



PLAYWRIGHT COMMISSION

What are we looking for

We're looking for an experienced writer or writers to collaborate with our network of secondary school teachers and young people to develop a 30-minute theatre production. The writer(s) could be an individual, partner writers or a theatre company with the right experience to develop this script. The creative output will be performed in a professional theatre space at **OPAC Youth Theatre Festival, February 2027**.

The work will be performed by school students aged 12–14, targeted at KS3 level students across mainstream and specialist schools. You will be the writer(s) of a 20 – 25-page script piece that the students will perform, and the teachers will direct. It is important we can respond directly to the ideas of the schoolteachers and young people and that the story is directly inspired by Oldham past or present. A brief will come from consultations, which will form the basis for your final written piece.

Key Considerations

- Co-creating from consultation.
- Writing and developing a story and characters for ensemble casts of up to 25 students.
- Adaptability of the work.
- Relatability and relevance to young people and Oldham.
- Delivering within the timeline.
- Ethics around youth voice process and safeguarding.
- Young people with varying needs.

The Commission Fee

£1,890 – A 20–25 page script for a piece of creative theatre or play to be performed by 12–14-year-olds, as well as supporting notes for directors to develop into a performance.

Deliverables

1. Written piece for schools to perform at OPAC Festival 2027.
2. Attendance to the festival in February 2027
3. Attendance to planning meetings with the team, directors and young people.
4. Consultation with schools, including review sessions with teachers to support delivery around the piece.

Person Specification

ESSENTIAL EXPERIENCE:

- Experience writing stories, theatre or poetry.
- Experience producing new work for young people or young performers.
- Comfortable working within school and education settings.
- Experience collaborating with theatre makers and performing arts organisations.
- Able and willing to learn and work cross-culturally and with cultural sensitivity.

HIGHLY DESIRABLE:

- A connection with Oldham and Greater Manchester.
- A passion for creating high quality drama, theatre.
- Experience with 'Devising', drama and theatre practice.
- Script and playwrighting experience.

Key Dates

Application Deadline: **Thursday 14th May 2026**

Interviews: **Thursday 21st May 2026** – must be available on this day.

MAY – JUNE

- Writer's meetings with OPAC team across May.
- Consultations with teachers, students and young people
- Draft Summary from consultation.
- First Draft.
- Second Draft.

JULY

- Table reading and review (**7th or 9th July 2026**)
- Final Draft submitted – by **20th July 2026**

Application Process

There will be two stages to the application.

1. Submission of application

2. Interview with panel

- Please send an expression of interest cover letter to **otwlearningandengagement@oldham.gov.uk** outlining suitability for the role. This cover letter should be no longer than **2 pages of A4**.
 - If you prefer, we will accept expressions of interest submitted in the form of a video or audio recording no more than **5 minutes** in length and hosted on an accessible drive or cloud link.
- We are also inviting applicants to send a creative CV and examples of work, that demonstrate your experience as a writer or theatre practitioner e.g. Show reels, portfolios.
- You may also want to submit an **excerpt not exceeding 10 pages** of previous work to support the application. Applicants will be notified of the outcome by **Friday 22nd May 2026**.

Accessibility, Inclusivity and Safeguarding

The safeguarding of young people is paramount. Experience or training around our safeguarding policies and codes of conduct will be a compulsory.

We will keep at the forefront of our decision making, the representation of our locality, accessibility and protected characteristics with regards to; the brief, the recruitment and the public engagement.

We welcome applicants from all backgrounds and abilities who can fulfil the brief and will take into consideration different needs. If shortlisted, you will be asked if you have any accessibility requirements so we can fully support your interview.

Should you have any questions or need additional support with this application, please direct your questions to **otwlearningandengagement@oldham.gov.uk**

Background Context and Core Values

The OPAC Youth Theatre festival is part of a 2-year programme of education in drama, theatre and performing arts in Oldham.

Oldham Coliseum Theatre and **Oldham Theatre Workshop** are working together to continue developing partnerships with schools and creating pathways into the local theatre education offer that supports the curriculum and enhances soft-skills development for young people.

The festival is a week of performances of the chosen piece and stimulus, performed or devised by secondary schools, as part of their extra-curricular programme. At the heart of this commission is the importance of children and young people's creative education and the need to connect with local, Greater Manchester artists, practitioners, students and teachers. On a micro-level we want to ensure every individual child across Oldham has an opportunity to experience the performing arts and participate on or offstage.

We know there is a need to make the pathways and long-term economic benefits of theatre, drama or performing more visible. Celebrated theatre more at school level will support the uptake of creative arts for future of the creative industries.

We encourage curiosity or requests for further clarity around the project, so please do not hesitate.

Best of luck!

