



# Director of Engagement & Partnerships

## 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 give teenage musicians the greatest adventure they can have in orchestral music, helping them unlock their full potential.

We are an inclusive organisation that currently connects with over 10,000 teenagers each year, as well as many younger children. Our programmes offer teenage musicians an unparalleled opportunity to excel, pushing the boundaries of what they believe is possible, while inspiring others to do the same.

We focus on two main ideas: firstly, that collective music making fosters uniquely communal experiences, offering young people an experience of belonging, self-expression and shared achievement that is increasingly rare and deeply impactful and secondly, that teenagers can be powerful role models, opening up the relevance of orchestral music to their peers.

This work is more urgently needed than ever. Young people today face a complex landscape: rising mental health challenges, reduced in-person connection, and growing gaps in access to high-quality music education. NYO responds to this need by placing teenage musicians at the heart of a movement - bringing them together to make music, build confidence, and inspire one another.

Our mission is to ensure that by 2033, NYO's programmes, performances, and resources are accessible to every teenager in the UK. We aim to create a vibrant, inclusive national community where young people can experience high-quality orchestral music, find role models, and gain the confidence to succeed in life.

### The role

The **Director of Engagement & Partnerships** leads the development and delivery of NYO's engagement programmes, ensuring they align with NYO's mission to open up orchestral music to every teenager in the UK.

This role ensures that NYO Inspire, Open and schools, digital, and youth voice work are positioned on equal footing with NYO's orchestral programme, bringing coherence to NYO Inspire, Open, schools, alumni and digital activity, supporting clear planning, purposeful partnerships, and youth-led approaches across all strands.

This is a practical leadership role, rooted in working closely with teams, building strong relationships, and helping ideas take shape through clear systems and shared values. It champions youth voice, peer leadership and inclusive practice across the whole organisation, while driving partnership growth to meet strategic objectives.

## Cross-organisational priorities

This role is part of a restructured leadership team at NYO reflecting our growth and ambition to embed the NYO Adventure in the lives of thousands of young people, working towards our 2033 goal. Our priorities include furthering the opportunity to grow NYO Inspire, shape a significant national initiative to grow NYO's impact within secondary schools, and develop digital entry points through bespoke resources informed by youth research. All senior leaders at NYO champion orchestral music as a powerful agent for teenage development and contribute to the shared responsibility of embedding and evolving the NYO Adventure pedagogy, which includes:

- **Community ethos:** fostering an inclusive, supportive culture across programmes
- **Taking on challenge:** musical and creative skills development, enabling artistic and personal growth
- **Youth voice:** young people influencing ethos, contributing to programme design and direction, and presenting Orchestral music to their peers.
- **Play your part:** teenage leadership and role modelling, musicians inspiring their peers through action

## Reports to:

CEO & Creative Director

### Direct Reports:

Head of NYO Inspire  
Head of Programme Planning  
Head of Youth Development  
Head of Schools (planned role)

## Key responsibilities

### Strategic leadership

- Build the Engagement programme as a strategic priority, delivering NYO's mission at scale, with specific focus on the Schools programme, Alumni training, and partnerships strategy.
- Ensure alignment and coherence across the organisation's cross-cutting initiatives, with clarity on who leads, manages, and contributes to their success.
- Provide inspirational leadership to the Head of NYO Inspire, Head of Youth Development, Head of Programme Planning and Schools teams.
- Act as senior guardian of inclusion, youth voice and equitable access, with responsibility as a lead officer for NYO's safeguarding strategy.



- As a member of the senior management team, lead the Engagement programme's contribution to NYO's strategy, business plan, organisational KPIs, and report to the Board of Trustees.
- Develop and embed cross-team strategies for the NYO Adventure pedagogy, safeguarding, youth voice, EDI and inclusion, to achieve programme cohesion and sustainability.
- Ensure evaluation and feedback processes are embedded and used to guide improvement and reflection.

### **Partnership development**

- Develop a national partnership strategy across music education, schools, training providers, youth work, cultural sectors with a clear geographic reach, to unlock reach, quality and sustainability
- Guide partner selection and engagement for Inspire and Schools delivery, ensuring alignment with strategic aims
- Align partnership development with income generation alongside fundraising, communications and finance teams
- Support NYO's position as a strategic partner in national conversations on music education, youth leadership, and inclusion.

### **Programme oversight**

- Provide strategic oversight of NYO Inspire, supporting increased scale, depth and impact.
- Support the NYO Inspire team to develop a new inclusive programme of work in youth centres.
- Lead the development of a large-scale, high-impact secondary schools programme that supports teachers to reframe ensemble and orchestral music as a living artform for their students, embedding NYO pedagogy. Ensure the programme reflects fosters inclusivity, current educational needs, and is scalable through regional partnerships and alumni delivery models. Build a team for delivery.
- Support workforce development by designing, developing and overseeing a training framework for early career alumni. Create pathways for alumni to become facilitators, educators, and peer leaders across the NYO engagement and Orchestra programmes.

### **Digital and communications**

- Lead on the purpose and direction of NYO's digital content for the engagement programmes, including projects like the teenage Guide to the Orchestra, in close collaboration with the senior management team.
- Work with the communications team to support digital storytelling that reflects young people's voices and NYO's values.
- Help connect youth-facing communications with programme design, ensuring clarity, authenticity and consistency.
- Work with the Communications team to build a communications strategy to support the national partnership strategy.

### **Team Leadership**

- Provide developmental leadership and structured support to senior delivery leads; NYO Inspire, Youth Development, Programme Planning, and Schools (future role): enabling joined-up strategy, co-ordination and shared purpose across programmes, and support confident ownership of their areas.
- Convene cross-team planning structures and shared milestones.

- Embed learning and reflective practice into planning and delivery cycles.
- Oversee the budgeting and financial accountability of your teams.

### **Cross-organisational integration**

- Collaborate with the Chief Operating Officer on targets, evaluation and performance indicators.
- Work with the Deputy Orchestra Director to ensure coherence between the Orchestra and wider engagement activity.
- Work with the CEO and Deputy Orchestra Director to align planning and pedagogy across programmes.
- Collaborate with the Head of Programme Planning to ensure resource, planning, protocols, operational and cross team integration.
- Collaborate with the Head of Youth Development to ensure safeguarding, an inclusive culture and youth voice are embedded across all programmes.
- Ensure evaluation processes reflect youth voice and engagement impact.
- Represent NYO's engagement work to funders and sector stakeholders, contributing to fundraising, advocacy, and external communications.

### **Cross-team working**

The Director of Engagement & Partnerships plays a key leadership role in:

- Supporting a culture of learning, communication of impact, and strategic decision-making across the SMT and other extended leadership team meetings, and contributing to alignment of strategic and operational planning.
- Leadership teams for NYO Inspire and schools-based delivery, including residential delivery
- Strategic planning
- Fundraising, advocacy and stakeholder planning with the senior team.

## **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.

All NYO team members are expected to:

- Champion teenage potential and leadership.
- Act with integrity and empathy.
- Share responsibility for creating an inclusive, collaborative culture.
- Support the learning and development of others.
- Celebrate creativity, curiosity and challenge.

# Person Specification

## Personal attributes

|  | Essential | Desirable |
|--|-----------|-----------|
| Vision that is grounded in practice – able to combine big-picture thinking with operational awareness                            | ✓         |           |
| Strategic and collaborative – comfortable aligning different perspectives and priorities.  | ✓         |           |
| Values-driven with a passion for inclusion and youth empowerment.  | ✓         |           |
| Relational, reflective, and resilient – able to build trust and adapt in response to challenge.                                  | ✓         |           |
| Able to lead change while honouring what's gone before – respectful of organisational legacy while driving forward new ambition. | ✓         |           |

## Experience

|  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| Proven strategic leadership in a complex, youth-focused, education, or cultural organisation               | ✓ |   |
| Experience building and delivering partnership-driven programmes at scale                                  | ✓ |   |
| Track record in youth-centred practice, youth engagement principles, inclusion, and leadership development | ✓ |   |
| Track record of designing and scaling impactful programmes   | ✓ |   |
| Understanding of secondary music education and school engagement   | ✓ |   |
| Experience of digital programme development or blended delivery  | ✓ |   |
| Experience leading a multi-functional team with planning, delivery, and support functions                  | ✓ |   |
| Insight into policy, advocacy, or cultural education sectors   |   | ✓ |
| Background in music education, orchestral settings, or youth development                                   |   | ✓ |
| Knowledge of safeguarding frameworks and youth participation models  |   | ✓ |

## Skills

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Excellent team leadership and cross-sector collaboration skills.   | ✓ |  |
| Strong communicator, advocate, and public representative.  | ✓ |  |
| Ability to translate organisational strategy into coherent plans and lead cross-team execution   | ✓ |  |
| Skilled in developing, aligning, and evaluating large-scale programmes with clear objectives and outcomes                                | ✓ |  |
| Ability to identify, build, and maintain high-value relationships with stakeholders in education, youth, cultural, and community sectors | ✓ |  |

## Terms and Conditions

### Salary

£63,000–£68,000 per annum pro rata

### Contract term

Permanent

### Hours

Full-time (35 hours a week) – we would also be willing to consider candidates seeking a four-day / 28 hour working week.

### Annual Leave

27 days plus statutory bank holidays

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. Hybrid working policy applies to this role; the core office days are Tuesday and Wednesday.

Most NYO projects take place during school holidays or at weekends, therefore the role will include some weekend and statutory holiday working, for which a TOIL policy is in place.

## How to apply

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

The deadline for applications is 10am on **Monday 7 July 2025**. First round interviews will take place during w/c 14 July.

If you have any questions about the role, please contact [recruitment@nyo.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@nyo.org.uk).

## Equal Opportunities

NYO is an Equal Opportunities employer. Diversity and inclusion are central to our work, including recruitment practices. We aim to ensure no job applicant, employee, or participant receives less favourable treatment based on age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy or maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation. Individuals are selected, promoted, and treated based on their relevant merits and abilities. All employees must comply with and actively promote this policy.

## Safeguarding

NYO is committed to safeguarding and protecting the children and young people we work with. Our policies and procedures ensure sector-leading safeguarding practices. All employees, contractors, trustees, and volunteers are dedicated to maintaining an environment where young people's welfare is paramount. Our policies protect young people from harm, ensuring all concerns and abuse allegations are taken seriously and responded to appropriately.