

## Nicola Hollinshead

Applied theatre practitioner/Community project manager

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Founder/Director – Islington People’s Theatre CIC

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### Professional Profile

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- An innovative, inspirational and engaging applied theatre practitioner and drama facilitator, I have over 10 years’ experience in a variety of drama training and facilitation roles.
- A confident, motivating and assertive communicator, I have well-developed interpersonal and leadership skills and have been responsible for designing, delivering and evaluating a wide range of effective projects and have delivered in a variety of challenging environments, including prisons.
- Accustomed to performing a broad range of tasks under pressurised conditions, I am committed to delivering the highest level of training, development and learning support. Additionally, I have directing, producing, project management skills and excellent organisational and administrative skills.

### Employment History

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2021

**Applied theatre practitioner – Lead facilitator**

**Leeds University, Arts & Humanities Outreach**

**‘Skill Up in Theatre and Performance’, Leeds University’s Arts and Humanities Outreach Team**

- Delivering a devising applied theatre session with Year 12 participants, part of a four-week project
- Looking at ways to create theatre from a variety of sources
- Exploring the many approaches to delivering a devised piece
- Directing short devised pieces to show back on screen

2020-21 (ongoing)

**Applied Theatre Practitioner - Co-facilitator**

**Southwark Playhouse**

**Delivering weekly online sessions with participants with a diagnosis of early onset dementia, using applied theatre and drama practice.**

- Delivering weekly one-hour sessions (online on zoom) in blocks of eight weeks over 12 months, with adults with early onset dementia and their carers using a range of applied theatre participatory practice with weekly learning outcomes
- Working alongside a co-facilitator to support and develop creativity, confidence building, self-expression and well-being amongst participants
- Developing work in the sessions into a devised piece of work if the process directs the group towards that as an outcome

2020

**Applied Theatre Practitioner - Co-facilitator**

**Safe Ground**

**Co-facilitating the delivery of the three-day personal development programme ‘Our Own Stories’ with women with experience of the Criminal Justice System, in conjunction with the women’s charity Advance.**

- Co-facilitating the applied based programme ‘Our Own Stories’, a creative personal development for women, offering them space and structure to reflect on, learn from and plan for, moments of transition and transformation in their lives.
- Directing a short showing, devised by the women for Advance staff the host organisation and Safe Ground staff, at the culmination of the three-day programme

2020

**Applied Theatre Practitioner - Co-facilitator**

**Southwark Playhouse/Arts4 Dementia**

**Working on a new project with Southwark Playhouse ‘Muse of Fire’, in conjunction with Arts4Dementia & the NHS, this will be a pilot project across 2020 for adults with early onset dementia and their carers – part of the ‘Social prescribing’ outreach work being implemented within the arts and dementia field.**

- Delivering weekly two-hour sessions, in blocks of eight weeks over 12 months, with adults with early onset dementia and their carers using a range of applied theatre participatory practice with weekly learning outcomes
- Working alongside a co-facilitator to support and develop creativity, confidence building, self-expression and well-being amongst participants
- Developing work in the sessions into a devised piece of work if the process directs the group towards that as an outcome

2017 to 2018

Reading Rep Theatre

**Community Participation Officer & Applied Theatre Practitioner – Lead facilitator**

Community Participation Officer for Reading Rep Theatre's 'Engage' programme. This role involved delivering applied theatre sessions at Abbeyfield Dementia care home, Elizabeth Fry approved premises and Iris Treatment Centre, based in the Reading area. I also conducted outreach work for all projects within the Engage programme to generate data for the evaluation template. Additionally, with assistance from an external evaluator, I researched, created and implemented a new evaluation template for the project.

**Elizabeth Fry Approved Premises, Reading, Berkshire**

- Delivered weekly applied theatre sessions with women on parole over a period of 18 months
- Developed a new project 'Confidence Building Through Creativity' to work with the women
- Evaluated the work done with the women for the final evaluation template

**Iris Treatment Centre. Reading, Berkshire**

- Delivered weekly applied theatre sessions with adults in recovery and addiction
- Developed a beginner's version of 'Recoverist Theatre Project' to work with the participants
- Evaluated work done with the participants for the final evaluation template

**Abbeyfield Dementia Care Home, Winnersh, Berkshire**

- Responsible for delivering bi-weekly applied theatre drama-based sessions with dementia residents
- Created and developed applied theatre and drama-based sessions working with props, song, techniques for creating poems and stories, working with text
- Mentored and trained a placement student to work as an assistant facilitator on the sessions

2018: **Applied Theatre Practitioner - Co-facilitator**

Equal Arts/Hen Power

Delivered creative arts-based sessions for dementia residents using crafts, songs, working with poetry and creating poems and stories. The role also involved working with live hens for connection, engagement and interaction.

- Working with live hens to initiate creativity, expression and communication with the participants
- Delivering crafts and arts-based sessions with the residents
- Creating and delivering sessions using applied theatre and drama processes

2018: **Applied Theatre Practitioner - Co-facilitator**

Unlock Drama, HMP Hull

Worked with male inmates convicted of violent offences on a 'Violence Reduction Project', creating a piece of devised theatre to raise awareness of the consequences of violence & the use of the drug 'spice' in prison. The 45-minute piece was performed to staff and inmates.

- Delivered a variety of applied theatre and drama-based processes including freeze frames, image theatre, improvisation and devising techniques to generate material
- Acted alongside the participants in scenes of domestic abuse and drug use created by the group
- Co-facilitator with an experienced facilitator with extensive experience of working across the prison estate

2018: **Applied Theatre Practitioner– Co-facilitator**

Arcola Theatre

Worked with over 15 participants from the over 50+ Community Theatre to create a piece of devised theatre for 'Creative Disruption Festival 2018', 'Dissenting Adults' which ran for three nights at the Arcola Theatre.

- Co-facilitator delivering weekly two-hour session over 10 weeks with adults over 50+
- Director of final piece of theatre created by the group 'Dissenting Adults'
- Project managed the final piece including managing a small project budget

### 2017: **Applied Theatre Practitioner – Lead facilitator**

### **Recoverist Theatre Project**

Created project to work with adults in recovery working in conjunction with *Action on Addiction*, Liverpool as an MA practice unit. The project was funded by the Leverhulme Foundation and ran for ten weeks, two hours a week, training participants in a variety of theatre practices including; improvisation, devising and writing monologues. 'Who Am I?' the final devised piece of theatre created by the participants, addressed issues of stigmatisation and labelling on their addiction and recovery journeys.

- Wrote and delivered ten weekly applied theatre sessions covering a range of applied theatre and drama processes
- Directed the final devised piece of theatre for showing to a small audience
- Responsible for the creation, implementation and delivery of the project, managing stakeholder relationships & small project budget

## Other Relevant Employment Experience

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### **Applied Theatre Practitioner (MA placement)**

### **Magic Me**

Project assistant on 'Decorum', an intergenerational devised theatre project with female elders from Tower Hamlets & teenage girls from local school, looking at women's 'learned behaviours' to create a piece of devised theatre. The piece had a showing at WOW Festival, Southbank, 2017.

- Supporting the project from the beginning to the final performance by undertaking a variety of creative tasks with participants
- Directing individual scenes with the participants
- Working alongside the lead facilitator to support the creative process

### **Applied Theatre Practitioner (MA placement)**

### **Outside Edge Theatre**

Delivered weekly drama training sessions with adults in recovery focusing on developing improvisation and acting skills.

- Worked alongside a participant as a co-facilitator and mentor
- Wrote and delivered weekly sessions focusing on acting skills, improvisation and devising techniques
- Evaluated work done on the placement in a formal MA case study

### **Drama Facilitator**

### **Julian Campbell Foundation**

Wrote and delivered a series of interactive drama workshops with teenage girls to raise awareness of Mental Health issues.

- Developed an interactive piece based around the book 'Mood Mapping' using drama and theatre techniques to raise awareness of MH issues
- Worked alongside a professional actor in the sessions to develop improvisation scenes based on the 'Mood Map' while engaging the participants
- Delivered the sessions as lead facilitator to groups of teenage girls to fulfil project requirements

### **Comedy & Drama Tutor**

### **Pauline Quirke Academy**

Tutor for this leading Stage school delivering weekly sessions with three age groups.

- Delivered weekly drama sessions with ages up to 16 years covering a range of drama and theatre practices and training
- Facilitated workshops based around internal programme delivering weekly required learning outcomes
- Directed a thirty-minute devised piece based of theatre around issues of bullying and peer pressure, with the 9-16-year-old age group, with a showing at the end of term to staff and parents

### **Drama Facilitator**

### **Manor Gardens Wellbeing Project**

Wrote and delivered sessions to increase confidence and creativity working with Mental Health service users and adults with special needs.

- Designed sessions specifically for beginners to drama
- Utilised creative visualisation techniques to incorporate into the drama processes

- Facilitated improvisation techniques to encourage storytelling

#### **Drama Workshop Assistant**

#### **Hammersmith & Fulham Young Offenders Scheme/Raw Material**

Working with young offenders to devise material to make a short film based on their experiences.

- Assisted experienced lead facilitator on the project
- Co-facilitated warm up games with the participants
- Assisted with administrative tasks required for the project

#### **Producer & Coordinator**

#### **Highgate Film Festival**

Recruited leading industry players to the event for four main panel events including; Film 4, C4, First Film Foundation & Skillset. Recruited and organised volunteers daily. On-line and off-line marketing, programming and first point of contact for the festival.

- Responsible for all online & offline marketing for the festival and fundraised budget for the festival
- Recruited and organised volunteers throughout the event
- Recruited leading industry players to the event and organised four main panel events

#### **Volunteer Coordinator & Director of Live Event**

#### **Raindance Film Festival**

Co-wrote and delivered the Volunteer programme for Raindance 2000, attracting over 100 volunteers to the festival.

- Created the template for the volunteer programme which was implemented throughout the festival
- Responsible for marketing and promoting the festival and the volunteer programme
- Directed an opening night 'Raindance' with dancers and drummers throughout the streets of Soho to promote the festival

#### **Assistant Director**

#### **Liverpool Playhouse Theatre**

Working alongside West End Theatre Director, Bob Thomson, on a Bill Kenwright production 'Raving Beauties'. The production had a successful extended run in the main house.

- Assisted the director daily in rehearsals on a variety of creative tasks
- Directed small sections on a 1:1 basis with individual actors working on aspects of their role
- Promoted the production, alongside the director, at local radio and press events

#### **Acting Skills Tutor & Theatre Director (full time over two years)**

#### **Seconds Out Theatre Workshop**

Acting skills tutor and theatre director on this government funded arts course with the aim of tackling unemployment in Liverpool, based at Unity Theatre, Liverpool, working with 120 participants experiencing long term unemployment. The project aim was to increase confidence and transferable skills through engaging with the arts, to help re-enter the workplace.

- Delivered multiple workshops with the participants focusing on acting skills and confidence building
- Directed three main productions with the group, including; *Road* by Jim Cartwright which was offered a short run at Liverpool Playhouse Studio
- Project managed productions, responsible for small productions budgets, marketing and publicity

#### **Press & Marketing Assistant**

#### **Liverpool Playhouse Theatre**

Trained by leading TMA Theatre Marketing Manager to recruit and assist local focus groups in order to increase audience numbers.

- Wrote press releases and editorial, marketed and organised press nights
- Recruited focus groups to generate data on local preferences for theatre programming
- Assisted in the implementation of at Theatre ticket scheme

#### **Executive Assistant/Personal Assistant/Administrator**

#### **Various employers/temporary/FTC contracts**

2008 – present

Extensive experience of working as a Corporate Executive Assistant/PA & administrator in both private and public companies, in a variety of temporary and contract roles working at CEO/Director/Partner level. Pitman trained, I

have excellent organisational and administrative skills, attention to detail, ability to work under pressure with multiple priorities, deliver to deadlines and provide support at the highest level.

- Extensive diary management experience working with ever changing priorities
- Organising itineraries for global travel, roadshows and corporate events
- Taking responsibility for director's emails and actioning multiple daily tasks

## Professional Actor

## Various employers/contract roles

### 1988 to 2012

Worked on a variety of contracts of varying lengths and types of theatre covering; children's theatre, TIE, rep, small, medium, large scale and No 1. touring, community theatre, devised productions, new writing, fringe theatre, one-woman shows, TV and independent film. Companies worked for include; Almeida, Kings Head, Liverpool Everyman & Playhouse, Eastern Angles, Colchester Mercury, NXT Theatre, Goodnights Entertainment, Bristol Express, Theatre Centre, New Theatre Dublin, Antic Hay & Snap TC, BBC & C4.

## Education and Training

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- Phd Leeds University, School of Performance and Cultural Industries, PhD student, Applied Theatre (2020 - 2025 current part-time student)
- Pitman Training – Executive Assistant/PA diploma (passed with Distinction)
- MA Applied Theatre (Royal Central School of Speech and Drama)
- Arts Educational Drama Schools, The Actors Company, Post Graduate Diploma in acting (method acting)
- BA Honours Drama & English (2:1) (Goldsmiths College, London University)
- PTLTS City & Guild 7303 – Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector
- Liverpool College of Further Education – 2 A levels (English Lit – B/French – B)
- Holly Lodge School, Liverpool – 8 O Levels/1 CSE (3xGrade A/3xGrade B/2xGrade C)

## Key Skills

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- Professional and constructive communicator with motivational presentation skills
- Skilled interpersonal skills; excellent ability to encourage, motivate, persuade and develop learners
- Strong team player - able to build productive working relationships and positively influence team morale
- A highly motivated and driven individual with a 'can do' attitude
- Exceptional organisational and facilitation skills with a strong ability to prioritise and meet deadlines for multiple simultaneous projects
- Robust IT skills and proficient in most Microsoft Office packages, including PowerPoint

## Relevant Training

- Safe Ground – Our Own Stories
- Arts4Dementia – working with adults with Early onset dementia diagnosis
- Clean Break – Safer Spaces
- Leeds Tidal – Disobedient Theatre Activist training
- Collective Encounters – Creating Political Theatre with Communities
- Spare Tyre - Participatory Arts Masterclass for working with people with Dementia
- Resistance training/Breaking Barriers – Tony Cealy
- House of Memories - Dementia awareness training, Liverpool Museums
- Collective Encounters - Dementia workshop training
- Unlock Drama - Theatre in Prison
- Geese Theatre – The Other Side of the Wall Facilitation Training for Working with Offenders
- Escape Artists – ONC course for Working in the Arts with Vulnerable & Marginalised Groups
- Arcola Theatre - Youth Facilitators Toolkit Training
- Islington Council - Mental Health Awareness
- City Lit/Actors Centre/Dirty Market Theatre - Devising Theatre Training
- Company Three - Directing with Young People Training
- Bigfoot Theatre – Actor as Educator
- Conflict Management
- Equality and Diversity
- Safeguarding
- Data Protection

## Interests and Hobbies

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I enjoy yoga, running, singing, reading, drumming and cooking. I am passionate about all aspects of theatre and drama and am a regular theatre goer. To relax I love to spend time with family and friends.

## Testimonials

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Link to freelance testimonials

[Testimonials \(islingtonpeoplestheatre.co.uk\)](https://islingtonpeoplestheatre.co.uk/testimonials)

Excellent references available on request