

OPENING DOORS

2026-27

A series of professional development workshops, based on the requests from creatives in and around York

Run by Next Door But One, Riding Lights Theatre Company and Theatre@41





Opening Doors will run from October 2026 - March 2027



Workshop	Date	Time	Place
Facilitation: Working The Room	Tuesday 20th October	10:00-12:30	Friargate Theatre
Screen Acting	Tuesday 20th October	10:00-15:00	Theatre@41
QLAB	Monday 26th October	18:30-20:30	Friargate Theatre
Marketing Your Show (and Yourself)	Monday 2nd November	09:30-12:30	Theatre@41
Writing your DYCP application	Wednesday 18th November	18:00-20:00	Friargate Theatre
An Introduction to Clowning	Sunday 22nd November	9:30-14:30	Theatre@41
'Do The Write Thing': Scriptwriting Workshop	Wednesday 25th November	13:00-15:30	Friargate Theatre
Intro to Stage Management	Wednesday 13th January	18:30-20:30	Friargate Theatre
Finding the Fun in Fundraising	Monday 18th January	13:00-15:30	Theatre@41
Auditions: What can you control?	Thursday 21st January	10:00-17:00	Friargate Theatre
All Levels: Playback Theatre	Sunday 24th January	10:00-16:00	Theatre@41
The Director's Process (Part 1)	Monday 1st February	18:30-20:30	Theatre@41
Successful Storytelling through Movement	Sunday 21st February	10:00-12:30	Theatre@41
Audio Theatre	Wednesday 24th February	18:00-21:00	Friargate Theatre
The Director's Process (Part 2)	Monday 1st March	18:30-20:30	Theatre@41
Insights into Touring Theatre	Thursday 4th March	14:00-18:00	Friargate Theatre
Object Puppetry Play and Performance	Thursday 25th March	14:00-16:30	Friargate Theatre
A Different Kind of Networking!	Thursday 25th March	18:00-20:30	Friargate Theatre

Workshops

Facilitation: Working The Room with Kate Veysey & Paul Birch

This session is for those who facilitate spaces and sessions all the time, and also for those who are terrified to start. Join Kate Veysey and Paul Birch to consider how we structure a session, how we lead, and how we hold space. What kind of facilitator do we want to be? Full of practical takeaways including games and exercises to enable our participants and ourselves to enjoy sessions together.

Screen Acting with Niall Costigan

Acting on screen can be a daunting, overwhelming prospect. This workshop aims to break down the process of acting for screen and make the whole experience more familiar and therefore less stressful! On the day we will look at various techniques and pointers for acting on screen and you will get the opportunity to film a scene you will be able to keep. As part of the class you will be sent a short script to learn and you will need a smartphone (with plenty of memory!)

QLAB with Ollie Brown

Take full control of your show's technical world in a hands-on session. Whether you're a solo theatre-maker, part of a small company, or creating your own productions, this workshop will teach you how to use QLab to seamlessly run sound, lighting, and video from a single, powerful platform.

Marketing Your Show (and Yourself) with Livy Potter

Want to shout about your show but not sure where to start? Looking to improve your visibility online as an artist? Interested in learning tricks marketers use to sell a show? In this practical session, we'll take on the fundamentals of arts marketing – audiences, budgets, campaign plans, press releases and tour packs – and learn how to put them into practice. We'll also explore how to use your creativity to your advantage online.

Writing your DYCP application with Next Door But One

Thinking of applying to Arts Council England's Developing Your Creative Practice? Join this workshop to familiarise yourself with the process, have facilitated time to think through your development and application, and leave with a plan of how to apply. Matt and Kate, who will be running this workshop have both been recipients of DYCP and will be sharing their own insights as well as sharing examples from other successful applications.

An Introduction to Clowning with Clown Space

Join James Lewis-Knight, Artistic Director of Clown Space for a playful session exploring the foundations of clown and physical comedy. During this session, we will look at what it means to bring joy and connection to the stage, embrace failure and find a light body and spirit in performance. This workshop is useful for anyone in the industry from actors to technicians - come and play!

'Do The Write Thing' with Paul Birch

This is a scriptwriting workshop focused on writing strong scenes. What makes for a good dramatic scene? What tools are useful to take you beyond exposition and into surprising encounters between characters? Whether you are writing for the first time or want to refresh an existing script, this workshop will look at a range of strategies and techniques to inspire fresh, powerful playwriting.

Intro To Stage Management with Jane Williamson

From page to stage, Stage Managers help build and create the world of a play. This mix of conversation and practical exercises will give you an overview of exactly what they do, how they do it and why a good Stage Manager is a production's superpower.

Finding the Fun in Fundraising with Matt Harper-Hardcastle

Fundraising can sometimes feel like the bit you have to do before you can get on with the exciting part. But what if the fundraising process could actually help make your idea better?

In this practical and encouraging workshop, NDB1's CEO and Artistic Director Matt Harper-Hardcastle will explore how fundraising can be an opportunity to really interrogate your idea: What do you want to make happen? Why does it matter? Who is it for? What difference could it make? And how do you get someone else as excited about it as you are?

Drawing on over 13 years of fundraising for arts and community projects, Matt will share practical approaches to identifying potential funders, building a compelling case for support and turning an exciting idea into a strong funding application. The session will also look specifically at Arts Council England Project Grants, with tips and examples drawn from successful applications.

Most importantly, this workshop isn't just about getting the money. A good funding application asks you to articulate your idea, your ambition and your impact. Whether that particular application is successful or not, you come away with a clearer project, a stronger plan and a better way of talking about it to future funders, partners and collaborators.

Come along with an idea (however early) and hopefully leave with a plan, some practical tools, and a little more fun in your fundraising.

Auditions: What can you control? with Lizi Patch

This practical, hands-on session will explore what you can actually control in the audition process, from choosing and preparing material to making an impression, taking direction and managing nerves. We'll also look at the changing audition landscape, including self-tapes and online submissions.

You'll get honest, practical advice to help you feel better prepared, present yourself with confidence and navigate the inevitable rejection that comes with being an actor.

Note: We'll use the framework of a group audition to explore these skills in practice, but the session will be flexible around the needs and experience of the group on the day. If you have a monologue you're working on, there may also be an opportunity to workshop a section of one or more pieces in a masterclass-style segment.

Please wear comfortable clothes: we'll be doing a simple physical and vocal warm-up and working on practical drama exercises.

All Levels: Playback Theatre with Matt Harper-Hardcastle

If you are an actor, musician, facilitator or storyteller with an interest in community and improvisation, then this is the workshop for you! Playback Theatre is a particular style of improvisation that spontaneously brings an audiences' experiences to life to foster reflection, new perspectives and encourage connections between one another.

This style of performance is a central part of Next Door But One's repertoire and in this workshop you will get to explore the history and theory behind it as well as getting hands on with the short forms it is made up of. We will build on that learning by looking into more complex short forms and move into Full Stories. This workshop will also look at the roles and skills of the Conductor. This is a combination of the beginners and advanced workshops from last year, all in one day!

The Director's Process with Tom Bellerby

Part 1: In this workshop Tom will break down some of the key ideas that shape his process as a director. In part one Tom will explore the work he does before rehearsals start. From first reading a script to developing a concept for a production to collaborating with other creative team members to bring this to life. Through a mixture of practical exercises and conversations this workshop will act as an introduction to the role of a director. Please note this is a repeat of last years workshop.

Part 2: Tom will explore a directors role once rehearsals start. From the read-through to tech rehearsals to how to say goodbye to projects once they've finished. Through a mixture of practical exercises and conversations this workshop will act as an introduction to the role of a director. Please note this workshop will build on ideas explored in Part One.

Successful Storytelling through Movement with Bailey Dowler

This session welcomes all, no need for ballet shoes or previous movement experience. We'll focus on the tasks, barriers and undertakings of a Movement Director and how to use Movement to create meaningful storytelling. Physical Theatre, Improvisation and Creative Elements will all appear throughout and I'll be there to assist you every step of the way. Whether you would like to begin creating your own work, want to have a greater confidence/understanding in Movement or you just want to move your body then come along and we'll discover together.

Audio Theatre with Hannah Davies

With digital recording tools now in everyone's pocket, making audio theatre has never been more accessible. In this workshop, writer, theatre-maker, poet and Carleton Hobbs BBC Radio Award winner Hannah Davies shares and reflects on some of her own audio projects. The first half explores examples of her work and the principles of devising, creating and recording behind them. The second half offers a practical way in, as you begin creating a short audio piece of your own. Bring pen and paper, plus a smartphone or recording device if possible.

Insight into Touring Theatre with Theatre@41 & Riding Lights

Getting a show on the road starts long before opening night. This short, practical workshop takes you through the headlines of tour booking, from first conversations with venues to the confirmed date in your diary.

In the session we'll cover how to research and approach the right venues, what programmers look for in a pitch, how to negotiate deals (splits, guarantees and hires), and how to build a realistic tour schedule and budget. We'll also look at the practicalities that catch people out: technical specs, marketing lead times and contracts.

Object Puppetry Play and Performance with Cassie Vallance

In this hands-on workshop, explore the fundamentals of puppetry through playful experimentation with everyday objects. Discover how movement, imagination and collaboration can transform ordinary items into expressive characters. Starting with individual exploration, we'll move onto working in small groups and then developing short scenarios in small groups, culminating in mini performances for other participants.

A Different Kind of Networking! with NDB1, Riding Lights and Theatre@41

It's the session you've all been asking for - Networking! In a non-creaky session, you will be hosted to share practice, promote your work and seek out new opportunities. There will be a jobs board, a chance to hear about other local arts projects and a session about how you promote yourself in an authentic and comfortable way.



Workshops Leaders



Niall Costigan

Niall Costigan is a York based actor/director and workshop leader. He has worked in T.V, Film and Theatre for over 20 years and is currently a series regular in The Marlow Murder Club on BBC, toured in Crime and Punishment for Northern Broadsides last year and will soon be seen in this coming series of The Bay for ITV. He runs masterclasses and workshops as the Actors Forge at Friargate Theatre, he co-runs Theatre Lab with Paul Birch and runs The Adult Theatre Workshops at York Theatre Royal.



Matt Harper-Hardcastle

Matt is the CEO and Artistic Director of Next Door But One. Matt is an award-winning, gay, disabled, theatre director, writer and facilitator. Having worked for regional theatres, universities, national campaigns and local charities, Matt founded NDB1 in 2013 to create a home for all those who shared in his passion for theatre, community and co-production. Matt is also the Chair for Tutti Frutti Productions and Vice Chair of Out of Character, a theatre company comprising of actors with lived experience of mental ill health, and Patron of York Carers Centre.



Lizi Patch

Lizi Patch is a highly experienced theatre director, playwright, dramaturg and visual artist. She has written, directed and toured work for venues including Soho Theatre, The Lowry, Hull Truck, Alphabetti Theatre and the Etcetera Theatre in London, and was a guest writer for two series of BBC Radio 4's Brief Lives.

Lizi spent 14 years as freelance Artistic Director of Young People's Theatre at Leeds Heritage Theatres, where she co-founded and ran Leeds Grand Youth Theatre (LGYT) and founded Leeds Actors in Training (LAIT), a programme for emerging actors. Across both programmes she has worked extensively as a director, teacher and mentor, delivering weekly actor training, masterclasses, audition preparation and performance projects.

Lizi's own creative work explores identity, belonging and power structures, with credits including Punching The Sky (Northern Tour/Soho Theatre) and Down To Zero (Alphabetti Theatre). As a dramaturg, she works with artists and companies including The Sin Cru and Bobak Champion, supporting work that brings together different art forms, cultures and ways of telling stories, often in unexpected spaces and for new audiences.

She is currently co-developing a new musical exploring the climate crisis and working on a touring version of her abridged adaptation of Medea.



Workshops Leaders



Kate Veysey

Kate is a freelance director and facilitator. Her work for family audiences includes *The Fairy Who Fell Off The Christmas Tree* (She Productions), *Green Fingers* (Fladam Theatre Company) and *Five Children and It* (Strawberry Lion).

Schools touring work or NDB1 includes *My Mad Mum*, *How to be a Kid*, and *She was Walking Home*.

Kate is currently in R&D for *An Old Lady Looks Back* (Elizabeth Holt, Hull Truck) has also directed *How to be Brave* (Other Lives Productions village hall tour 2024) and was Assistant Director for *Catch by Clean Break*, which toured women's centres and prisons and theatre spaces nationally in 2023-4.

Kate is the Artistic Director for Out of Character Theatre Company. In this role she recently directed Jim Cartwright's *Two at The Crescent*, York, and is currently in rehearsals for *There's A Monster Coming*

In 2022 Kate was awarded a Developing Your Creative Practice grant from Arts Council England to focus on Directing, supported and mentored by female directors including Emma Rice /Laura Keefe (Wise Children) and Tamara Harvey (RSC) and Sarah Brigham (Derby Theatre). Kate is also a theatre lecturer at York St John University.



Bailey Dowler

Bailey is a Movement Director from Hastings, based between London and York. Since graduating from Northern School of Contemporary Dance, Bailey found his way into Movement Directing through working as an Associate Artist for Next Door But One. Originally, starting with an R&D on a production for the company in 2023, Bailey has now directed the movement for many of Next Door But One's productions since (*How To Be A Kid*, *My Mad Mum* and *When Robins Appear*). Currently, Bailey is working with Electric Press Productions on their Immersive Pantomime, *Cinderella*. Also, Bailey has been a Dramaturg for Premier Dance Theatre. After training alongside the Founder on Trinity Laban's Centre for Advanced Training Programme (CAT), Bailey collaborated on Premier Dance Theatre's debut piece titled "*Stasiland*" for their R&D and Residency with Dance Pavilion South West.

Whilst training, Bailey has performed works with: Company Wayne McGregor, Yukiko Masai, Gracefool Collective, Dr Valerie Preston Dunlop and English National Ballet.



Cassie Vallance

Cassie is one half of the award-winning children's theatre company Story Craft Theatre. A graduate of the Royal Scottish Conservatoire, she has built an extensive career across TV, film and theatre as an actor, writer, and director. In 2018, she co-founded Story Craft Theatre, which focuses on creative, interactive and accessible theatre for young audiences across the UK.

An early passion for puppetry sparked Cassie's exploration into this art form; first as a performer, and later as a maker. She has just completed her Developing Your Creative Practice (DYCP) grant from the Arts Council England to further develop her skills in puppet design and performance.



Workshops Leaders



Livy Potter

Livy is a Freelance Creative who wears many hats. As an Arts Marketeer and Content Developer, she regularly works with York Theatre Royal and Friargate Theatre, supporting them with marketing and communication campaign planning and delivery. Before going freelance, she had a ten-year career promoting the activities of the University of York, XR Stories and York Theatre Royal.

As an actor, she works both nationally and internationally on theatre projects with companies such as ARCADE, Badapple Theatre, Next Door But One, Stephen Joseph Theatre, Shooting Fish Theatre, Digital Drama, and Parrabbola.

She is also a Facilitator on a number of local community engagement projects, including Interplay Theatre's LS12 Creative community participation programme and Clementhorpe's 'Cuppa and a Chat' sessions. Livy has been a Trustee of Theatre@41, York's leading independent theatre, since 2025 and was Chair of York Settlement Community Players between 2022 and 2024.



Paul Birch

Paul Birch is a playwright, practitioner and performer with a focus on applied and community theatre-making. He has made work for and with Audible, BBC, Birmingham Rep, Bristol Old Vic, City Varieties, Colet Court, Converge, Cheltenham Everyman, Digital Drama, Fairfax House, Leeds Grand, Leeds Playhouse, NDB1, NCEM, Out of Character, Polka, Spiteful Puppet, York Explore and regular collaborations with York Theatre Royal. He specialises in improvisation and has trained in improv at UCB New York, iO Chicago and on the conservatory programme at the legendary Second City. He is currently the Artistic Director of Riding Lights Theatre Company and Friargate Theatre.



Hannah Davies

Hannah Davies is a playwright, theatre-maker and performance poet. She trained as an actor at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts and went on to work in theatre, radio and television before studying playwriting on the Royal Court Young Writers Programme. Her first play was performed as part of the Royal Court Young Writers Programme 2007. Since then she has worked as a playwright with companies including: York Theatre Royal, Pilot Theatre, Dry Write, Ice&Fire Theatre, Trestle Theatre, Hannah Bruce & Co, Company of Angels, Tara Finney Productions, York Mediale, Flanagan Collective, Guild of Misrule, ARCADE.

Hannah is a multi-slam winning poet and Associate Artist at York's leading spoken word night, Say Owt. She is the winner of numerous Slams across the country. She has performed at leading spoken word nights across the UK including Tongue Fu, Evidently, Women of Words, Sonnet Youth, Other Voices, Punk in Drublic, Verse Matters, Inua Ellams Rap Party.

Hannah is a graduate of the School of Arts and Creative Technologies and has an MA in Theatre: Writing Directing and Performance and a PhD by Creative Practice in Playwriting.



Workshops Leaders



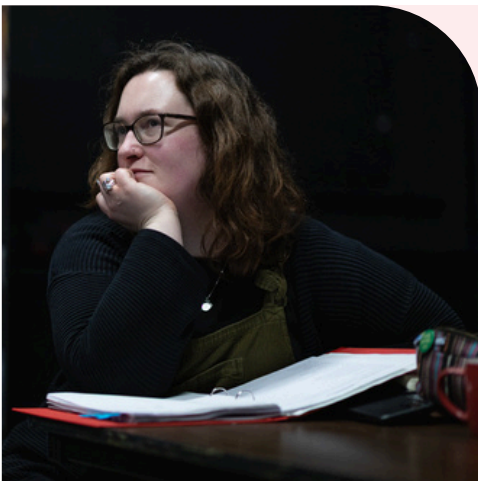
Ollie Brown

Ollie is Executive Director and CoCEO of Riding Lights, he is also the elected Vice Chair of the Association of British Theatre Technicians. Previously Ollie has been in Technical Director and Head of operations roles at theatres across Yorkshire, including Cast, Hull Truck, and The Victoria Theatre.



Tom Bellerby

Tom is a currently Theatre Director at York's Theatre@41 and Artistic Director at Attic Theatre Company, a new writing touring theatre company based in London. He is also Co-Chair of Pilot Theatre Company. Previously he has been Resident Director at the Donmar Warehouse and Associate Director at Hull Truck Theatre. He's recently directed work at NCPA Mumbai, Derby Theatre, Theatre 503, The Yard Theatre, Polka Theatre and associate directed at the National Theatre and on the West End. He regularly teaches and directs at drama schools across the UK including RWCMD, Arts Ed, RCSSD and Leeds Conservatoire. He was shortlisted for the RTST Peter Hall Directors Award. Tom trained at the Central School of Speech and Drama.



Jane Williamson

Jane has worked as a stage manager for over 10 years across productions and projects of all types and sizes. For most of her career she has worked as a DSM in rehearsal rooms for Hull Truck Theatre, York Theatre Royal, Stephen Joseph Theatre and the Young Vic amongst many other theatres and companies. Jane also works as Company Manager for Next Door But One.



James Lewis Knight

James is the Artistic Director of Clown Space, a theatre company in York specialising in Clown, Full Mask and Physical Theatre. Alongside this, they are touring their new children's show 'Doris the Dormouse' in Spring 2027.

James trained with the prestigious Clown masters Philippe Gaulier and Carlo Jacucci in Etampes, France, as well as Mask and Clown teachers John Wright, Steve Jarand and Felipe Ortiz.



Book Your Workshops

With funding from Arts Council England places on any of the Opening Doors workshops are free!

However, some of the workshops have limited capacity, so it is important that you sign up for those you want to attend and have availability to attend. This also means we will be able to send you reminders and any follow up resources.

All participants must be 18 years old and over.

To sign up, look through the workshops on offer and fill out this short form to book your place:

Workshop Registration Form



Once you book, you will receive an automated email via Google Forms with a copy of which workshops you have booked. Please accept this as confirmation and place the dates, times and venues in your diary.

If you have any questions about the workshops or want to discuss anything about the programme or your engagement in it, please contact janew.ndb1@gmail.com

