Paines Plough

LITERARY MANAGER
RECRUITMENT PACK

You Bury Me by Ahlam
Photo: Pamela Raith

Literary Manager

Come and shape the future of theatre with Paines Plough.

Paines Plough is looking for a bold and fiercely curious Literary Manager to join our team.

We've spent over 50 years redefining what new writing can be, and now we want your voice at the heart of our next chapter.

We are a company with storytelling in our bones. We are champions of new voices, restless seekers of the next generation of playwrights, and fearless believers in the power of theatre to reach everyone, everywhere.

We are a founding partner of the Women's Prize for Playwriting; a revolutionary initiative founded with Ellie Keel productions in 2019 to level up gender inequality amongst playwrights on our national stages.

Alongside this, we develop and commission playwrights from across the UK and tour their work to our vast national network of theatre partners.

As our Literary Manager, you will play a strategic role in helping to shape the future of new writing. You'll spot talent before anyone else, develop new work with some of the most exciting voices in UK theatre, and help bring new plays to life on stages across the country.

If you live and breathe new writing and want to work with a team that places the playwright at the heart of everything it does, then this is the job for you.

Help writers take their first step.

Take bold new work on tour.

Advocate for writers all across the country.

Be part of something national, diverse, nimble, urgent.

About Paines Plough

Led by Joint Artistic Directors, Charlotte Bennett and Katie Posner, we are one of the UK's leading theatre companies in developing writers, and producing ambitious, socially-relevant new plays that reach audiences across the UK.

Since the company was founded in 1974, we've debuted plays from writers including James Graham, Sarah Kane, Duncan Macmillan, Dennis Kelly, Abi Morgan, Mike Bartlett, Sam Steiner, Elinor Cook, Vinay Patel, Zia Ahmed and Kae Tempest.

We place the playwright at our heart, and we advocate for writers whoever and wherever they are. We are committed to being local and finding unheard voices, striving to ensure our development of writers is as extensive as our touring productions.

Our recent productions include:

- **After Party** by Morna Young
- **Consumed** by Karis Kelly
- **Ordinary Decent Criminal** by Ed Edwards with Mark Thomas
- **Shanghai Dolls** by Amy Ng
- **My Mother's Funeral: The Show** by Kelly Jones
- **Every Brilliant Thing** by Duncan Macmillan with Jonny Donahoe
- **Strategic Love Play** by Miriam Battye
- **Bullring Techno Makeout Jamz** by Nathan Queeley-Dennis
- **You Bury Me** by Ahlam

Alongside our productions, we have a strong writer development strand. Recently, we worked with 7 organisations and 400 writers in our multi-year development programme, **Tour The Writer**, whilst also continuing to bolster our relationships with writers through bursaries, commissions, attachments, and one-to-one meetings.

In 2019, we co-founded the **Women's Prize for Playwriting** with producer, Ellie Keel. This open-access prize is now an anchor in our work, proactively campaigning for writer gender equality in theatre. Three of the winning plays so far have toured the UK to critical acclaim, with two further winners now in development.

We continue our work at the company's home in Coventry, deepening our relationship with our long-standing collaborators Belgrade Theatre and seeking out new opportunities in the Midlands.

"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

Our values

Open: We are a friendly bunch, whether you are an aspiring writer or audience member.

Collaborative: We never work alone and strive to be the best possible partner whether we're working with theatres, actors, designers, students, local communities or accountants.

Inclusive: We want people to feel they can have their voices heard, and that these voices and perspectives are representative of 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're in the business of new plays and new ways of touring them. We are inquisitive, unafraid to ask questions and to try things out both in our theatre and team.

Environmentally aware: We are proactive in our practice in line with the current climate change crisis. Our work Paines Plough tours new plays that are socially relevant and that speak to the present moment and develop writers from across the country.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

Inclusivity is at the heart of Paines Plough's values; we promote equality and challenge discrimination in everything we do.

As such, we welcome and encourage job applications from people of all backgrounds, particularly those from under-represented groups in the arts. We will commit to interviewing people who identify as disabled and/or as a person of colour or member of the Global Majority who can demonstrate they meet the level of knowledge and skills required to do the job. Please see the Person Specification as we operate a transparent scoring system, applying a score against your response to each of the criteria as listed.

If you need any assistance, or require this information in a different format, please contact recruitment@painesplough.com to request the right version for you. If you would like to submit your application in a different format, we would be happy to accommodate this too. For example, this could be a short video or audio recording (up to five minutes in length) rather than a letter. Again, please contact recruitment@painesplough.com to discuss this.

If anyone would like an informal chat about the role please contact Executive Director, Claire Simpson, on claire@painesplough.com.

Consumed by Karis Kelly

Ordinary Decent Criminal by Ed Edwards

After Party by Morna Young

Every Brilliant Thing by Duncan Macmillan, with Jonny Donahoe

The mentored writers convene at Tour the Writer Festival 2026.

The Final Five celebrate at the Women's Prize for Playwriting ceremony in 2026.

Paines Plough at the Women's Prize for Playwriting ceremony, 2026
Photo: Greta Zabulyte

Staff

Joint Artistic Directors and CEOs	**Charlotte Bennett and Katie Posner**
Executive Director	**Claire Simpson**
Senior Producer	**Ellie Fitz-Gerald**
Marketing & Audience Development Manager	**Manwah Siu**
Administrator & Literary Assistant	**Hannah Churchill**
Assistant Producer	**Demi Nandhra**
Project Manager - Roundabout	**James Gibson**

Board of Trustees

Kully Thiarai (Chair), Ankur Bahl, Corey Campbell, Asma Hussain, Abi Morgan, Helen Perryer, Farha Quadri, Carolyn Saunders.

Literary Manager

This brand new role is designed to expand and enrich our literary capacity and deepen our engagement with writers across the UK. The Literary Manager will work closely with the Joint Artistic Directors and the wider producing team to identify, develop, and champion new playwriting talent, and help to shape the creative direction of Paines Plough.

You will play a key role in reading and evaluating scripts, identifying writers for the company to commission and develop and supporting writer development across our artistic programme.

Key Responsibilities

Strategy and Management

- Work closely with the Joint Artistic Directors to develop the literary strategy for the organisation in line with the wider artistic vision.
- Cultivate and manage strategic partnerships for writer development activity.
- Manage the literary budget and identify new sources for funding where appropriate
- Manage all writer development programmes including but not limited to the Women's Prize for Playwriting.
- Work closely with the Administrator & Literary Assistant to deliver the strategy.

Script and Writer Development

- Read, evaluate, and respond to script submissions and proposals in line with Paines Plough's artistic vision.
- Identify and build relationships with emerging and mid-career playwrights from across the UK.
- Oversee the commissioning process and work with writers from first drafts to final scripts.
- Offer dramaturgical support to commissioned playwrights and writers-in-residence.
- Proactively seek out and recommend bold, diverse voices for commissioning and development.
- Read and evaluate scripts, offering written and verbal feedback to the artistic team.
- Act as dramaturg on selected readings, Research & Development projects, and productions, as appropriate and required.
- Support the company's commitment to inclusive practice and actively develop strategies to champion underrepresented voices.
- Seek opportunities for collaborative partnerships which support our writer development strategy.

Programme Support

- Work with the Artistic Directors to shape the literary vision and programming strategy.
- Contribute to programming decisions with insight into developing and completed scripts.
- Support the development of work for our national touring programme.
- Manage Paines Plough's writer development programmes, including but not limited to the Women's Prize for Playwriting.
- Assist in the coordination and delivery of literary projects, workshops, and events.

Industry and community engagement

- Represent Paines Plough at industry events, festivals, readings, and performances across the UK.
- Cultivate and maintain excellent relationships with agents, theatres, producers, and co-commissioning partners.
- Lead outreach initiatives to discover voices from underrepresented communities.

Administration

- Oversee the maintenance of the company's script database and track submissions, responses, and writer communications, in liaison with the Administrator & Literary Assistant.
- Oversee the company's database of show invites in liaison with the Administrator & Literary Assistant
- Review and where relevant, develop strategies and policies for Paines Plough's approach to script submissions and show invites.
- Prepare reports, funding applications, and project evaluations related to literary activity, in liaison with the Executive Team.
- Manage budgets related to literary projects and commissions.
- Contribute content for marketing, press, and funding communications related to literary work.

Person Specification

Essential skills and experience

- A minimum of 5 years of relevant literary experience within the professional theatre industry.
- A demonstrable passion for new writing and contemporary theatre.
- Experience in dramaturgy, script development, or literary management.
- A strong track record of working with writers and supporting script development.
- Excellent reading, analytical, and written communication skills.
- Demonstrable commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the arts.
- Confidence in working independently and collaboratively within a small team.
- Willingness to travel throughout the UK to attend performances and seek out new voices.

Desirable skills and experience

- Experience of commissioning new work or managing writer development programmes.
- Existing professional network within the UK theatre sector, including writers and literary agents.
- Experience with community engagement or artist development projects.
- Knowledge of current trends and debates in UK new writing.

Terms of Employment

Salary	£45,000 per annum, pro-rata
Contract	Fixed term for 2 years
Pension	Auto-enrolment in the company pension scheme on completion of probation, with 4% employer contribution and 5% employee contribution.
Holiday	The basic annual holiday entitlement with pay is 20 days per year plus bank holidays, with an incremental increase of one additional day for every full holiday year worked. Annual leave allowance pro-rated for part-time staff.
Hours	21 hours per week (3 days). Paines Plough operates a flexible working policy with core office hours between 11:00-17:00 and a flexible working day operating from 09:00-19:00. Additional hours may be required to fulfil the role, including evening and weekend work for which no overtime is payable. A TOIL (time off in lieu) policy is in place.
Location	Paines Plough has a hybrid working model with two days working from home and three days office-based at Paines Plough's offices in Coventry or London. In addition, travel will be required throughout the year to support the company's work in other locations. All work-related travel and accommodation will be covered by Paines Plough. We welcome applicants from the West Midlands as part of our new location at the Belgrade Theatre in Coventry.
Probation	3 months.
Notice	During the probationary period, 4 weeks' notice on either side is required. After completion of the probationary period, 3 months' notice on either side is required.
Benefits	London Season ticket loan scheme (if applicable); bike to work scheme; theatre ticket allowance; training opportunities

How to apply

The deadline for applications is **9am on Friday 9 October 2026.**

Applications received after this time will not be considered.

Interviews will take place during the week commencing **2 November 2026**

Please send your covering letter (of no more than 500 words) and your CV in the same document, to **recruitment@painesplough.com** with the subject line:

"[Your name]: Literary Manager Application."

Please ensure that your covering letter addresses why you are interested in the role of Literary Manager at Paines Plough, and your fit to the person specification.

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

Questions for us?

If you have any further questions and would like an informal chat about the role or the company's vision, please contact Executive Director, Claire Simpson, at claire@painesplough.com.

If you are interested in this position but feel it would be a big step up for you, we would be very interested in hearing from you as we would be prepared to provide support and training to the right candidate.

Shortlisting and Interviews

When shortlisting we are looking at how closely your application meets the criteria set out in the Person Specification. We will reply to all candidates via email, regardless of whether you have been shortlisted or not.

Offers

All offers are made subject to satisfactory references, proof of identity, address and eligibility to work in the UK.

Accessibility

If you would find it more accessible to complete this application in another format, please get in touch with us.

Paines Plough Limited

Coventry office and registered address:

Belgrade Theatre
Belgrade Square, Corporation Street
Coventry, CV1 1GS

London office address:

Kiln Theatre
269 Kilburn High Road,
London, NW6 7JR

Main contact address: office@painesplough.com
Website: www.painesplough.com
Instagram/Threads: @painesplough
Facebook: @painesploughHQ
YouTube: /painesplough/
TikTok: @painesplough_
Bluesky: @painesplough.bsky.social