

Programme and Orchestras Manager

NCO Job Recruitment Pack



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1. About National Children's Orchestras

Purpose

Our purpose is to champion the life-changing power of music.

Mission

Together, we are using the power of music to create a supportive community that enriches lives.

We empower children to uncover the joy of orchestral music, unleash their creativity, realise their ambitions and embrace a future filled with endless possibilities. The confidence, resilience and teamwork learned through music become skills for life, wherever each young musician's journey takes them.

National Children's Orchestras (NCO) was founded in 1978 by Vivienne Price MBE who recognised a lack of provision for younger aged musicians to engage with orchestral music. NCO set out to provide opportunities for children aged 8-14 to discover the joy of orchestral playing at the highest level, during a period of their lives when many give up their music as they transition to secondary school. Fast forward 48 years, there are approximately 24,000 NCO alumni, many of whom are professional musicians and music teachers across the globe.

Today, nearly 2000 children aged 8-14 connect with NCO each year. They take part through:

- Auditioned orchestral weeks and weekends
- Non-auditioned workshops
- Activities with schools and hubs
- Free tickets to concerts

The next few years will be defined by a significant expansion of free, non-auditioned activities and initiatives, increasing NCO's reach and impact by enabling thousands more children to play together, to be creative and to embrace the possibilities that music can offer them.



Our values influence everything we do and how we do it.

we believe no dream is too big.

When we're free to dream, explore, create and play, the world opens up. In music and in life, dream big – you never know what incredible things you'll discover along the way.

Dare to Dream



we believe orchestral music shapes skills and hearts.

Orchestral music is a wondrous world that nurtures empathy, resilience, and the courage to face whatever life throws our way. It builds strength of spirit, deepening connections to ourselves and the world around us.



strength of spirit



we believe everyone has their own brilliance.

Everyone has a unique potential waiting to shine. In a supportive, inclusive environment, we can discover our own brilliance, find our voice, and grow with confidence and creativity.

Every voice Matters



we believe in the power of community.

Our power lies in our unity; we grow together, support each other, and become something greater as one.

The Power of Us

Play together. Be unstoppable.

2. Our commitments

Our commitments to our administrative team include:

- A professional development plan for each employee that includes training, support and mentoring and can lead to progression within the organisation
- Employee Health Plan
- Real Living Wage Employer
- Networking opportunities within Bristol and the music/wider arts sector
- Two team away-days each year when no one does any work!
- A light, fully accessible and modern office in Bristol's creative quarter, Paintworks, managed by Ethical Property with friendly neighbours also working in charities and organisations that make life better
- Empathetic arrangements for hybrid working that enable staff to manage their work/life balance and provide parents/carers, or people with disabilities, with the flexibility they need
- 23 days' annual leave per year (pro rata) plus the working days between Christmas and New Year plus Public Holidays
- Pension Scheme
- A rota for car parking and secure bike storage on site



3. About the role

Programme & Orchestras Manager

Location: NCO is based at Streamline, Paintworks, Bristol BS4 3AS. We are happy to consider candidates based outside Bristol/South West who can work remotely 2 days a week with 3 days a week in Bristol.

Salary Band: £32,000 - £35,000 / Pension Scheme / 23 days' annual leave per annum plus bank holidays and working days between Christmas and New Year.

Contract: Full-time, permanent

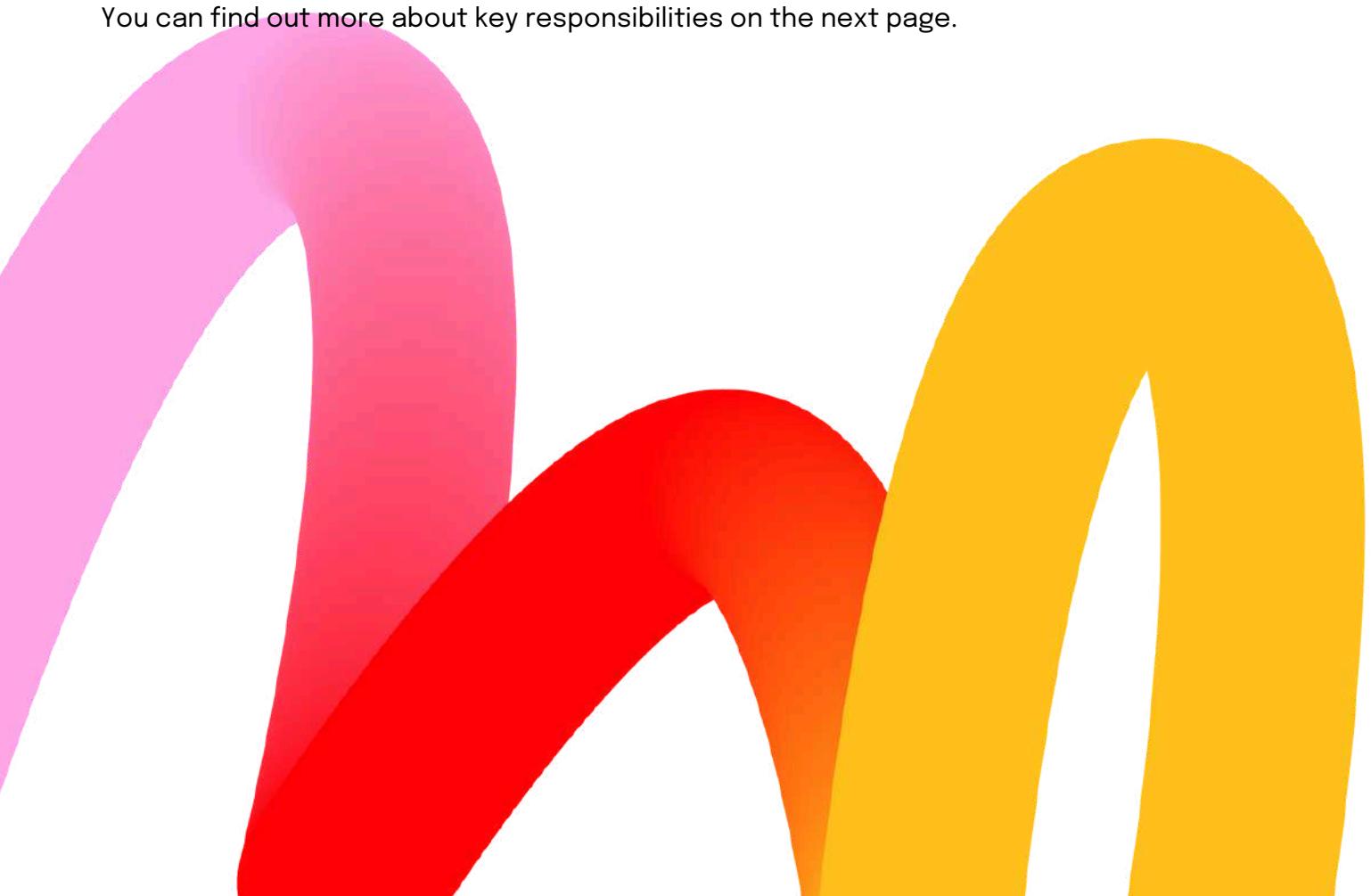
Reports to: Head of Engagement

Role to start: April - June 2026

Scope

The Programme and Orchestras team are responsible for the planning and delivery of all NCO activity: Weeks, Weekends, Days, our extensive auditions process and new Wider Access and Partnerships activities. This recruitment is for a Programme & Orchestras Manager who will lead on NCO's Days and Wider Access and Partnership programmes. This includes but is not limited to Orchestral Days, Schools Concerts, Student Placements, Side by Side Projects and Audience Development projects. They will also support the annual programme of auditioned activity alongside the two existing Orchestra Managers. They will deliver activity across the UK with evening, weekend and school holiday working required. They will work with the Head of Engagement on the creative development of activity and long-term planning.

You can find out more about key responsibilities on the next page.



Key Responsibilities

- Lead on planning and logistics of NCOs wider access and partnership project activity including booking, contracting and communicating with freelance musicians and artists
- Work closely with Programme and Orchestras team and Head of Engagement to set timelines, schedule activity and manage expenditure in budgets
- Communicate with partnering organisations and stakeholders about activity (partners include Music Education Hubs, Schools, Trusts, Venues, Grassroot and Social Impact Organisations)
- Lead orchestral/event management of activity across NCOs programmes as required- includes residential, rehearsals, online sessions, workshops, public concerts, sharings and schools based activity
- Create detailed project briefs and documentation for use by Communications, Development and Freelance teams
- Work closely with Communications team on recruitment for Orchestral Days and Student Placements
- Work with Librarian to coordinate music for activity
- Administration of participants data in advance of activity – creating orchestra lists and providing data to inform delivery plans
- Provide project and event management support in the planning and delivery of NCO's online programme
- Provide support towards NCO's annual auditions process alongside the Programme and Orchestras and Communications teams
- Plan and deliver, with the Programme and Orchestras team, training and briefings for NCO administrative and freelance teams, engaging trainers and specialists as required
- Process invoices in line with the budget ensuring all transactions are correctly coded
- Contribute towards operational systems and processes that improve the experience for children and young people and their families and/or organisational efficiencies including our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system, Beacon
- Any other duties required by NCO

4. Who we are looking for

Someone with the following:

- Passion for the transformative power of orchestral music making for all young people.
- An ability to think creatively, be innovative and take initiative
- Interest and enthusiasm for working with children, young people and musicians
- Proven ability to work effectively under pressure with professionalism and good humour
- Demonstrable knowledge and understanding of the orchestral and music education sectors
- An understanding of and commitment to promoting equity, diversity and inclusion in all NCO's work
- An understanding of safeguarding concerns for organisations working with children and young people
- The ability to work collaboratively and communicate effectively with a wide range of stakeholders
- Exceptional organisational and administrative skills with an ability to create and maintain effective processes
- Experience of using standard Microsoft IT packages (Excel, Word etc.) and experience of working with a range of operational systems (CRM systems, websites, databases, applications, digital platforms e.g. Zoom etc.)

You may also have:

- Experience of working with sensitive data and knowledge of GDPR
- Experience of working with CRM databases
- First Aid training
- Full driving licence



5. Safeguarding

NCO is committed to safeguarding and protecting the children in our programme. We ensure that our organisation has a range of policies and procedures in place so that we can do everything possible to safeguard our members. Applicants should possess relevant enhanced DBS documentation or be willing to undergo a new check with NCO.

[You can read NCO's Safeguarding Policy on our website.](#)

6. Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

[You can read NCO's Equality Statement on our website.](#)

We are committed to being an Equal Opportunities employer and attracting diverse talent from sections of the community currently underrepresented in the culture sector to help us to develop a more diverse workforce.

[Please fill in this anonymous equal opportunities form before completing your application.](#)



7. How to Apply

[All applications must be submitted using this application form.](#)

You can find the application questions listed below to allow you to prepare them in advance, but you do need to complete the form to apply for the role. You will also need to supply the names and contact details for two references.

- 1. In place of a cover letter, please use this space to tell us a bit more about why you want to work at NCO and what attracts you to this role (500 words max.)*
- 2. Please refer to the 'Key Responsibilities' and tell us how your skills and experience meet the responsibilities outlined (500 words max.)*
- 3. Please refer to the 'We are looking' for section and provide evidence of how your personal attributes, skills and experience meet the criteria. (500 words max.)*
- 4. Please use this space to succinctly list your work experience and education history in chronological order.*
- 5. Please detail your relevant qualifications and any other training you have undertaken.*
- 6. If you have any gaps in your work experience or education and would like to let us know, you can tell us about them here or at interview. (optional)*

If you would like to talk to us about this role before you apply, please email Tamsin Oldham (Head of Engagement) t.oldham@nco.org.uk.

Deadline: Friday 13th March at 9am

First Round Interviews w.c. 23rd March, in person in Bristol

Second Round Interviews (if needed) tbc