

National Theatre

14 April 2025

NATIONAL THEATRE SKILLS CENTRE WILL TURBOCHARGE SKILLS NATIONWIDE WITH NEW BANK OF AMERICA PARTNERSHIP



The National Theatre today announces a major new partnership with Bank of America to turbocharge skills training for the creative industries. With the country and the creative sector in particular facing an urgent skills shortage, the National Theatre Skills Centre develops future artists, craftspeople and technicians through specialist skills programmes delivered nationwide.

As lead partner for the National Theatre Skills Centre, Bank of America's support will accelerate the nationwide expansion of engagement, skills development, career support, and entry-level to mid-career training programs. Together, we will now reach 15,000 individuals over the next three years.

New plans for the National Theatre Skills Centre unveiled today include:

- A new flagship programme to develop creative talent from backgrounds which are often underrepresented within the theatre industry. This transformative initiative will offer **paid production placements** on every South Bank show starting in September 2025, providing individuals the unique opportunity to work alongside the National Theatre's world-class creative teams and in-house technical experts.
- **Nationwide Young Technicians** will double the number of young people taking part in free training of technical theatre including lighting, sound and stages, via an online course for 50 young people from across the UK, and by creating five new partnerships to co-deliver the programme in person nationwide.
- **New craft, design and technical courses** and brand-new courses in Prop Making, Costume, and Design for Stage coming over the next 12 months at the National Theatre to expand the number of work placement opportunities at the National across the full range of disciplines including creative, technical and business.
- Growing the number of **Production Arts T-Level placements and apprentices** to support talented individuals in areas where there are sector skills gaps, such as Scenic Art, Metalwork, Costume and Props.
- To coincide with **Creative Careers Week** in November, over 150 state secondary school students from across Greater London will be invited to attend demonstrations, workshops and hands-on activity, delivered by the National Theatre's expert teams, to learn about technical, production, design and craft roles.

The creative industries are one of the eight growth driving sectors the Government will prioritise in its Industrial Strategy. However, data from DCMS shows 30% of job vacancies in the cultural sector are affected by skills shortages, with 60% of theatres reporting that staff shortages have worsened since 2019. Moreover, research from Ravensbourne University found that 75% of 18–25-year-olds want to work in creative sectors, but 42% say it is currently too hard to find entry-level opportunities.

To address these major sector challenges, the National Theatre Skills Centre, in partnership with Bank of America, will provide career opportunities for young people and those seeking specialist professional development, offering them the opportunity to work with industry-leading experts at the National Theatre and nationwide through local partnerships. Central to the Skills Centre aims are addressing underrepresentation in the workforce prioritising those from the Global Majority, D/deaf and disabled, and those who have experienced socio-economic disadvantage.

The National Theatre is the largest employer in the not-for-profit theatre sector, and a skills incubator for the entire creative industries. Central London's largest theatre factory, the

National Theatre employs 2,200 people every year. Its learning activity is delivered in every Local Authority in England, and 90% of State Secondary Schools are signed up to the NT Collection to inspire learning within the classroom. The organisation's commitment to training the next generation of theatre makers supports a strong pipeline of future creative talent with specialist skills. To date 90% of apprentices trained at the NT have gone on to be employed in the sector.

Kate Varah, Executive Director and Co-Chief Executive of the National Theatre, said: *"With the creative industries generating £126 billion in gross value added to the UK economy annually (greater than the life sciences, aerospace and automotive sectors combined), the sector is a powerhouse of growth, innovation, and global influence. However, this contribution is at risk if the skills shortage is not addressed as a matter of urgency. We can't fix this problem on our own which is why I am delighted about this new iteration of our partnership with Bank of America. Bank of America have been a crucial and longstanding supporter of the National Theatre, and this partnership truly demonstrates how public organisations can work hand in hand with corporate partners to strengthen the arts sector and unlock opportunities for people all over the country."*

Andrea Sullivan, International Executive, Head of Social and Environment Group at Bank of America, said: *"The National Theatre Skills Centre, in partnership with Bank of America, plays a vital role in shaping the future of the creative industries, which is why we are delighted to partner on this important initiative. The UK has an illustrious cultural legacy of encouraging artists, progressive thinkers, and creatives, but it is failing to meet the skilling needs of the next generation and requires material investment."*

"Through this three-year, UK-wide commitment, we hope to help equip young artists, craftspeople and technicians with the skills needed to find gainful employment in their creative field. By fostering talent and nurturing the potential of individuals, we will ignite innovation and develop an ecosystem where skilling transforms industries."

Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Lisa Nandy, said: *"Partnerships like this are so important for our cultural and creative sectors, helping to open up opportunities and drive growth. We want to break down barriers to entering careers in our world-leading creative industries by ensuring that young people across the country are able to have access to skills and training. This partnership between the National Theatre and Bank of America is a perfect example of how, by working together, we can create opportunities and give young people the experiences they need to kick start a rewarding career in the cultural and creative industries."*

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Notes to Editors

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About the National Theatre

The National Theatre makes theatre that entertains and inspires using its creativity, expertise and unique reach. The National Theatre shares unforgettable stories with millions of audience members across the UK and around the world – on its own stages, on tour, in schools, on cinema screens and streaming at home.

World-leading artists make their best work at the National Theatre with the widest possible audience and impact. The National Theatre invests in talent and innovation on stage and off, taking seriously its role as the nation's theatre. Of the new productions developed each year with a wide range of theatre companies, a third of that research and development resource is dedicated to shows staged at theatres outside London.

Through touring our work to local theatres and schools and nationwide education and community programmes, we are active in every local authority in the UK. A registered charity with deeply embedded social purpose, the National Theatre works with hundreds of schools and communities across the UK to fire imagination and inspire creativity, and to develop skills and pathways for careers in theatre.

For more information, please visit nationaltheatre.org.uk