



LONDON THEATRE CONSORTIUM ANNOUNCES FOURTH YEAR OF PIONEERING APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMME AS IT PUBLISHES A REPORT SHOWING HOW THE SCHEME HAS HELPED TO DIVERSIFY THE THEATRE WORKFORCE

- Consortium of 14 leading London producing theatres announces 4th year of its award-winning apprenticeship programme offering up to 12 new apprenticeships across the group for 2017
- Piloting a new apprenticeship training hub at the Lyric Hammersmith with qualifications accredited through the National College for Creative and Cultural Industries.
- Report published on the programme's first three years, which shows the scheme's success in diversifying the theatre workforce and creating new entry routes into theatre.
- £800,000 invested in the creation of 56 apprenticeships in first three years
- 62% of apprentices to date have been from non white-British backgrounds and 27% have a disability.

The London Theatre Consortium (LTC) has announced plans for a fourth year of its pioneering apprenticeship programme offering up to a further 12 apprenticeships across the group for 2017. In a new development the LTC will work with the National College for the Creative and Cultural Industries to offer the apprenticeship qualifications and will pilot a new apprenticeship training hub at the Lyric Hammersmith.

This announcement comes as the consortium publishes a new report on the programme's first three years which sets out how an investment of £800,000 has created 56 entry level apprenticeships into theatre across a broad range of disciplines including Technical Theatre, Costume, Community Arts, Venue Operations, Producing and Administration.

The report shows how apprenticeships can help arts organisations to diversify their workforces and to create new routes into a career in theatre. 62% of apprentices to date have been from non white-British backgrounds and 27% have a disability, most hidden. The programme was also effective in reaching people from socio-economic backgrounds that are not currently well represented in theatre staff teams. All apprentices were paid at least the adult National Minimum Wage, regardless of their age, to make sure that no one was barred from taking a role for financial reasons.

As well as college and workplace training towards an accredited qualification, apprentices were given mentoring support, help to plan their careers and next steps and provided with opportunities to build their contacts and networks. Of the 48 individuals, 23 have gone on to further employment in the arts and 11 will shortly complete their Level 2 qualifications.

Apprentices reported that their self-confidence, organisational skills and work readiness improved enormously. Employers reported that managing an apprentice had encouraged them to reconsider their standard working practices to support better inclusivity and access.

The programme has been co-funded by CCSkills' Creative Employment Programme, AGE, City Bridge Foundation, LTC employers and the LTC itself.

"We worked really hard to find talented young people who we don't usually hear from when we are recruiting. Almost everyone working in the arts will say at some point that they owe their position to someone who "saw something in them and believed in them". That's brilliant if you're there to be 'spotted' but impossible if you'd never find yourself in that position in the first place. We decided we needed to be proactive and to go out and look for talent and potential – and we found it." Emma Rees, Director, LTC

"I think it's important to continue schemes like this where it's completely accessible to people who didn't go to university, people from different walks of life". LTC apprentice

"Working with apprentices makes me question a lot of practice that is taken as read within the organisation, and I think that is a really good thing for the culture of an organisation". Sam Maynard, Education Manager, Donmar Warehouse.

"The cultural sector is a real UK success story in terms of growth and economic development and London is one of the most multi-cultural cities in the world, yet the workforce of the theatre sector is still under-representative of London's diversity. From the start, we have seen this collaborative programme as an important way to diversify the workforce, to reach and train young people from backgrounds that are currently underrepresented in the theatre sector. Working together has been key to this. I don't think the London theatres could have embraced apprenticeships on the scale that they have, and with the success they have, if it hadn't been for that collaborative approach, as part of the London Theatre Consortium. Although the funding climate makes it harder now, we are committed to continuing to work together to maintain the momentum we have achieved and to create open and accessible opportunities for talented young people from all backgrounds in our theatres." Sian Alexander, Executive Director, Lyric Hammersmith.

Recruitment for the fourth year of apprenticeships will begin in January 2017, with apprenticeships starting in March 2017. More details are available from www.londontheatreconsortium.com

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Notes to Editors

London Theatre Consortium

London theatre Consortium is a collaboration of 14 producing theatres working together on large-scale strategic projects that are beyond the capacity of one or two organisations to deliver. We run projects in several priority areas including workforce and skills development.

The LTC is Almeida Theatre, Battersea Arts Centre, Bush Theatre, Donmar Warehouse, Gate Theatre, Greenwich Theatre, Hampstead Theatre, Lyric Hammersmith, Royal Court Theatre, Soho Theatre, Theatre Royal Stratford East, Tricycle Theatre, Unicorn Theatre and Young Vic.

Apprenticeship Programme

LTC launched its apprenticeship programme in 2013 and offers Level 2 apprenticeships (equivalent to 5 GCSEs) targeted at young people who we do not usually reach when we recruit, with the aim of addressing the systemic lack of diversity in our workforces. Each year a new cohort of apprentices is recruited through an accessible recruitment programme that is designed to spot passion and potential rather than past achievement and includes open days, workshops and supportive interviews. Eleven of our L2 apprentices have progressed to L3 apprenticeships (equivalent to 2 A levels) through the scheme. In the first 3 years of the scheme £800,000 has been invested in the creation of 56 apprenticeships. In 2014 the programme was recognised by the CCSkills Skills Award for Innovative Approaches in Recruiting Young People. In 2016 Sherice Pitter, Apprentice at the Lyric Hammersmith, won 'Apprentice of the Year' at the CCSkills Awards.

To receive a copy of the report please contact Emma Rees ereesltc@gmail.com