



Workforce Development Programme – Writer

Open Clasp is looking to invest in and commission three writers for a new Workforce Development Programme. Along with three facilitators and an assistant director, writers will attend an intensive weeklong programme in Open Clasp's ethos, values and practice. Facilitator and writer pairs will then be matched to a group of women to collaborate with and create three new pieces of theatre for the company's programme in 2022.

5 shortlisted writers/ applicants will be invited to attend a session on the 17th November 10am – 4pm, at West End Women and Girls Centre to meet the Open Clasp team and other programme participants. This session will be mandatory as part of the selection process. A payment of £50 will be made to attend or cover expenses. 3 writers will then progress onto the programme.

We want our workforce to be representative of the communities that we work with and engage. To apply, you must be a woman (Open Clasp is exempt under the Equality Act 2010 Schedule 9, Part 1). We are particularly keen to receive applications from women who face barriers within the theatre industry including disabled women, women who experience racism, working-class women and women who are part of the LGBTQ+ community.

Outline terms and conditions:

We are offering 3 x paid contracts (£120-£175 p/d on top of commission fee) to fulfil the following commitment;

- Attend a 4 day intensive programme in our methodology at West End Women and Girls Centre, in Newcastle upon Tyne from the 24th – 27th January 2022 (mandatory);
- 1 day of peer observation and reflection (28th Jan '22);
- Work with a facilitator to deliver Open Clasp's methodology collaborating with a group of women, determined by the company, over 8 workshop sessions between w/c 31st January and 25th March (typically one day a week dates tbc);

- Up to £140 holiday pay tbc (based on 13 days)
- £75 Childcare support payment available
- Undertake a writer's commission to write a script in response and in collaboration with the women you have worked:
 - o The fee for the commission is £2000 on completion.
 - o The script must be for a 20 min theatre performance,
 - o 1st Draft to be completed between 28th March – 8th April
 - o 1st draft feedback will be between 11th – 14th April
 - o 2nd Draft deadline 3rd May
- Attend 1 day of rehearsals (tbc. 16th – 28th May)
- Attend performances (tbc. 31st – 1st June)
- All applications will be considered on merit and in accordance with our equal opportunities policy.

This application pack includes a programme overview, person specification and a page about Open Clasp. Please also see www.openclasp.org.uk for further information about the company and our work.

How to apply

- Please read the Programme Overview and Person Specification and Information on Open Clasp.
- Send us an up-to-date CV, extracts of your work (no more than 10 pages) and either a cover letter, video, audio or BSL.

Your cover letter should tell us why you would like to undertake this programme and commission for Open Clasp and demonstrate you have the knowledge, skills and experience needed for the role.

Your video, audio or BSL should be sent to recruitment@openclasp.org.uk via WeTransfer or a Dropbox link it should be a maximum of three minutes and address the following three questions;

1. What do you think your role is as a writer, in the context of Open Clasp's ethos and values?
2. Tell us about a piece of writing you are particularly proud of.
3. What interests you in working with Open Clasp and why do you want to be part of this programme?

However, you choose to apply, please refer to the Role Description and Person Specification.

- You will also need to complete an equal opportunity monitoring form which will be removed before short-listing to make the process fair.
- If you would like any further information, have any specific requirements, or would like to discuss any aspect of the role in confidence, please contact Executive Director, Ellie Turner on 07818067122.

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- When you are ready please email your application to recruitment@openclasp.org.uk. Please put **WDP Writer** in the subject line or post it to Recruitment, Open Clasp Theatre Company, The Stephenson Building, 173 Elswick Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 6SQ. Please mark your envelope “Private & Confidential”
- Applications must be received by the deadline of **12 Noon on the 8th November 2021** to be included in the recruitment process.
- Prior to the application deadline, there will be a 40-minute Q&A session online on **Tuesday 19th October at 10am** with Carly McConnell and Catrina McHugh MBE to answer any questions you may have about the application process or programme. You must pre book by emailing recruitment@openclasp.org.uk

Please note that, as the role involves working with vulnerable adults the successful applicant will be subject to an enhanced DBS disclosure.

Programme Overview

As Open Clasp’s nation-wide reputation grows and partnerships with grass-roots organisations, women’s organisations and national charities strengthen, the company is urgently being called upon to create theatrical and trans-media work that holds the lived experiences of women often ignored by society. This vital work makes change on a social, cultural, and political level by being the best theatre it can be and using Open Clasp’s robust distribution and engagement model.

For us to meet this demand, we need to connect and engage with writers, facilitators and directors who can inspire and **want** to make great and urgent art with those who experience barriers to accessing it. This programme is an opportunity for Open Clasp to support artists who can grow with us and change the world, one play at a time.

Level of Experience

To give you some sense of what we are looking for in terms of what we expect you will have done in your career so far.

You will be confident in your process as a writer and able to communicate that to a range of people. You will be able to support a facilitator in creating safe and welcoming spaces for people new to theatre or the arts.

You will have written in response to people, groups, campaigns, and communities. You will have experience of adapting your writing process to collaborate with others either in your writing practice, in asking for and receiving feedback and in presenting your ideas, drafts and script.

You will have skills and experience that you can offer to the other artists on the programme and will be happy to share your experience, skills, knowledge through workshops, working with a mentor, and participating in discussion.

Most importantly, you will have experience of collaborating with working class communities, you will be able to relate to marginalised women and young women and place their lived experience at the centre of your creative process. You will be passionate about ensuring the voices of women and girls are heard on a national and international scale for social & cultural change.

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Your skill set and experience may cross over the roles on offer here, for example, you could be a writer and facilitator, or a director and writer. If that is the case, it is of equal interest to us, and you should have a conversation with us before you apply.

Role Description As a writer on the WDP you will need to:

- Bring skills, creativity, energy and a passion for activism
- Build connections and positive relationships with your team and the new group of women you meet to work with who's voices are currently under-represented in theatre and society.
- Be an active learner willing to listen, question and adapt your writing process to meet the aims and values of Open Clasp.
- Attend 8 sessions with a group of women working with a facilitator and other partners with administrative support from the company.
- Writers will be line managed by the Creative Producer, Carly McConnell
- Writers will be required to attend fixed sessions at our Newcastle offices, Stephenson Building (West End Women and Girls Centre), Elswick. Travel and overnights may be required to deliver the programme. Any travel and accommodation will be arranged and paid for by the company. Our expenses policy determines how meals and other expenses are managed.

**Person Specification
Essential Requirements**

1. Commitment to the aims and ethos of Open Clasp Theatre Company.
2. Experience of having your script produced as a play / theatre for screen in a theatre / arts venue or a co-creation piece created with communities produced. Extracts of your writing will be reviewed as part of the recruitment process.
3. A desire to advocate for change in the areas of inclusion, diversity and the rights of women and girls to equality and fairness.
4. Strong listening skills, an eagerness to learn and an open mind are essential. As is an eagerness to develop and share ideas as part of a collaborative team.

Desirable:

1. Ability to respond to the company's mission and vision and bring new ideas on how to realise it.
2. Experience of working within creative and production teams.
3. Experience of working with women in prison or the criminal justice system.
4. Experience of working with groups affected by domestic violence.
5. Experience of working with neuro diverse groups which includes conditions like ADHD, Autism, and Dyslexia.
6. Knowledge and an interest in creating theatre for social change.

About Open Clasp Theatre Company

Open Clasp makes truthful, risk taking, and award-winning theatre informed by the lived experiences of women and girls, working class women, women disenfranchised in theatre and society, those from minority communities and women affected by the criminal justice system. We are feminist, by feminist we mean fighting for the rights of all those identify as women and girls. It means challenging injustice and being an ally with marginalised communities experiencing discrimination.

Founded in 1998, Open Clasp is part of the National Portfolio of Organisations funded by Arts Council England. We take a special interest in women and girls from the North, shining a light on their experiences through our work. We make space for debate, encouraging our audiences to walk in the shoes of the most disempowered women in society.

Our work is performed in theatres, prisons, village halls, schools, conferences, and community centres including touring to Edinburgh Fringe and off-Broadway to national and international acclaim. It resonates deep into the communities where it is created and outside ensures the under-represented are seen in a new light by both women and men, and those who can make a difference.

Our transmedia approach shapes the work of researchers and leading policy experts. We contribute to regional and national discourse, performing at the Houses of Parliament in 2016 contributing to the Prison Safety and Reform White Paper and are currently on BBC iPlayer in partnership with Women's Aid and Shelter.

Our Values:

- To collaborate with some of the country's most marginalised women and young women, placing their lived experience at the centre of our creative processes.
- Ensure the voices of those women are heard on a national and international scale for social & cultural change.
- Make space for discussion, debate and critical conversations.
- Promote respect, equality and inclusion.
- Reflecting and celebrating the diversity of the North of England.
- Climate and ecological concerns will be reflected in our work to contribute to debates while acknowledging the link between responsibility and disadvantaged communities.

We are:

Catrina McHugh MBE – Joint Chief Executive, Artistic Director and Writer

Ellie Turner – Joint Chief Executive, Executive Director

Carly McConnell – Creative Producer

Rachel Errington – Finance and Office Manager

Colette Conlin – Project Coordinator

Associate Director – Laura Lindow

Associate Stage Manager – Rachel Glover

Associate Artist – Jessica Johnson



Better Health
at Work Award
Bronze Award