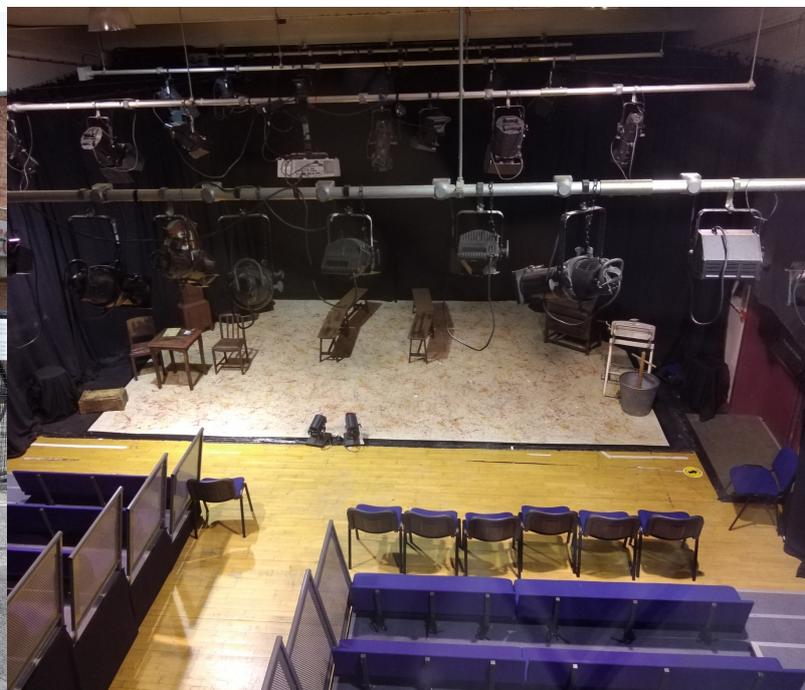
In order to encourage applications from these communities, and other potential applicants who have experienced barriers to developing careers in the sector, the acta team invite you to an Open Day at the actacentre on:

**Monday 25th October at 11am-1pm**

This meeting will be completely separate from the recruitment process, (in order that selection and recruitment remains fair and in accordance with our equalities framework,) but will offer an opportunity for an informal chat with current Finance and Evaluation Director Helen Tomlin, and other acta team members about the job opportunities.

You will also be able to take a look around the actacentre theatre and work spaces, ask questions, and find out more about the roles and what it's like to work at acta.

**Please email [helen@acta-bristol.com](mailto:helen@acta-bristol.com) if you would like to attend the open day.**



# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

**Participatory theatre is by its own definition an inclusive way of working.** It feeds into every project, every participant, and every performance. Yet, we know there is still more to be done.

We acknowledge that diverse thinking brings benefits to an organisation, and as such we encourage people from all backgrounds, cultures and industries to bring their transferable skills and knowledge to acta.



## About the role

This appointment is a new post following the departure of our current Finance and Evaluation Director, Helen Tomlin, who was previously the Executive Director. The role is complementary to, and works in tandem with, the Director, which was a new post and appointment made in January 2021.

acta's structure and business practice reflects the company's approach to working with communities, placing equal value on each company member. Whilst responsibility for the overall work of the organisation will be held by the Director, responsibility and accountability for specific areas of work are distributed to individual members of the team.

This role has the opportunity to evolve to suit the person and the organisation in the future.

### Contract terms & conditions

- Full-time, based at the actacentre in Bedminster, Bristol, BS3 3AY.
- Salary: £35,000 pa
- Main working hours are 9 – 5, Monday – Friday, with some evening and weekend work required; flexible working policy (includes TOIL and occasional home-working).
- Probationary period of 3 months.
- 30 days annual leave pa.
- NEST pension scheme.





# Full Job Description

## **The General Manager will have responsibilities in the following main areas:**

### (i) Finance

- Responsible for all company finances including reporting, audit, invoicing, payments, payroll etc
- Set and manage all organisational and project budgets in collaboration with Director and AD (Artistic Directorate) and to maintain cashflow forecasts
- Management of funding agreements

### (ii) Evaluation

- Reporting back to Council of Management, major funding bodies, and other stakeholders as appropriate
- Compiling of project reports and appropriate systems to collect & analyse data and evaluate programme delivery
- Develop and implement organisational Theory of Change alongside Director
- Manage annual returns to Companies House and Charities Commission

### (iii) Building Management

- Buildings management including responsibility for front-of-house
- Management of cleaner and volunteer gardeners
- Compliance with all legal responsibilities including Health & Safety

### (iv) Strategic Business Planning and Policy development

- Lead on the development and implementation of the Diversity and Inclusion and Environmental policies and action plans, and other company policies
- Support the Director to produce and update the Business Plan
- Strategic and forward planning with the Director and company, to include effective resource management
- And any other duties, as appropriate

### (v) Operations

- Manage and coordinate the hires of actacentre spaces
- Work alongside the Director and AD to ensure the efficient and impactful delivery of acta projects
- Lead responsibility for matters related to the provision of IT services and equipment including contract management for external IT support
- Create and issue contracts for freelance workers
- Service board meetings (shared with Director)



# Person specification - essential

## General

- Minimum of three years' applicable management experience in a relevant sector
- Understanding of issues faced by arts, culture and heritage sector

## Finance

- Experience of being responsible for an organisation's financial operations, including use of Quickbooks (or similar)
- Expert understanding and experience of compiling company and project budgets
- Be a strategic thinker with sound business and financial planning skills, including experience of financial and risk management
- Be able to support team in seeking creative opportunities for income development

## Evaluation

- Experience of designing evaluation frameworks and plans
- Understanding of up to date practice and methods for implementing evaluation including how to measure social and learning impacts through evidence-based methods and theories of change
- Demonstrative analytical and written communication skills, including experience of writing reports which present clear narrative and evidence-based findings

## Building Management

- Ability to manage theatre building as clean, safe, welcoming production and social space
- Understanding of issues and challenges in achieving environmental targets and best practice in building-based organisation

## Strategic Business Planning and Policy development

- Have the ability to deliver diversity objectives across the organisation
- Have knowledge and understanding on environmental issues and how they affect an arts organisation
- Experience of business planning with focus on social impact, enterprise and sustainability

## Operations

- Extensive knowledge of Health and Safety and its practical application in a theatre/arts organisation or similar
- Understanding and management of internal IT systems
- Have a successful track record in the development and delivery of events and programmes that can appeal to specialist and broad audiences

## Person specification - desirable

- Demonstrable and relevant employment in community theatre and/or socially engaged arts field
- Understanding of cultural policy in UK
- Experience in leading international collaborations
- Experience of leading organisational progress on inclusion
- Experience of reporting to Arts Council England, lottery funds, and/or charitable trusts and foundations
- Experience of reporting to trustees of a charity and / or directors of a company

## Personal qualities

- Friendly, generous, empathetic and approachable
- Excellent people management skills
- Highly organised with excellent administrative, written and verbal communication skills
- Highly computer literate with IT experience
- Strong commitment to acta's organisational values
- Demonstrable understanding of acta's work
- Proven commitment to equality, diversity and inclusivity and anti-racist practice
- Ability to employ creative solutions to problem solving
- Ability to work on own initiative as well as a member of a team





# Governance and Staffing structure

## Council of Management

acta is governed by a Board of 12 members, who are Directors of the limited company, and trustees of the charity. There is a wide range of expertise and experience from business, charitable and voluntary sector, education, and include participants and ex-employees.

The staff report directly to the Board, which meets six times each year, with a structure of sub committees in the areas of Business Planning, People, Money and Building, which meet in-between full Board meetings.



## Staff Structure

**Director** | HR and line management; programme management; fundraising and income generation; strategic planning; advocacy, communications

**General Manager** | Finances; programme evaluation; building and operations management

### Artistic Directorate:-

**Associate Director** | project delivery, devising, writing, directing; child protection lead

**Projects Director** | project development, delivery, devising, writing, directing; fundraising

**Creative Producer** | project development, delivery and fundraising

**Production Manager** | design & technical support for shows, visual arts facilitator

**Comms Coordinator** | marketing and communications, front of house, building hires

**Workshop Assistant** | Cornerstone outreach and partnership building, and assisting workshops

**Cleaner** | cleaning and buildings support



# How to apply

To make an application, please write and submit two separate documents as follows:-

- 1) **Contact sheet** – name, address, telephone and e-mail contact
- 2) **Application** in four sections (NB please do not include your name and contact details on this document):
  - Education & training
  - Work history
  - Referees – contact details for x 2 people who acta can ask for a reference; (we will only take up references upon appointment.)
  - Person specification – a written application that explains why you are the best candidate for this role, and how you meet each of the criteria listed in the person specification.
- 3) **Equalities Monitoring Form** – please download this form from the acta website, complete and return with your application. See [www.acta-bristol.com/news](http://www.acta-bristol.com/news) to find the job advert.

Please send both documents together, as attachments to an email, with the subject line of your email: **“General Manager” application,** and send to [oliver@acta-bristol.com](mailto:oliver@acta-bristol.com) before the **closing date of Mon 8th November 12pm.**

**Please note that all shortlisted candidates will be invited to interview by Friday 12 November, and interviews are expected to take place at the acta centre, Tuesday 16 – Thursday 18 November.**

We are committed to ensuring that the interview process is accessible to all shortlisted candidates. (Further details on the interview process will be made available at the shortlisting stage, but please do contact us at any point if there is anything we need to do to ensure the recruitment process is accessible to you.)

We will be recruiting in accordance with our **equality and diversity recruitment procedures**, so will be making opportunities available to all applicants on a fair basis. However, we are keen to recruit employees who are representative of the diverse cultural backgrounds of our participants, and encourage applications from Black, Asian and ethnically diverse people and/or people living with a disability, who are under-represented in the existing staff team, for this significant new post.

We believe that the information included in this job pack, together with the acta website, should be sufficient for applicants to make their written applications. However, if you do have a particular unanswered question at this stage of the process, please email [oliver@acta-bristol.com](mailto:oliver@acta-bristol.com).

