

PLAY HERD Artist - Job Description

ABOUT THE HERD

The Herd makes space for childhood. Rooted in Hull, and acclaimed nationally, we collaborate with young children to dream up shows, installations and programmes of play that ignite joy, celebrate child creativity and nurture family connection. We believe in the radical power of the arts to reimagine a world with more space for early childhood, a world where children thrive and communities flourish.

WHO WE ARE

Led by theatre makers Ruby Thompson and Sam Caseley, we're a herd of artists, makers and play workers, with a shared dedication to the genius of young children.

WHAT WE DO

Rooted in Hull, and acclaimed nationally, we collaborate with young children to dream up shows, installations and local programmes of play that spark joy, celebrate child creativity and nurture family connection. We run regular creative play sessions in family hubs, community centres and schools. We tour shows to our local libraries and the UK's

leading theatres. We build play installations in disused shops and world famous arts venues.

WHY WE DO IT

We believe in the radical power of the arts to help children thrive, families connect and communities flourish. We think that 21st century life leaves little space for childhood, and puts pressure on family connection, so we create stories and spaces dedicated to children and their adults. Our work has creative play at its heart because we know from child psychologists that play is the way that children develop their brains, bodies and social skills. We work in communities where the pressures of poverty have a particularly negative impact on childhood.

HIGHLIGHTS

In 2016, Ruby and Sam wrote stories with children at a pupil referral unit in Hull. We turned these stories into a show, put the show on at Hull Truck, and with that The Herd was born. 2018 saw us diving into the wonderful world of toddlers, and with the help of McMillan Nursery in North Hull, we made Slime - an immersive, playful, tactile show for under 5s. Slime began life touring libraries, before a stint at the Edinburgh Festival led to two national tours and the

Guardian labelling it a 'howling delight'. Since Slime, our obsession with early childhood has grown. In 2023 we made REPLAY for the Southbank Centre, a play installation made entirely out of reclaimed materials. In 2025 REPLAY returned to the Southbank Centre, joined the Bradford City of Culture programme and has so far reached over 50,000 people. This year sees the Herd more rooted in our local community than ever with the creation of Play Herd, a weekly programme of creative play for Family Hubs, whilst our national significance grows as we tour our unique blend of theatre and play around the UK with Counting Sheep.

Since 2016 The Herd has reached an audience of over 94,000 people and worked with over 5000 children as participants in play sessions and workshops.

ABOUT PLAY HERD AND THE ROLE

We are recruiting a pool of Artists based in Hull and the surrounding area, with an interest in co-creation with babies and young children, for our ongoing weekly creative play sessions called PLAY HERD. You can find the webpage for the project here:

<https://www.theherdtheatre.co.uk/playherd>

Play Herd is a creative play session for 2-4 year olds and their grown ups. A session that allows children to be the creative, imaginative, curious artists that they all naturally are. This is a time for children and their grown-ups to be together and we invite grown-ups to follow their child in play.

During delivery artists would offer families the opportunity to take part in a variety of creative activities - from cardboard play, to exploration of musical instruments, to mark making to movement and dance. We are looking for artists who are willing to share their own practice, explore other artforms and are excited by the prospect of playing alongside children as co-creators. You might be a dancer, a fine artist, a circus performer, a musician - as long as you're interested in sharing your experience with young children, we're interested in you!

We have been delivering this project since February 2025 and have secured funding for the next 2 years of delivery. All sessions are drop in and free of charge for families. Sessions are every Wednesday and Thursday during term time:

- Wednesdays AM for 0-12months at Gipsyville Library, 728-730 Hessle Rd, Hull HU4 6JA (starting October 2025)
- Thursdays AM 2-4yrs at The Octagon Family Hub, Walker Street, Hull, HU3 2RA (running since February 2025)
- Thursdays PM, 2-4yrs at Fenchurch Family Hub, Fenchurch Street, Hull, HU5 1JF (running since September 2025)

Play Herd has received funding from Youth Music's [Energiser Fund](#). We're delighted to be one of 11 fantastic arts organisations around the UK to explore child-led creativity with this fund. We're feeding into wider research around co-creation between artists and early years children.

The project is delivered in partnership with Hull City Council's Early Years team, academics from The University of Hull and student volunteers from Wilberforce College. The Fenchurch Family Hub and Gipsyville Library sessions are generously supported by the Arts Council England, The Williams Family Fund and The Brelms Trust.

The Play Herd Artist will:

- Co-deliver sessions (between 1hour - 1.5 hours in length) alongside another artist;
- Contribute to debriefs after each session;
- Help transport and set up materials from Herd base, and pack down and return materials after sessions (within the working hours);
- Take part in paid training and planning meetings with Herd artists and directors at agreed times;
- Follow The Herd's code of conduct with best practices for session delivery and safeguarding at all times.

WHAT EXPERIENCE DO I NEED?

ESSENTIAL

- A passion for working with children and young people;
- An artistic practise of any medium;
- A curiosity of how young children could engage with your practise;
- A kind, gentle, patient, and empathetic approach;
- A collaborative mindset and an interest in co-creation;
- And interest in how young children experience the world around them;

- A curiosity to work across artforms.

DESIRABLE

- Has an interest in sustainable practice;
- Previous experience with Early Years arts;
- Experience of co-creation with children;
- Understanding of child development;
- Looking for weekly work such as this for a sustained period of time.

All sessions take place in Hull but we are very open to working with artists in the wider Yorkshire region as long as they are able to travel into the city.

APPLICATION DETAILS

To apply for this role please send your CV and an expression of interest, and availability during the above dates to ruby@theherdtheatre.co.uk by Friday 17th October 2025.

If you'd prefer to send us a video talking us through these things, then great.

The Herd Theatre is an equal opportunities employer and encourages applications

from anyone regardless of age, disability, sex, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief.

We want to make sure our teams are made up of people who share the backgrounds of the children we reach.

We actively encourage applications from people from the global majority, those with Eastern European heritage, those who identify as working class, those who are neurodiverse, those who are Disabled.

FEE

The Artist fee is £80 per session delivery, including set up and pack down, around 3 hours in total.

A morning shift would be 9am - 12pm, with delivery with families from 10am - 11.30am within this time. An afternoon shift would be 12.30pm - 3.30pm with delivery with families from 1.30pm - 2.30pm. You can deliver 2 sessions on a Thursday if available and desired.

Due to the nature of the project, planning mostly happens 'in the moment'. Additional planning term planning time or training will be paid at £20 per hour.

CONTRACT

This is a freelance contract with The Herd Theatre. You will be responsible for your own tax and national insurance contributions.

CONTACT

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www.theherdtheatre.co.uk

[@theherduk](#)