

Chair Recruitment

Playing ON is creating a world where marginalised communities are better understood.

We are a registered charity and professional theatre company with a body of work drawn from the communities within which we work. Our three critically acclaimed plays by the late Philip Osment have all been published by Oberon and performed at London theatre venues and nationwide. Our most recent play "Can I Help You?" was nominated for an OFFIE award for best director for Jim Pope.

We use workshops, training and performance to engage with disenfranchised communities. Our current programmes include working in partnership with the NHS in mental and physical health settings, working with those who have experience of the care system and working with young people at risk of long-term unemployment. We create theatre which brings together experts by profession and experts by experience to improve the wellbeing of all.

We are at a very exciting time in our journey having recently converted to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

Playing ON is led by a joint executive, Artistic Director/CEO Jim Pope and Executive Director Rhian Davies. You can read more about the Playing ON team and board at <https://www.playingon.org.uk/aboutus>

"I started off as a participant, and then I became associate artist with the company and then a few years later, I also became a board member. It's been a great journey in the sense that I was learning with Playing ON, learning as I got into facilitation, to then leading workshops and being on the board as well."

– Michael Amaning, Trustee

Through taking part in Playing ON workshops and shared performances participants gain new understanding and are empowered to re-engage with education, training and employment.

"I came to a Playing ON workshop as a service user in May 2017 and found myself on a stage reading out my work to the public at the Albany Theatre. NUTS."

– Mental Health Service User and Former Trustee

Our published plays have been performed in multiple settings from theatres to community centres from hospitals to the House of Lords. By expanding the circles of influence, we make decision makers question the system and address its faults.

A message from our Artistic Director, Jim Pope

Starting a radical new theatre company wasn't easy in the aftermath of the financial crash of 2009. Over the years though with each new project, our confidence has grown. We have cemented many valuable relationships, both within the Playing ON community with board members and associate artists and with external partners who have

spurred us on to expand and widen our reach.

To date we have worked with prisoners and prison staff, mental health service users and NHS staff, hospital patients, drama students, those in recovery for addiction, young people in care and youth offending teams.

We have produced three full scale theatre productions and many intensive theatre devising programmes. We have mentored emerging practitioners, delivered trainings and headed conference events. Our work has continued unabated through lockdown as we have used social media platforms, mobile devices, go-pro cameras and social distancing measures to enhance our usual theatre making offer. As lives become more isolated and the gap between rich and poor widens, the need for our work has increased. Lockdown has created opportunities that did not previously exist.

I was moved recently by a comment made by a young care home leaver in a drama workshop, which I was running on zoom. She said that it was the first time she had been in a space filled entirely by her peers all of whom have also grown up in care. For her it meant a respite from stigma and not having to pretend that she led a different life.

"Virtually all the patients who were engaged in the six-week workshop programme were discharged at about the same time and in that respect, I think that the performance clearly accelerated their discharge. I know in two definite cases where I can clearly say the performance led to me discharging them."

- Dr Dele Olajide, consultant psychiatrist, The Maudsley Hospital.

A note from the current Chair, Adam Moll

"I remember the goosebumps watching my first Playing ON production. For all the beautifully crafted writing, it was the raw authenticity of stories from people whose voices are seldom heard on stage that reeled me in. Having the privilege of being a Board member, and then Chair, has undoubtedly been one of the most rewarding experiences of my career.

We've been on quite a journey over the past decade but our next steps are arguably our biggest yet, as we diversify our work, partners and supporters, giving us the stability to grow and impact thousands more lives.

To help achieve this we have enhanced our Board with passionate, ambitious and diverse people who share a belief in the transformational power of theatre and a desire to share it with the most marginalised.

If this resonates with you and you have a passion for organisational strategy and development, then we'd love to hear from you. Join us on our journey and enjoy the goosebumps along the way!"

Beneficiaries

1850 Participants including:

- Mental health service users and providers

- Young people at risk of engaging with criminal justice system
- Academics & members of the House of Lords
- Applied theatre students and practitioners
- Care experienced young people

5900 Audience members, including:

- 1930 online audience members since March 2020
- 3427 theatre building audience members
- 480 across 9 community tour venues

Partners

We partner with a range of organisations and institutions in different ways:

- Funders, recent funders include Baring Foundation, Arts Council England, The Young Londoners' Fund, Wakefield and Tetley Trust
- Host organisations, who are usually embedded in the community we are working with and bring us in for our expertise in socially engaged practice. These include: Spotlight Youth Services, Lewisham College, Dragon Cafe, MicroRainbow International and NHS trusts including East London and Camden and Islington
- Theatres, we are an associate company at Omnibus Theatre where we have mounted our two most recent productions. We have toured theatres including: Vault Festival, North Wall in Oxford and The Gulbenkian. We are currently working with The Albany on Drilling Diamonds for Lewisham Borough of culture 2022.
- Education partners, we work with applied theatre and performance courses to bring our practice to the next generation of practitioners. These include The University of Kent, Rose Bruford and Central School of Speech and Drama.

Artists

We are currently entirely run by freelance artists, producers and administrators which means we are well placed to be in the discussion around freelancers which has become all the louder through the pandemic.

Our associate pool comprises people who started as participants on projects, others who trained under Jim at National Youth Theatre and some practitioners who have been working in the sector for many years. We include pastoral associates whose purpose is to support participant engagement.

The Role of the Chair

Role: Chair

Team/Department: Board of Trustees

Salary: None (Non-executive role)

Location: London but can accommodate remote working.

Key Responsibilities

- Lead the Board of Trustees, ensuring that they fulfil their responsibilities for governance of the charity meeting legal,

constitutional and Charity Commission requirements.

- Chair quarterly board meetings in a supportive and inclusive fashion ensuring robust recording and timekeeping.
- Lead and challenge the Board and Executive team in developing, shaping and guiding the company's strategic and artistic plans.
- Approve and monitor the implementation of internal policies (e.g. Health and Safety, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Safeguarding, Complaints procedure).
- Ensure that the Board is able to regularly review major risks and opportunities, and satisfy itself that systems are in place to manage them.
- Ensure the Board fulfils its duties to secure the financial health of the charity.
- Line-manage the Chief Executive Officer, holding them to account in delivering on the company's business plan and objectives.
- Be a strong advocate and figurehead for Playing ON's work, developing access to appropriate networks for fundraising and mission development.

Experience & Qualities:

- A strong understanding of the role of a trustee in an arts or non-profit organisation.
- A confident and clear understanding of governance and compliance and the processes necessary to deliver them.
- Able to confidently develop and manage a team of trustees and chair meetings efficiently.
- A strong understanding of what it takes to create a healthy and happy work environment.
- Passionate and enthusiastic about theatre and the power of the arts for personal and societal change.
- Able to access and share broad networks and make new relationships to further the interests of Playing ON

Approximate Time Commitments:

- There are four formal meetings of the Board each year and an annual strategy away day. Trustees will also join a sub-committee of the Board i.e. Earned Income or Diversity and Inclusion to contribute their expertise. From time to time there will be key events to attend such as fundraisers and performances. We anticipate a time commitment equivalent to around one day per month. Board members are appointed for an initial period of three years. We are open to the possibility of having Co-Chairs for Playing ON to bring the widest range of skills and experience into the organisation.

Next Steps:

For more information or to ask any questions, email jim@playingon.org.uk.

To register your interest in becoming our next Chair, [click here](#).