



Head of NYO Schools

Application Pack

Play your part at the National Youth Orchestra

The National Youth Orchestra is the UK's leading organisation championing orchestral music as a powerful agent for teenage development. We are a welcoming community where every teenager can play their part in shaping their world through extraordinary music.

It's the greatest adventure a teenager can have in orchestral music where young people develop much more than musical skills.

Every year we welcome over 10,000 teenagers of all backgrounds and different levels of musical ability into a national community to play and share orchestral music. At the centre of the organisation, our Orchestra, known as NYO, is acclaimed internationally as 'the world's greatest orchestra of teenagers' for their dazzling performances. Each NYO musician also plays their part as a leader and role model, sharing music and skills through NYO Inspire and our wider engagement programme.

With music education all but disappearing in state schools, the free programmes provided by NYO are needed more than ever – to ensure all teenagers have the opportunity to develop their confidence and skills for life through sharing and playing music together. Joining the NYO community, they open up to new friends and possibilities. Stepping out to perform, they rise to new challenges. Sharing their passion with other young people, they learn to inspire and lead.

The role

This is a key strategic role within NYO's Engagement team. The postholder will lead the development of Catalyst, NYO's newest schools offer, and work with colleagues and partners to build a scalable model that supports schools to create vibrant musical communities for teenagers.

The role will suit an innovator: someone excited by building and developing a new programme area, with excellent relationship-building skills, a strong understanding of the mainstream secondary education sector, and a commitment to creating meaningful opportunities for young people, teachers and early career alumni through music.

Working at NYO

At the National Youth Orchestra, you'll work as part of a supportive, friendly and adventurous staff team. Learning and personal growth are intrinsic to every role.

Our offices near Holborn in central London are a hive of activity, a space for collaboration and ideas. Hybrid working is standard for most roles, with a flexible and supportive culture. During the year you will be present at NYO projects, concerts and events across the country, sharing music with young people across the UK.

NYO offers a season ticket loan scheme, cycle-to-work scheme, health cash plan, retail and entertainment discounts and a 24/7 counselling and support helpline.

Purpose of the role

The Head of NYO Schools is responsible for developing NYO's overall programme offer for schools. The main initial focus of the role is to lead Catalyst, NYO's flagship new schools programme, and to use this work to shape the future direction of the wider NYO Schools offer.

Catalyst is a key objective within NYO's business plan. Over a three-year period, the programme will test and develop a scalable, costed model for supporting schools to rebuild musical communities that are embedded in school life, visible to young people and shaped by peer role models.

The postholder will lead the design and delivery of activities that reflect NYO's Play Your Part methodology, including alumni training, teacher CPD, school residencies, commissioning and creative resources, and celebratory events. They will play a major role in shaping a programme area with the potential for significant national relevance and long-term growth.

They will collaborate with other members of the Programmes team to shape and support the experiences of schools and pupils engaging with schools concerts, schools tours and attending through our Free for Teen ticket offers. They will connect Catalyst with the wider NYO offer of both online and in person provision and advise internally to ensure that needs of schools and individuals are met.

The role combines programme leadership, partnership development, creative and pedagogical oversight, and cross-team collaboration. It is expected that, as Catalyst develops, the postholder will help identify future opportunities for NYO's wider school-facing offer.

Reports to:

Director of Engagement & Partnerships

Line management:

The role will initially have no direct reports. It is expected to line manage future NYO Schools staff as the programme develops, and to provide leadership and direction to freelancers, alumni and project teams.

Key relationships:

Internal

- Programmes team
- Fundraising & Communications team
- Finance & Operations team

External

- Teachers and school leaders
- Music Education Hubs

- Lead artists and facilitators
- Alumni musicians
- Other freelance delivery staff and suppliers

Key responsibilities

Creative and programme leadership

- Design, develop and lead NYO Schools projects to embody inclusive, peer-led, and creatively rich orchestral learning, discovery and experiences in state school settings.
- Develop inspiring musical and social experiences that centre the needs and interests of teenage musicians.
- Work with lead creative artists to programme all creative content and learning for NYO Schools.
- Research and design inspiring, supportive resources and training for state school educators to support them to develop peer-leadership in their schools.
- Design and implement a refreshed NYO Alumni training programme and support the development of early career musicians as peer leaders, creating sustained, high-challenge opportunities across NYO Schools and the wider NYO programme.
- Together with the Director of Engagement & Partnerships, Deputy Orchestra Director and other colleagues contribute to schools concerts approach, repertoire and delivery.

Strategic development and partnerships

- Work with the Director of Engagement & Partnerships to develop a refreshed vision for NYO Schools as a new programme area.
- Build sector partnerships, including with music hubs, Multi Academy Trusts and other relevant partners, to broaden reach, raise profile and deepen local impact.
- Develop relationships with music education sector colleagues, partners and teaching associations.
- Represent NYO Schools externally and position NYO as a thought leader in teenage development through orchestral music.
- Following the proof of concept and scaling of NYO Catalyst, identify need and opportunity for the extension or expansion of NYO's school-facing offer.

Collaboration and team leadership

- Collaborate with the Programmes Planning & Administration Manager to align NYO Schools delivery with planning systems, contracting, risk, safeguarding and evaluation timelines.
- Collaborate with the Director of Engagement & Partnerships and Head of Inspire to develop selection and targeting processes for NYO Schools applicants.
- Work with the Head of Youth Development to embed youth voice, inclusive practice, role modelling and social development within the NYO Schools experience.
- Liaise closely with the Deputy Orchestra Director to share tutors, pedagogy, and cross-strand opportunities.
- Line manage NYO Schools staff as required as the programme develops, and support the development of freelancers, alumni and creative teams contributing to the work.

Communications & Fundraising

- Work with the Director of Engagement & Partnerships and Communications team to profile the work of NYO Schools work, including contributing to the Music Educators' newsletter.
- Contribute to the development of sector facing resources and stories in collaboration with Communications and Fundraising teams.
- Work in partnership with Communications and Fundraising teams to capture and communicate the impact and voice of NYO Schools.

- Contribute to fundraising applications and reports relating to NYO Schools.

Pedagogy, inclusion and youth development

- Champion the Play Your Part methodology across NYO Schools work, with a focus on youth community, youth voice and peer leadership.
- Build in consultation with young people, educators and advisors at all stages of programme delivery.
- Support young people to develop confidence, self-expression and musical identity through participation in NYO Schools activity.
- Build structured pathways through which young people can develop their own skills, mentor and inspire others, progressing through NYO activities including Inspire, or connecting with external partners.
- Co-design early career alumni training content (e.g. delivery, facilitation, safeguarding) alongside the Lead Artist and Director of Engagement and Partnerships.
- Support youth-facing evaluation processes and work with the Head of Youth Development to consult young people in programme development and create space for young people's decision-making.

Planning, budgeting and delivery

- Lead NYO Schools delivery in alignment with programme team planning and project management systems, budget, and evaluation systems.
- Design creative briefs and learning structures for projects in collaboration with delivery teams.
- Manage project budgets and co-author annual planning submissions.
- Monitor quality and risk during project delivery, working with other leads to uphold safeguarding standards.

Other duties

- Undertake any other duties reasonably required within the scope of the role.

Person Specification

	Essential	Desirable
Personal attributes		
Strong commitment to NYO's mission and to the role of orchestral music in teenage development.	✓	
Strategic, imaginative and reflective, with the ability to translate vision into practical programme design and delivery.	✓	
Collaborative and relationship-focused, with the confidence to build trust across teams and with external partners.	✓	
A persuasive and adaptable communicator, able to represent NYO Schools clearly with a range of audiences.	✓	
Committed to inclusion, youth-centred practice and safeguarding.	✓	
Experience		
Significant experience of developing and leading programmes in music, arts, education, youth or related settings.	✓	
Comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the current context for music education in schools.	✓	
Experience of shaping or growing a programme area, initiative or strand of work with clear strategic purpose.	✓	
Experience of building and managing productive partnerships, ideally in schools, music education or youth settings.	✓	
Experience of leading creative, educational or youth-centred programme design.	✓	
Experience of managing budgets, delivery plans, quality and risk in complex projects.	✓	
Experience of line management and/or leading others through influence, including freelancers or project teams.	✓	
Skills		
Strong programme leadership and project management skills.	✓	
Excellent written and verbal communication skills.	✓	
Ability to develop strategy in a defined area of work and translate it into effective delivery.	✓	
Ability to build external relationships and represent the organisation credibly in sector contexts.	✓	
Good understanding of inclusive practice, youth leadership and safeguarding in programme contexts.	✓	

Terms and conditions

Salary

£45,000 – £48,000 per annum
dependent on experience

Contract term

Two-year fixed term contract (with scope to become permanent).

Hours

Full-time (35 hours a week)

Annual Leave

27 days plus statutory bank holidays

Place of work

10 Great Turnstile, London, WC1V 7JU

Hybrid working policy applies (core office days are Tuesday & Wednesday)

Probationary period

Six months

Notice period

Two months

NYO offers a season ticket loan scheme, cycle-to-work scheme, health cash plan, retail and entertainment discounts and a 24/7 counselling and support helpline.

Some weekend working may be required alongside occasional attendance at NYO residential projects (which generally take place during school holidays). A TOIL policy is in place for weekend/statutory holiday working.

Equal Opportunities

NYO is an Equal Opportunities employer. Diversity and inclusion are at the heart of our work, and this extends to our recruitment practices. We want to ensure that no job applicant, employee or participant receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Individuals will be selected, promoted and treated on the basis of their relevant merits and abilities. All employees are required to comply with and actively promote this policy.

Safeguarding

NYO is committed to safeguarding and protecting the children and young people that we work with. We have a range of policies and procedures in place and aim to be a sector leader in good safeguarding practice. All employees, contractors, trustees and volunteers are committed to practices that establish and maintain an environment in which the welfare of the young person is paramount; ensure that policies and procedures protect young people from harm, and that all concerns and allegations of abuse will be taken seriously and responded to appropriately.

How to apply

To apply for the role, complete the online application form available at <https://www.nyo.org.uk/about/work-with-us>

The deadline for applications is **Monday 11 May 2026** at 10am.

First stage interviews will be held on 18 May, in central London.

If you have any questions about the role, please contact recruitment@nyo.org.uk.