

Riverside

THEATRE



Welcome

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Volunteer at the Riverside Theatre.

We are currently looking for friendly and approachable people to join our busy front of house, education and community outreach teams in a variety of roles.

The Riverside Theatre has been operating for over 40 years and believes everyone's lives can be enriched through quality arts and cultural experiences.

Along with this handbook, you will receive information about your specific role, and the opportunity to learn more about the Riverside through our induction training. We hope this handbook helps make your experience volunteering with the Riverside easier and more enjoyable.

To be considered for one of our volunteer roles, please complete the application form at the end of this pack.

We look forward to receiving your application and a huge thank you for choosing to volunteer with us and we hope you enjoy your experience with us and find it as exciting and rewarding as we do!

Roseanne Sturgeon
Theatre Manager

About our organisation

The Riverside Theatre is Northern Ireland's oldest operating theatre outside of Belfast, celebrating 40 years operating in 2017.

Set on the busy Ulster University campus in Coleraine, the theatre serves not only the staff and student population but the wide reaching Causeway Coast & Glens community with a 140,000 + population. This geographically stunning location includes UNESCO World Heritage site, the Giant's Causeway, and attracts substantial visitors and tourists into the area and venue annually.



The venue welcomes some 30,000 children and adults annually through a varied programme of drama, comedy, music and art. Volunteers are integral to the smooth running of Riverside, and through a wide range of volunteer roles, you can also expect to make new friends, learn new skills and enrich the lives of others through quality cultural experiences.

Riverside Staff Team:

*Theatre Manager	Roseanne Sturgeon
Box Office & Marketing Manager	Roisin Daley
*Theatre Assistant	Rose McCloskey
*Event, Sales & Customer Services Assistant	Shaun Kelly (Volunteer Co-Ordinator)
Technical Manager	Megan Sheeran

***All the above staff members may act as Duty Manager during front of house shifts.**

How we support you

We want to make sure that you enjoy your role and get the most out of it.

Our commitment to our volunteers, we will:

- Always treat you with respect, consideration and appreciation
- Ensure you have a clear idea of your responsibilities, including the length of time we would like you to be involved in a project.
- Give you information about the training and support available to help you carry out your role.
- Provide you with support through regular meetings or discussions (the format will depend on your role)
- Offer you fair, honest and timely feedback on your work.
- Update you on how your work has made a difference.

Induction/ Training

We want to ensure that you feel happy and confident to carry out your role. As a Riverside volunteer, and so you will be taken through this handbook as an induction with our Volunteer Co-Ordinator, asked to attend formal training sessions and directed to all relevant Ulster University's policies and procedures associated with your volunteer role (i.e. Fire Evacuation Procedures/ Cash Handling etc. – provided by Volunteer Co-Ordinator)

Support

You will receive ongoing support from our Volunteer Co-Ordinator. As part of your development, please make a note of how each task you carried out went, what you did and if there were any issues that arose. Most volunteers will have a review meeting annually, but the frequency of these will vary depending on the nature of your role and your time commitment. The review meeting, in person or by phone, will focus on how the role is going, what support you need and, if necessary, update you on what is happening at Riverside. It should be an opportunity for volunteers and staff to raise issues and for you to talk constructively about your involvement with us.

Social Events

Throughout the year, a number of free social events will be held for volunteers. Most of these events will be free to attend. Please ask Volunteer Co-Ordinator for more information.

Discounts

You will be entitled to discounts on tickets, drinks and food bought at any of the facilities in the theatre. These discounts will be allowed both when on duty and when visiting the theatre to see a performance. The discount, however, will only be applied to yourself and no other member of your party. Our Volunteer Co-Ordinator will advise on the various discounts available for you during induction.

Volunteer Records and Data Protection

The Riverside holds volunteer details and work records to document the contribution made by volunteers, for insurance purposes and for health and safety purposes. The Riverside adheres to Ulster University's Data Protection Legislation. With your permission, we may use the data to keep you informed of other news and activities concerning the Riverside Theatre, however we will not pass on your information to third parties without your specific permission. If any of your details change, it is important that you update our Volunteer Co-Ordinator with your new information. You can also contact us directly at any time to ensure that we have your up to date details. If you have volunteered for some time, we may occasionally ask you to sign an updated Data Protection statement to confirm that we can continue to hold your details, as required by the University's data protection auditors.

Some volunteer roles will require an Access NI check to inform Riverside management of any criminal convictions that a person wishing to volunteer may have, this is most often in relation to our regulated activity with children or vulnerable adults. There is also the option to opt out of a check in the acceptance of the terms & conditions below.

Front of House Volunteer Roles

Usher

The usher's first and most important role is to ensure and maintain the customer's safety above all else. You should always consider the safety implications of all your actions. Secondly, it is to make the customer's visit to the theatre as enjoyable as possible. You may be the only representative of the theatre that they will encounter directly.

Role Description:

- To enhance and enrich the theatregoing experience for our patrons.
- To provide additional frontline support to the Duty Manager.
- To encourage ancillary sales.
- To act as Ambassadors for the theatre, encourage positive word of mouth for the shows staged and thus have a positive impact on ticket sales.

Main Duties:

- Arrive 45 minutes to your shift before an event starts.
- To check the seating area and evacuation routes are kept clear of any obstacles.
- To check customers have the correct ticket for that performance.
- To direct customers in/out of the theatre and to the appropriate facilities before, during and after each performance in a friendly and efficient manner.
- To assist disabled patrons to their seats.
- To assist in delivering excellent customer service to all patrons.
- To ensure the theatre operates within the boundaries of health & safety during each performance (as directed by the Duty Manager).
- To supervise the audience during a performance taking reporting any incidents to Duty Manager where necessary.
- To act as an evacuation marshal, assisting to ensure that patrons vacate the building in a safe and timely fashion.
- To maintain good working relationships with all persons associated with the Riverside Theatre and its operations, demonstrating high standards of professionalism at all times.
- To promote and comply with all Ulster University policies and procedures.
- To embrace and adhere to the Brand Values of the Ulster University.
- Any other duties as advised by the Duty Manager.

What we expect from you

Dress & Code of conduct

Usher uniform is not compulsory, however branded t-shirts are available and volunteers encouraged to wear them; however, volunteers are expected to be smartly presented and wear a Riverside Volunteer lanyard to identify themselves to patrons. No sportswear or logos permitted.

It is expected that you behave with professionalism and dignity at all times. You will from time to time come into contact with well known public figures. You must not approach Artists for autographs or photograph's or become distracted away from your duties.

Volunteers are not permitted to consume alcohol during their working volunteer shift.

Arrival Times & Attendance

The Volunteer Co-Ordinator devises monthly rotas and will be in touch regularly to check availability and book in your volunteer shifts, you can also email your availability to the Volunteer Co-Ordinator regularly at s.kelly1@ulster.ac.uk

You are required to be ready to start for any performance or event **45 mins** before the show/ event commences. It is essential that you are punctual – not only does this affect the safety and duties of your colleagues but also the safety of the audience and participants. Please note University Car Parking is free weekdays after 7pm and all weekend.

Please report to **Front of House/ Box office area** to collect your volunteer lanyard and be ready to start your role. The Duty Manager will tell you the position that you have been allocated for the event. There are always members of public in the building and a sense of decorum is required at all times. Consider your conduct; mind your volume and your language.

⇒ The Duty Manager will sign you in on arrival and leave all your personal belongings in the secure area behind Box Office. Do not take handbags,

mobile phones etc. with you into the auditorium.
 ⇒ Please conclude any personal business prior to arrival.

In the event of poor volunteer attendance /performance, the Theatre will inform the Volunteer of its concern in writing and request improvement within a reasonable timeframe. Non-attendance at three performance shifts without adequate notice or reason will result in immediate end in agreement.

If there is an emergency, and you are cancelling at short notice, please ring the Volunteer Co –Coordinator immediately on **028 7012 3123** or email: s.kelly1@ulster.ac.uk (ideally by close of business (5pm) on the volunteer shift day.)

Briefing

The Duty Manager's will give volunteers a quick brief at the start of their shift- that will contain some or all of the following information:

- Show running times
- Number in the audience
- Number of wheelchair patrons and the location.
- Whether photography may be taken during a performance
- Any special effects e.g. pyros, strobe lighting etc.
- Any special guests in the audience e.g. Mayor
- Latecomer procedure.
- Whether performers will be coming on or off the stage or using the auditorium as part of the performance.
- Evacuation practice.

Once you have had all the information relevant to the performance, the Duty Manager will then wait for clearance from the Riverside Technical staff. Once the manager has clearance you will be instructed to go to your allocated positions and open the house for the public to start taking their seats. This will usually happen half an hour before curtain up.

⇒ After briefing try to ask as the Duty Manager as many relevant questions as possible.

⇒ This is an opportunity to raise any issues that you may have come across with the duty manager i.e. lights out and hazards.

Usher Positions

You will be asked to take position at one of the auditorium doors where you will be greeting and checking tickets and showing patrons to their seats.

There are two doors into the auditorium.

In the Lower ground entry to the front rows and two either side of the Box office (check door signage for clarity on row numbers)

Pre show checks

Please report to the Duty Manager when you come to front of house. Then you can proceed to check your area that you have been allocated.

As part of your duties you must check that all foyers, staircases, lobbies are open, clean, tidy and safe in your allocated area.

Enter the auditorium and check for the same hazards and issues in your allocated areas.

Check that all areas are clearly lit, as they should be. It is essential that any problems be discovered as early as possible. After checking with the Duty Manager that no other tasks need to be attended to, check that the doors are closed.

Deal with any problem you encounter where possible or report to the Duty Manager immediately. For outstanding problems that cannot be dealt with from Front of House, log the issue with the Duty Manager.

Wait quietly in the auditorium for the Duty Manager to give the relevant show details.

Opening Auditorium & Seating Patrons

When everything is ready for the auditorium doors to be opened, the Technical staff will make an announcement.

Once the technical staff have made the announcement that the House (Auditorium) is open (usually half an hour before the show), the following is undertaken:

1. Open your doors.
2. Greet all patrons and make them feel welcome. Don't forget to ask them if they would like a programme (if on sale).
3. Tickets must be checked.
4. Direct each patron to their seat with clear and explicit instruction.
5. The doors must remain open until the Duty Manager gives the cue to release them or the performance begins.
6. Do not eat or drink whilst at your door.
7. If you have to leave your door, make sure that your position is covered by a fellow volunteer or that you have informed the Duty Manager.

The only valid ways of entering the auditorium are as follows:

1. A valid ticket (showing a printed value and seat number) either on our printed ticket stock or 'E tickets' via the online booking system, which will either be printed at home or shown to you on a smart phone.
2. Members of staff wearing their name badge. Again, the Theatre Manager will allocate a seat.

Patrons are not allowed to bring drinks in a glass container into the auditorium, but are allowed to enter with drinks including alcohol as long as it is in a plastic bottle or cup.

Patrons who have bulky items such as large back packs will need to leave the item in the cloak stands in the foyer and cannot take them into the auditorium.

Prams, push chairs, or any other such devices cannot be taken into the auditorium for fire regulations, but can be stored in areas of the foyer, ask the Duty Manager for guidance.

Wheelchair patrons who have booked wheelchair positions can take their wheelchairs into the auditorium.

Checking Tickets:

When checking tickets make sure to lead customers to correct seating and always check the following...

- ⇒ the show title
- ⇒ the date
- ⇒ the time of performance
- ⇒ the right venue
- ⇒ the row and seat number

If there is a double booking problem, check all of the above information carefully before getting the Duty Manager involved. If all of the above are identical on both sets of tickets, the duty manager should be called immediately. (See below).

While you are waiting for the Duty Manager to arrive:

- ⇒ Do not under any circumstances suggest that the unseated patron sit in another unoccupied seat as this will result in more confusion if those tickets have been sold.
- ⇒ Both parties should be treated with respect and sympathy at all times.

During the performance:

During the performance please remember all that was said in the briefing and supervise the audience appropriately. For example, if photo and filming is not allowed then please stop anyone taking photos or recording the performance (this includes mobile phones).

Official Recording Equipment & Cameras: Video cameras are **never** allowed in the venue without official permission from both the management and the company performing.

You will be informed if this has happened. If you have not been informed, assume that permission has **not** been granted and inform the Duty Manager immediately if you suspect someone is videoing a performance. Likewise, flash photography is generally not permitted, although there are more exceptions to this rule. If a company

are particularly strict in this area you will be informed at the pre-show briefing. Wherever possible a pre-show announcement will be made.

Also during the performance you should supervise the audience and react appropriately, making sure people do not talk or disrupt the performance. If any Patrons continually ignore you then get the Duty Manager who will deal with the situation.

If there are any problems with the performance you must inform the Duty Manager at once. For example sound issues or auditorium temperature.

Interval:

The auditorium doors are **not** to be opened until the house lights are up. Once you have opened your doors, please carry out any duties that you have been assigned. Remaining volunteers should be vigilant as to any assistance they can offer to patrons. Patrons are not permitted to take any glass or glass bottles into the auditorium. It is important to watch out for patrons wandering in with glass items. Volunteers must collect plastic cups from the bar at the start of the interval and have them ready to assist patrons at the auditorium doors. You must politely ask that they transfer their drink into a plastic cup.

At the end of the interval the Duty Manager will be present in the auditorium to give clearance to the technical crew and hand over the house. The Duty Manager will then advise the crew giving 'clearance' and then nod to the usher staff to close the doors. You must wait for this signal from the Duty Manager or when the lights go down before releasing and closing the doors.

End of performance:

Ushers will be expected to stay 10 minutes after the show and should position themselves by the auditorium exits or at points throughout the auditorium where they may be available to assist any patrons with difficulties and ensure the swift movement of the audience out of the auditorium.

Under no circumstances should Ushers leave the auditorium or begin removing litter if there are still members of the public in the auditorium.

Once all patrons have left:

- Ensure **all** doors to the auditorium including fire exits are closed.
- Check your area for lost property. If you find any, hand over to the Duty Manager.
- After a matinee performance, if there is another performance following, remove litter from auditorium, collecting up the bin bags and leaving them all together in the designated area for the Duty Manager to take out.

Once this is all completed, Ushers should report back to Duty Manager for debriefing and any other business inside the auditorium. Once this is all done the Duty Manager will let you leave.

Education & Outreach Volunteers

The Riverside also offers a number of bespoke Volunteer roles within its education and outreach department.

Riverside Youth Theatre Assistant

About the project:

The Riverside Youth Theatre runs various workshops throughout the year allowing children and young people to explore, discover, learn, experiment and collaborate with professional facilitators through a range of theatre arts in a safe workshop environment. Through the performing arts, the Riverside strongly believes that every child and young person can discover vital communication and presentation skills and confidence that will help them develop into adulthood.

Role Description:

Youth Theatre Assistants are responsible for creating a positive, safe, supportive and encouraging environment for children and young people to develop, take risks and flourish. This position is suited to an enthusiastic person with a demonstrable interest in creating theatre with young people. Youth Theatre Assistants will help deliver high quality, exciting and productive sessions during term time, while striving to better their own working practice with mentoring and training sessions provided by the Riverside Theatre management team.

Main Duties:

- To help facilitate workshops throughout the academic year arranged via Theatre Manager.
- To foster sound professional relationships with members and their parents/guardians.
- To actively engage with the training and mentoring opportunities arranged with the Riverside management team.
- Ensuring compliance with all Ulster University's policies and procedures, including Health & Safety, Child Protection and Financial Conduct.



Fighting Words Creative Writing Project

About the project:

This project welcomes school groups and community youth groups to the venue for a two-hour story-writing workshop. Arriving with nothing but their imaginations, they leave as published writers!

In the first half of the workshop, the group collaborates to create the beginning of a story and in the second half, they write their own individual endings. Each child leaves with their own personalised book containing the group's beginning and their own individual ending.

The workshop structure is developed for primary, post-primary, community and family groups.

A typical workshop for 6 – 13 year old children might look like this:

Each workshop is unique, but they all follow the same basic structure, outlined below.

1. Volunteers arrive half an hour before the workshop begins for a briefing session. Volunteers are assigned roles and given relevant information about the expected group including age range, number of participants, and any special learning needs of participants.
2. Participants arrive, are welcomed and receive a name badge.
3. The story maker introduces the task ahead and facilitates a warm-up game.
4. The story maker facilitates the group in writing the beginning of a story, assisted by the scribe, who records ideas on the flipchart. A vote is conducted between each round of ideas to select details for the story. The volunteer illustrator begins to create illustrations based on the story.
5. Participants move to sit at tables to work on their story with the help of writing mentors.
6. Participants are invited to share their work. During this time, the storybooks are printed and bound.

7. The volunteer illustrator finishes their illustrations and they are shown to the group.
8. The story maker presents participants with their storybooks, which are distributed by volunteers.
9. Participants collect their belongings and leave the workshop space.
10. Volunteers and staff have thirty-minute debriefing session, recording observations in the volunteer observation book, sharing experiences of the workshop and reflecting on ways of improving in the future.

Volunteer roles within this project:

Writing Mentor

Role description:

Writing mentors are a crucial part of our workshops, giving individual attention to children and young people to help them develop their writing.

- Listening to participants' ideas
- Encouraging participants to use their imaginations, emphasising the importance of creativity
- Supporting participants in developing their ideas
- Giving constructive feedback on participants' work
- Assisting in the setting up, running and clearing away at designated events
- On-site implementation of Health & Safety and Child Protection policies in accordance with induction
- Volunteers will report directly to Fighting Words Belfast staff

Main Duties:

1. Listen carefully and be patient. The most important things are the words, ideas and opinions of the child, so avoid superimposing your own onto their work.
2. Be positive! Read or listen to their work and offer comments and praise regarding specific parts. This can boost a child's confidence and encourage them to continue with their writing.
3. Focus on imagination and originality, rather than spelling, grammar or how much is written. Whilst these are important, the focus is on encouraging participants to come up with a story and put it down on paper. Editing and redrafting come later. We are not aiming for a perfectly polished piece of writing on the first attempt.
4. Encourage expansion and reflection by asking open questions, such as:

- What is your favourite part of the story so far?
 - What does it look like when that happens?
 - How does that character feel when that happens?
 - What do you think that character would do next?
 - Have you ever felt like that? What did you do?
 - Where is your story set? Where might your characters go next?
 - Do you want your story to end happily, sadly or at a cliffhanger? Why?
5. Ensure that participants understand the task. Remind the child that they can take the story in whatever direction they wish – as the writer; they have full control over their story. Ask “What would you like to see happen?”
 6. If a child is struggling to write but has plenty of ideas, offer to scribe for them. Take it in turns to write, or write for a few minutes before encouraging them to take over. Make sure that you write only their words and avoid the temptation to add your own ideas.
 7. If a child is confident and happy to work independently, do not feel you have to talk to them. Remind them that you are there if they need you, check in occasionally and ask them how they found the session when it is nearing a close. Equally, if one child requires more attention than the others, do not worry about giving it to them. Check in with the rest of the group regularly and remind them that you are still available if they need your help.
 8. Encourage whole group of paired discussion if you feel they will benefit from hearing different ideas, but give a time limit. Encourage children to read their own work aloud, or to read each other's work.
 9. Relax and enjoy yourself! Being comfortable with the participants and responding authentically to their stories is the most valuable thing you can do.

Story-maker

Role Description:

The story maker facilitates the group work part of the workshop session. This role can be carried out jointly with another volunteer.

- Welcoming participants and explaining the task and format of the workshop
- Introducing the other volunteers
- Soliciting ideas and guiding students through the story-writing process
- Directing the typist in order to create the beginning of a story
- Encouraging participants to share their work
- Assisting in the setting up, running and clearing away at designated events
- On-site implementation of Health & Safety and Child Protection policies in accordance with induction
- Volunteers will report directly to Fighting Words Belfast staff

Personal attributes required:

- Inventiveness and quick thinking
- Ability to guide participants through the story-writing process
- Be aware of and responsive to all participant suggestions
- Ability to engage participants and keep focus on task
- A committed and reliable team player
- Able to be proactive and take initiative when required
- Flexible, open-minded and adaptable, a quick and calm thinker
- Appreciative of the rights of children and young people
- Trustworthy and honest
- Interest in and enthusiasm for the arts
- Commitment to induction, training and developing new skills

Illustrator

Role Description:

The illustrator brings story to life visually by creating A3 illustrations to accompany the beginning of the story.

- Provide illustrations that compliment the story written during group work
- Assist in the setting up, running and clearing away at designated events
- On-site implementation of Health & Safety and Child Protection policies in accordance with induction
- Engage with participants and offer encouragement and support
- Volunteers will report directly to Fighting Words Belfast staff

Personal attributes required:

- Experience in drawing
- Confidence in transforming words into images
- Ability to work under time pressure
- A committed and reliable team player
- Able to be proactive and take initiative when required
- Flexible, open-minded and adaptable, a quick and calm thinker
- Appreciative of the rights of children and young people
- Trustworthy and honest
- Interest in and enthusiasm for the arts
- Commitment to induction, training and developing new skills

Workshop Helper (Scribe/ Typist)

Role Description:

Workshop helpers make the experience more enjoyable for the participants and contribute to the smooth running of the session.

- Setting up the workshop space
- Welcoming participants, providing name tags
- Typing the story as it is created by participants
- Assisting with the distribution of story books
- On-site implementation of Health & Safety and Child Protection policies in accordance with induction

Volunteers will report directly to Fighting Words Belfast staff.

Personal attributes required:

- Personal attributes
- Ability to work well with others
- Adaptable
- Ability to use own initiative
- Interest in and enthusiasm for the creative endeavours of children and young people
- A committed and reliable team player
- Able to be proactive and take initiative when required
- Flexible, open-minded and adaptable, a quick and calm thinker
- Appreciative of the rights of children and young people
- Trustworthy and honest
- Interest in and enthusiasm for the arts
- Commitment to induction, training and developing new skills
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Acceptance of terms & conditions

As a civic organisation, Riverside encompass both paid and voluntary staff. The theatre has a duty of care towards all staff and will provide a full induction and training for volunteer staff. All staff, whether volunteer or paid fall within Ulster University's equal opportunities policy.

As a licensed public venue some staff are required to undertake a standard disclosure CRB (Criminal Records Bureau) check. * Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

Please tick if you do not wish to be checked

Due to Health and Safety Regulations, we have to be able to provide proof that all our staff are fully conversant with the Emergency procedures that operate in the Riverside Theatre.

Please could you sign this page and return it to the Volunteer Co-Ordinator.

I confirm that I have received a copy of the Volunteer Hand Book and have acquainted myself with the information contained herein:

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: _____

Date: _____

Application Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Tick here if you are happy to be added on the Riverside emailing list to be contacted about other events and activities at the venue and University campus outside of your volunteer role.

Please briefly state which volunteer role (or roles) you would like to apply for and why?

Please give details of your employment status at the moment.

Do you have any previous experience of working with the public? Please give details

Do you have experience handling money? Please list below

What do you think you could bring in terms of skills as a volunteer?

As you are working with the general public, Riverside would like to take character references.

Please give the names of two referees.

1.Name	Address	Telephone Number
2. Name	Address	Telephone Number

May Riverside contact your referees at this stage? YES / NO

MANY THANKS FOR TAKING THE TIME TO FILL IN THIS APPLICATION FORM.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO **SHAUN KELLY, VOLUNTEER CO-ORDINATOR, RIVERSIDE THEATRE, ULSTER UNIVERSITY. CROMORE ROAD, COLERAINE, BT52 1SA**
or email to: s.kelly1@ulster.ac.uk