

Artist Development & Big Imaginations Coordinator

Application Pack 2026

**Application
deadline:
Friday 4
September**

z-arts.org

335 Stretford Road,
Hulme, Manchester,
M15 5ZA

Registered charity 1093556

Ask us a question or call for a chat.

Get in touch in whichever way works best for you
– or drop us a line and ask us to call you back.

Email: zoe@z-arts.org

Call: 0161 226 1912



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Title: Artist Development & Big Imaginations Coordinator

Based at: Z-arts

Hours: 30 - 37.5 hours per week

This role is offered at between 30 and 37.5 hours per week, to be agreed at interview to suit both parties. While there is some flexibility in working hours, the postholder will be expected to be at Z-arts when artists are in residence, as required.

The successful candidate will be expected to work in the building and one of their working days must be a Monday.

Dates: **Deadline: Friday 4 September**
Interviews: Thursday 10 September

Ideal start date:
W/C 12th October or as soon as possible

Salary: £27,300 pro rata

Job Advert:

At Z-arts, we believe children deserve extraordinary creative experiences. Behind every brilliant production, every inspiring artist and every successful partnership is someone who makes it all happen. This role is that person. You'll play a central role in supporting artists, coordinating opportunities, strengthening the Big Imaginations network and helping bring ambitious ideas to life. You'll be the person who keeps projects moving, spots opportunities, solves problems and creates an environment where artists feel welcomed, valued and able to do their best work.

This is a role for someone who enjoys taking ownership, building relationships and making things happen.

Welcome from our CEO



Here's a BIG welcome to Z-arts - the UK's only dedicated arts centre for children and families.

We pride ourselves on being welcoming and family-orientated, and I try to extend that to the whole team as well as to our visitors. Many organisations like to call themselves a family, but at Z-arts, we take it one step further!

I'm delighted you're interested in working with us. The staff here are an amazing bunch, full of vivacity and passion for the work we do and if you join us, you'll see for yourself that it's a great place to work. The children and the artists are all pretty inspiring too. That's not to say it isn't hard work. We're a small team, and we expect you to go the extra mile.

You'll find my door is always open (there's often a tennis ball flying in and out of it for Siskin, the office dog to play with), so if you have any questions or great ideas to share, just ask. Because you'll be working closely with me, I'm more than happy to have an informal chat if that helps you decide whether this job might be for you.

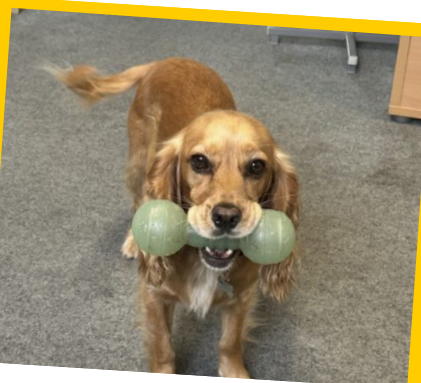
You can email me at liz@z-arts.org / or call 0161 226 1912.

I hope you enjoy reading this pack, and are encouraged to make an application.

We look forward to hearing from you soon!



Liz O'Neill CEO



Siskin - Apprentice CEO

About Z-arts



Z-arts is the UK's only dedicated arts centre for children and families, a centre of excellence for child-centred creative participation, rich and diverse theatre for young audiences, and immersive play experiences.

Our Mission

To inspire and enable generations of young people from Manchester and beyond to use creativity to achieve their potential.

In 2026, we laid out our Strategic Ambitions for 2026 - 2031.

Over the next five years, Z-arts will build on its success by strengthening our creative offer, widening our reach, and securing a resilient future.

You can read more about our latest strategic plan [here!](#)

Our key ambitions are:

1. Outstanding Creative Experiences for Children and Their Families
2. Creative Communities
3. Creative Talent and Workforce Development
4. A Resilient and Sustainable Organisation for the Future
5. Community & Sector Leadership

Based in Hulme, we are committed to supporting our local communities as well as reaching out across Greater Manchester and the North West. We operate from a large Edwardian building that includes a 225-seat theatre, our immersive experience, currently Adventures in Wonderland, a recording studio, a music room, a dance studio, Z-café, our brand-new children's library, two escape rooms, and rehearsal/meeting rooms. But there is much more to what we do that is outside of the building.

We lead networks:

Big Imaginations children's theatre network and the Manchester Family Arts Network.

We receive strategic funding from Manchester City Council to lead on best practice for engaging children and young people in arts and culture. We are an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, leading and delivering the Big Imaginations regional network of children's theatre, programming, and commissioning relevant, diverse theatre for the modern family.



What We Believe

Our manifesto to our families...

Z-arts is a place to express yourself, celebrate your imagination, have fun, be entertained, and dream big! So, whatever your age and whether you're coming to see a show or make some amazing mini-masterpieces in one of our arts workshops, we hope you enjoy your visit to Z-arts and are inspired by your own creativity.

History of Z-arts

Pavarotti sang here. Warren Beatty used our building in his film Reds. And Benji Reid's Life of a B-Boy was born here, if there's one thing that's for sure it's that Z-arts has a fascinating and eventful history!

www.z-arts.org/about-us/our-history/

Want to find out loads more about Z-arts?
Head to our website...

www.z-arts.org/about-us/

You can also have a nosey at our social media channels if you fancy.

 @z.artsmcr

 @zartsmcr

 Z-arts

 z_artsmcr



Working at Z-arts



We believe that theatre and the arts are for everyone.

They are inspiring, immersive, and magical, and we want to share the joy of creativity, imagination, and storytelling with children and families in Greater Manchester and beyond.



Our Values

Welcoming Playful Vibrant

Z-arts Kids Council words:

Kind, Friendly, Fun, Curious, Creative (KFFCC)



We have reviewed and refreshed our core values, workshopping them with the children who come to Z-arts as well as with the team.

It's sometimes all hands on deck!

Z-arts has a relatively small team with lots on the agenda that we aim to get our teeth stuck into! This sometimes means that it's all hands on deck - so be sure you're up for doing a little bit of everything.

We work collaboratively across our teams.

Getting involved varies from giving a wave to our social media channels, welcoming a school into our building, supporting funding bid research or working with the team to understand and evaluate our data, so that we can all be the best we can be.



Working at Z-arts



At Z-arts we feel it's vital that our employees are well rewarded. We are constantly reviewing the details of our package, but the things you'll be able to enjoy currently include:

- 23 days holiday per annum, plus statutory public holidays (pro rata for part-time staff).
- Entitled to one extra day's holiday after one year of continuous service.
- Group Personal Pension scheme – Z-arts contribute 3% of salary, with employees contributing 5%

Sub-Groups

There are six sub-groups run by our staff here at Z-arts, these are:

- **Diversity**, driving our diversity manifesto forward throughout our activity.
- **Access** ensures everyone's visit to Z-arts is as enjoyable as possible.
- **Green Champs**, our environmental heroes.
- **Wellbeing**, to make sure our employees feel at their best!
- **AI**, helping us explore new tools and set guidelines for using AI responsibly
- **Health & Safety**, making sure Z-arts is a safe place to work, perform, and play



Wellbeing

At Z-arts, employees' wellbeing is a big priority, and we want employees to be the best they can be. Our wellbeing benefits up to now include:

- **Flexible working hours**
- **Team well-being walks**
- **Refreshments in our staff kitchen**
- **Regular all staff meetings**
- **Regular team socials!** (We know lots of people in the arts & cultural sector, there's always a ticket or two going for shows & events across the city)
- **Free tickets to all of Z-arts events & productions!**
- **Buddy System**
- **Team Away Days**



Working at Z-arts



Diversity

We have a diversity manifesto. Here's a snippet below.

Our activities reflect our audiences, and we aim to represent all the different communities in our area. Z-arts is an antiracist organisation. We do not tolerate discrimination of any kind. We practice inclusivity and accessibility and are learning how to embed trans-inclusivity across all we do. Z-arts is welcoming to all people who do not discriminate against others.

We acknowledge all protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010 – including age, disability, gender, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation recognising socio-economic status and class as a thread that intersects all of these.

As a **learning organisation, Z-arts is always open to change.**

You can read more about what diversity means to Z-arts at:

www.z-arts.org/about-us/work-at-z-arts/



Our Recruitment Policy

Z-arts have a recruitment policy in place to ensure job applicants are considered equally and fairly, and are not discriminated against based on their race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, marital or civil partner status, disability, or age.

You can find out more about our **Unconscious Bias Recruitment Policy** [here](#). Z-arts also have a Safer Recruitment Policy which takes this further and ensures we are keeping children safe, this applies to all staff, freelancers, volunteers and placements.



Our building is located at:

**Z-arts
335 Stretford Road,
Hulme, Manchester,
M15 5ZA**

**Our registered charity no. is:
1093556**

Working at Z-arts



What the team say!

Don't just take our word for it, see what our staff have to say about working at Z-arts.

I love working at Z-arts! Each day is new and exciting - full of colour, joy, and creativity! Being a parent and working here is also great as my kids love Z-arts. We get a free Family Membership and are the first to see all the fabulous shows and exhibitions on offer!

- Janine, Early Years Artistic Producer



Part of Z-arts' remit is working with children and families, encouraging artistic fun and exploring the joy of just playing. The best thing is, that the remit doesn't stop at participants but also extends to the staff here. And their commitment to this honestly creates such a supportive, professional, productive, and most importantly fun working environment! And it's such a joy to be part of this! It allows you to be a big kid while being a grown-up. **- Isah, Artistic Development Producer**

Since joining Z-arts 20 years ago, I have never enjoyed a job so much. I thoroughly love working in such a dynamic organisation and doing the work I do. Z-arts has continued to grow and prosper over the years and we thoroughly deserve the praise we get from both parents and their children. I really take pride in seeing some of the shy young people developing and becoming more confident by attending our creative workshops. It is fantastic that I still get a buzz out of coming into work each day.

- Paul, Visitor Experience Team Leader

Working at Z-arts is so refreshing! It's brilliant to work somewhere where there is such a hive of creative minds and new ideas are met with, 'let's give it a go!' Z-arts are all about supporting the community and the whole family and this extends to the staff too. Having a young family, working at Z-arts allows me to work around family commitments and are genuine about being a supportive workplace for flexible working.

- Hannah, Creative Schools Project Coordinator



What our families say!

Z-arts has given my daughter the opportunity to be a dancer and performer, which otherwise I feel she would have missed out on due to our financial situation. It is an amazing place and I don't know what we would have done if we hadn't found it.

- Parent



I love coming to Z-arts because the activities and classes here allow me to express my personality and open my mind to the world of creativity.

- Bright Sparks Member

Z-arts has made arts and theatre particularly accessible to my family, it's been inclusive to my child with SEN and recaptured my love for the arts.

- Parent



Z-arts are really inclusive with our ideas. It makes us feel like we really fit in... our ideas want to be heard and our ideas really matter.

- Parent



Artist Development & Big Imaginations Coordinator

Z-arts is Manchester's venue for children and families and delivers a broad range of performing arts events, performances, exhibitions, activities, workshops and participatory opportunities. Our mission is to inspire and enable generations of young people from Manchester and beyond to use creativity to achieve their potential.

PURPOSE:

At Z-arts, we believe children deserve extraordinary creative experiences. Behind every brilliant production, every inspiring artist and every successful partnership is someone who makes it all happen.

This role is that person.

You'll play a central role in supporting artists, coordinating opportunities, strengthening the Big Imaginations network and helping bring ambitious ideas to life. You'll be the person who keeps projects moving, spots opportunities, solves problems and creates an environment where artists feel welcomed, valued and able to do their best work.

This is a role for someone who enjoys taking ownership, building relationships and making things happen.

HOURS:

This role is offered at between 30 and 37.5 hours per week, to be agreed at interview to suit both parties. While there is some flexibility in working hours, the postholder will be expected to be at Z-arts when artists are in residence, as required.

The successful candidate will be expected to work in the building and one of their working days must be a Monday.

RESPONSIBLE TO:

Zoe Pickering: Co-Creative Director & Big Imaginations Manager



ABOUT THE ROLE:

No two days are the same.

One morning you might be welcoming an artist into the building and making sure they have everything they need for a residency. By lunchtime you could be coordinating a national network meeting, before spending the afternoon updating website content, organising contracts or helping plan an Artist Lab event.

Some of the work is exciting.

Some of it is administrative.

All of it matters.

Because when the details are done brilliantly, artists can focus on making extraordinary work for children and families.

WHAT YOU'LL HELP MAKE HAPPEN:

Champion Artists

- Coordinate artist residencies and studio bookings, ensuring every artist receives a warm, professional welcome.
- Build positive relationships with artists making work for children and families.
- Coordinate Artist Labs, networking events and opportunities that help artists learn from one another.
- Support the delivery of commissions and co-commissions, keeping projects organised and moving forward.
- Coordinate artist callouts, contracts and programme administration.
- Keep programme information, websites and communications accurate, engaging and up to date.
- Actively seek out and build relationships with inspiring artists, companies and creative practitioners making work for young audiences, whose work could enrich Z-arts and the wider Big Imaginations network.

Help Big Imaginations thrive

- Coordinate the day-to-day administration of the network.
- Support artists participating in the Artist Imagination Fund.
- Organise meetings, prepare papers, take notes and record actions.
- Maintain the Big Imaginations website and social media.
- Gather stories and evidence that demonstrate the impact of the network.
- Support data collection, reporting and evaluation.

Support great programming

- Prepare deal sheets and contracts.
- Coordinate communications with companies and visiting artists.
- Ensure artists receive the information they need before arriving.
- Work closely with colleagues across Z-arts to make projects run smoothly.
- Support programme promotion alongside the Marketing team.

Improve what we do

- Look for ways to improve processes and how we support artists.
- Take ownership of your work and see tasks through to completion.
- Coordinate qualitative evaluation and help us learn from every project.
- Share ideas that strengthen the Artist Development Programme, Big Imaginations and Z-arts as a whole.

How we work at Z-arts

We're a small organisation with big ambitions.

Everyone contributes. Sometimes you'll be delivering exciting creative projects. Sometimes you'll be checking contracts, updating spreadsheets or making cups of tea for visiting artists. Sometimes you'll be helping another team because that's what needs to be done that day.

No task is beneath anyone here. We all roll up our sleeves, support one another and take pride in doing every job well. We believe the experience people have of working with Z-arts is shaped just as much by the small details as the big moments.

The kind of person who'll thrive here

- Naturally takes ownership and doesn't wait to be asked.
- Enjoys making things happen and following ideas through.
- Is highly organised and takes pride in getting the details right.
- Can balance multiple priorities without losing sight of quality.
- Communicates warmly and builds positive relationships.
- Enjoys solving problems and finding practical solutions.
- Works collaboratively and willingly supports colleagues.
- Is happy to help wherever needed, whatever the task.
- Looks for ways to improve how things work.
- Cares about creating outstanding experiences for artists, colleagues and children alike.
- Shares Z-arts' values of being Welcoming, Playful and Vibrant.

We are looking for someone with lived experience who can relate to the challenges faced by artists from the global majority. We recognise that candidates may be stronger in some areas than others. Z-arts is a learning organisation, and we will support the right candidate to develop skills where needed. The right values, approach and characteristics are as important to us as specific experience or knowledge.

What success looks like

- Artists tell us they feel welcomed, supported and inspired by Z-arts.
- The Artist Development Studio and associated programmes are well attended and valued.
- Big Imaginations members feel connected and engaged.
- Projects run smoothly because the detail is consistently well managed.
- Colleagues trust you to keep momentum going and make things happen.
- You introduce ideas that improve how we work.



How to apply

Please download and complete Part 1 and Part 2 of the application form.

As you fill in the application form, please explain how you think you meet the job description and person specification for the role. The information you provide will be used for the shortlisting process. It is important in your application to give us examples of what you have previously done that shows us how you could be right for the job and why you're enthusiastic about joining Z-arts.

You do not have to have previously undertaken all of the duties in the job description but you should tell us about your potential ability to do them.

Please email completed applications to: paul@z-arts.org

We will contact you by email if you are shortlisted for an interview.

All job applicants will be contacted via email whether or not they have been shortlisted.

Ask us a question or call for a chat.

Get in touch in whichever way works best for you – or drop us an email and ask us to call you back.

Email: zoe@z-arts.org

Call: 0161 226 1912



Thank you for taking the time to read our application pack!

This recruitment pack is a work in progress and a learning document for us to update and make even better in due course.

So, if you have any feedback on the content, layout, or anything at all, we'd love to hear what you think.

Please email marketing@z-arts.org - we're all ears!



z-arts.org

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