



**Paines
Plough**

TRUSTEE Application Pack

You Bury Me by Ahlam.
Photo: Pamela Raith

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Welcome

Thank you for your interest in joining the Board of Paines Plough.

Paines Plough is one of UK's most celebrated new writing theatre companies, currently led by joint artistic directors Charlotte Bennett and Katie Posner. We exist to develop writers at all stages of their career, and produce groundbreaking new plays to inspire audiences across the country.

Founded in 1974, Paines Plough has had a seismic impact on the UK's theatre landscape, debuting early plays from writers like James Graham, Sarah Kane, Dennis Kelly, Abi Morgan, Vinay Patel, Miriam Battye, Anna Jordan, Zia Ahmed and Kae Tempest. We tour to over 30,000 people every year, and work extensively with writers in all corners of the UK.

We are a national company; resident at the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry, with a London base at Kiln Theatre. We're committed to being both hyper-local and international in our outlook and reach, and we work extensively with a range of partners to maximise our impact.

We are now seeking to recruit new Trustees who share our passion for new writing, and can help support our strategic and operational ambitions over the coming years.

Our current board is diverse, dynamic, and actively engaged in supporting the small team that makes up Paines Plough. We welcome a range of voices and backgrounds which reflect the audiences and communities we serve.

We are particularly keen to hear from those with expertise in local government, commercial and corporate business development, human resources, environmental sustainability, and fundraising and philanthropy. This round of Trustee recruitment is also a key opportunity for us to continue widening our West Midlands networks.

We want to work with collaborative thinkers from all walks of life. So even if you don't meet these specific criteria – but believe you can actively contribute to our thinking and future success – we would still strongly encourage you to get in touch. No previous experience as a charity Trustee is necessary, and training and induction will be offered if recruited.

Details of how to express a formal interest in the position are at the end of this pack.

“It is an enormous privilege to Chair the board of Paines Plough and work with an extraordinary team of staff and trustees to deliver to our ongoing commitment to support and nurture playwriting talent in the UK.”

Kully Thiarai, Chair of board of Trustees

**“We can’t ignore the challenges, they are real,
but we exist to support new writers,
produce new plays and tour them.**

**Touring new writing is what we do
and we are going to fight for it.”**

**Charlotte Bennett and Katie Posner
Joint Artistic Directors & CEOs of Paines Plough**

Photo: Rebecca Need-Menear



Recent work

- **Strategic Love Play** by Miriam Battye
- **My Mother's Funeral: The Show** by Kelly Jones
- **Shanghai Dolls** by Amy Ng
- **Every Brilliant Thing** by Duncan Macmillan with Jonny Donahoe
- **Ordinary Decent Criminal** by Ed Edwards
- **Consumed** by Karis Kelly
- **Tour the Writer** nationwide writer development programme – 2023-26
- **Women's Prize for Playwriting**

Coming up:

- **After Party** by Morna Young
- **Sapling** by Georgina Duncan

In 2019, we co-founded **the Women's Prize for Playwriting** with producer Ellie Keel. The prize proactively seeks to redress the gender imbalance of writers being produced on UK stages. In 2025, **Consumed** by Karis Kelly (the 2022 winner), sold out its first production at Edinburgh Fringe, followed by a hit national tour. The 2025 winner, **Sapling** by Georgina Duncan, will be produced alongside Sheffield Theatres next year.

In Summer 2026, we will present **After Party** by Morna Young, directed by Katie Posner. Reuniting with the Belgrade and the Traverse, After Party will be a large-scale show that demonstrates an increase in scale and ambition for Paines Plough.

Every Brilliant Thing, written by Duncan Macmillan with Jonny Donahoe, enjoyed a West End transfer in 2025, and is currently wowing audiences and smashing box office records in its Broadway debut, starring Daniel Radcliffe. Paines Plough has been involved with the show since its first ever performances at the Ludlow Fringe Festival in 2013, and consecutive years in Edinburgh in our Roundabout auditorium.

Mark Thomas performed an award-winning show **Ordinary Decent Criminal** by Ed Edwards at the Edinburgh Fringe 2025, followed by an extensive national tour. **My Mother's Funeral: The Show** by Kelly Jones and **Strategic Love Play** by Miriam Battye both transferred to New York, following successful UK tours.

Our nationwide writer programme **Tour the Writer** – in partnership with 7 organisations around the country – concluded its third and final year with a sold out day-long celebration at the Belgrade in Coventry, which included talks, workshops and networking, with professionally directed extracts of the 14 mentored writers' developed scripts.

Recently, we announced that we were successful in securing a vital grant from Arts Council England and the DCMS's Creative Foundations Fund to refurbish our much-loved tourable auditorium, **Roundabout**.

This exciting capital project will enable us to breathe new life into our venue, and bring it back to communities around the country: re-tooled, refreshed, and ready for the years ahead.

Our vision, mission and values

Theatre offers new ways of looking at the world, and the chance to rediscover our shared humanity in times of disconnect. Our principle aims as a company are to develop and empower artists, and to encourage public engagement with the arts.

We are a national company, committed to being local and finding unheard voices, striving to ensure our development of writers is as extensive as our touring productions.

We believe that storytelling and theatre makes us enriched, fulfilled, enlightened, happier and more empathetic human beings. We want audiences across the country to experience this, and we're passionate about empowering new writers to tell those stories.

Paines Plough is proud to be a stepping stone organisation; giving writers and core staff early career opportunities to develop their craft; empowering them to move forward into their future careers.

We are...

OPEN

We're a friendly group, and we operate with a culture of openness. We are open to new ideas, open to listening and learning, and open to new ways of seeing the world.

COLLABORATIVE

Theatre and storytelling are inherently collaborative artforms. We never work alone, so whether we're working with venues, creatives, actors, technical teams, students or local communities, we strive always to be the strongest partner possible.

INCLUSIVE

We want people from all walks of life to feel like their voices are being heard. At our core, we are a company that champions new writing, and so we support the development of stories and storytellers that represent the society we live in today.

LOCAL

We're a national company that invests time, effort and care in getting to know the communities we visit, as if we were local.

UNAFRAID

We are in the business of new plays and new ways of touring them. Like the plays we produce, we're inquisitive, unafraid to ask questions and to try things out.

ENVIRONMENTALLY AWARE

We are proactive in our practice, in line with the current climate crisis.

**“Without Paines
Plough many a
British writer
would have given
up / the company
has always been
an essential part
of the UK’s new
writing ecology
and its nationwide
place in that has
only grown in
recent years.”**

**Lyn Gardner,
Stage Door**



*Consumed by Karis Kelly.
Photo: Helen Murray*

Our partners

Partnership working is core to our model.

Paines Plough is a lynchpin in collaborating with regional organisations to deliver new plays to new audiences.

Some of our recent partners have included:

Co-producing partners

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry
Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh
Park Theatre, London
Second Half Productions
Sheffield Theatres
Mercury Theatre, Colchester
Ellie Keel Productions
Theatre Royal Plymouth
Synergy Theatre Project
Landmark Theatres
Soho Theatre, London
Women's Prize for Playwriting
Royal & Derngate, Northampton

Writer development partnerships

Belgrade Theatre, Coventry
Bradford 2025
Bradford Producing Hub
The Upsetters
Landmark Theatres, North Devon & Peterborough
Mercury Theatre, Colchester
Theatre Royal Plymouth
Theatre by the Lake, Keswick

Tour venues

Soho Theatre, London
Belgrade Theatre, Coventry
Roundabout at Summerhall
Key Theatre, Peterborough
Theatre Royal Plymouth
Mercury Theatre, Colchester
Bristol Old Vic
The Core at Corby Cube
Royal & Derngate, Northampton
Northern Stage, Newcastle
Leeds Playhouse
The North Wall, Oxford
Chichester Festival Theatre
SoHo Playhouse (New York)
Yard Theatre, London

Our strategic plan

Paines Plough collaborates with a range of strategic cultural partners to deliver our artistic programme based on two activity pillars:

- **PILLAR 1** - Developing writers: diversifying which writers are nurtured and strengthening how they are developed.
- **PILLAR 2** - Producing and touring: creating ambitious and socially relevant new plays which connect with and reflect audiences today.

These pillars unite through a 'place-based' touring model, in which Paines Plough invests in key partnership areas. This means we deliver our writer development initiatives alongside our productions, providing a range of opportunities for writers to become nationally celebrated.

Our approach to being place-based is underpinned by the concept that our local community consists of writers across the UK. As such, pillar 1 actively feeds pillar 2; building a national community of writers and sustainably developing new writing audiences across the country.

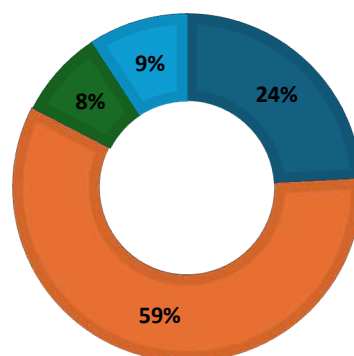
Turnover for the year ending March 2025 totalled £1.3m, with designated reserves of £359,190, consolidating a strong financial position. Paines Plough received regular funding from Arts Council England as a National Portfolio Organisation, which leverages additional earned income from box office, co-production fees and royalties, as well as grants and donations from a range of sources, plus Theatre Tax Relief.

Current funders include:

Arts Council England, The Hawthornden Foundation, The Leigh Trust, The Garrick Club Charitable Trust, The Noël Coward Foundation, Stockroom, Universal Consolidated Group, and a range of generous individuals including our Supporters Circle members.

INCOME 2024/25

■ Arts Council England ■ Earned income
■ Donations & Grants ■ Theatre Tax Relief





The Paines Plough team at the Women's Prize for Playwriting ceremony in 2026.

Staff

Joint Artistic Directors and CEOs	Charlotte Bennett and Katie Posner
Deputy Artistic Director (maternity cover)	Debo Adebayo
Executive Director	Claire Simpson
Senior Producer	Ellie Fitz-Gerald
Marketing & Audience Development Manager	Manwah Siu
Administrator & Literary Assistant	Hannah Churchill
Assistant Producer	Demi Nandhra

Governance

Paines Plough is a registered Charity and has a Board of Trustees who oversee operations to uphold the responsibilities of the Charity to the Charity Commission and monitor progress against strategic objectives as well as providing financial oversight. Day to day management of the company and delivery of artistic activity is delegated to the two Joint Artistic Directors who are also CEOs; supported at Senior Management Level by the Executive Director. They are supported by a small and dedicated staff team who manage Paines Plough's productions and development programmes.

Our board of Trustees ratify all major policy decisions and have overall responsibility for the organisation's good governance, including overseeing its strategic direction, financial wellbeing, and maintaining its reputation and values.

Our board also has responsibility for appointing new Trustees, who serve for a period of three years. It is possible for Trustees to be re-elected for a maximum of two additional terms. All new appointments are ratified by board members at the next relevant ordinary meeting.

Current Board of Trustees

- **Kully Thiarai (Chair)** - Creative Director and Theatre Maker, former Creative Director/CEO of LEEDS 2023 and Artistic Director/CEO of National Theatre Wales.
- **Ankur Bahl** - Freelance artist & culture-sector executive
- **Corey Campbell** - Artistic Director of Belgrade Theatre, Coventry
- **Asma Hussain** - Freelance fundraising professional
- **Abi Morgan** - Award-winning playwright and BAFTA and Emmy winning screenwriter.
- **Helen Perryer** - Finance Director, Royal Court Theatre in London
- **Farha Quadri** - A Policy Lead for NHS England.
- **Carolyn Saunders** - Partner, specialising in pensions practice, Pinsent Masons law firm

Key existing skills on the board include leadership, business strategy, financial management, legal, knowledge of the theatre industry, fundraising, directing, acting and new writing.

Current diversity representation at Trustee level is:
63% are Global Majority Trustees, 50% are women and 25% are based outside of London.

Paines Plough is committed to an active agenda to challenge underrepresentation. There has been a policy of positive action within recruitment to support a Board that celebrates intersectionality across gender, ethnicity, disability, social class and, as a company with a national focus, geographical representation outside of London.

The company continues to work towards these aims.

The Role and commitment

As a Trustee, we ask you to contribute to meetings from your perspective and experience. It's your unique perspective, based on your experience that supports the Artistic Directors/CEOs to lead Paines Plough. We also ask you to attend our productions and events, as regularly as you are able, and to actively advocate for Paines Plough.

The board meets four times per year, online and in person. Our Annual General Meeting takes place in December, and we aim to have one board away day each year, specifically to focus on looking forward, with the Executive team. We have three sub-committees which support specific areas of the company's work: Finance and Operations, Development, and Roundabout. These committees also meet four times per year, usually two weeks before the full board meeting.

As a Trustee you will have a number of legal responsibilities including:

- Comply with the charity's governing document and the law.
- Act in the charity's best interests.
- Manage your charity's resources responsibly.
- Act with reasonable care and skill.
- Ensure the charity is accountable.

The role is unremunerated although expenses can be reimbursed for travel to Board meetings as required. We welcome a mix of experienced and new Trustees on our board.

How to apply

The deadline for applications is **9am, on Monday 15th June 2026**

Interviews will take place during the week commencing **Monday 22nd June 2026**

If you are interested in applying, please send the below within one document:

- a short statement of no more than 500 words, explaining why you would like to undertake the role and what you would hope to offer to Paines Plough. This can be a written statement or a short video.
- an up-to-date copy of your CV (or equivalent written information)

To: recruitment@painesplough.com

Subject: "[Your Name] Trustee Application 2026"

We would also appreciate if you could complete an Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form at this link: <https://www.tfaforms.com/5169484>

Successful candidates will be invited to observe the next available Board meeting and/or committee meeting as relevant.

“[Paines Plough are] a truly national company, with an incredible record of discovering and nurturing some of our most important writers, reaching audiences and communities who are underrepresented and doing it all with passion, rigour and inclusivity, there’s no company quite like it.”
Duncan Macmillan, writer of *Lungs* and *Every Brilliant Thing*

Paines Plough Limited

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Facebook: @painesploughHQ

YouTube: /painesplough/