

PENTABUS

The Jerwood Writer in Residence Bursary

'Being the first Jerwood Writer in Residence at Pentabus is an amazing experience. I have the space and time to write a brand-new play, and I'm currently immersed in all the wonderful work Pentabus does with their Young Writers. I can't wait to meet the next Writer in Residence for walks, chats and all things theatre. Apply, apply, apply!'

Liv Hennessy, 2025 Jerwood Writer in Residence

Pentabus are looking for an emerging playwright to become our second Jerwood Writer in Residence.

As a recipient of the Channel Four Writer in Residence Bursary for three years in a row, an unprecedented achievement. In 2018, they were awarded a grant from the Clive Richards Foundation to continue to support a Writer In Residence Bursary for four years. Now Pentabus are delighted to have received a Writer in Residency Bursary from the Jerwood Foundation for the first time with Liv Hennessy receiving the first Jerwood residency. Previous recipients of the Writer in Residence Bursary include Sophie Ellerby, Tom Powell, and Joe White.

The Bursary supports a professional playwright in the early stage of their career, giving the recipient the opportunity to spend up to a year at our base in Ludlow in South Shropshire. During their time with Pentabus, the recipient will write at least one new full-length play.

About Pentabus:

'One of British theatre's unsung treasures.' The Guardian

Pentabus is the nation's rural theatre company, based in Shropshire. We are the only rural touring company that is committed to producing new work and tours to communities across the UK and beyond.

Our work brings communities and young people together, bringing outstanding contemporary productions with sector leading creative teams, directly to isolated rural communities, as well as platforming rural stories in urban settings.

Over five decades we've produced over 329 new plays, supported 258 playwrights and reached over half a million audience members. We've won awards and created lasting relationships with artists, venues and audiences across the country, and were the first to live stream from a village hall.

We excel at finding and nurturing new talent and have hosted Writers in Residences since 2014. These playwrights have gone on to be commissioned by the Birmingham Rep, Bristol Old Vic, Hampstead Theatre, HighTide, Manchester Royal Exchange, Nottingham Playhouse, Royal Court, The Bush, and the National Theatre.

We champion people of all ages to explore their creativity with particular emphasis on creating pathways into careers in the creative industries for those underrepresented, and people who live rurally under 30. Pentabus Young Company is our initiative offering, playwriting workshops in schools, further and higher education, a brand-new Youth Theatre, work experience and mentorships and our Young Writers' Programme, which celebrates its 11th year, and has catapulted many writers into careers in the arts, with recent graduate credits including Radio 4, BBC One, and Bristol Old Vic, as well as Tinniswood and Olivier Award nominations.

About the Residency:

'It's hard to sum up in words really how this opportunity changed me, my career and my life. I think for me most importantly, it made me feel like a professional writer for the first time and helped me dream, think, reflect, focus and reach for my goals, in a way I'd never been given the time or opportunity to do so previously.'

Florence Espeut-Nickless, Writer in Residence 2022

The Jerwood Writer in Residence Bursary is an opportunity for an emerging writer to become a part of the Pentabus family.

What the Writer in Residence Bursary will give to you:

- **The time and space to think and write.** You will have a space at Pentabus HQ, at The Ludlow Assembly Rooms in the heart of the beautiful town of Ludlow.
- **The opportunity to complete at least one full-length play** or several works in progress. This work must not have been commissioned by another company. Your writing time will be largely unrestricted, and you can write about anything.
- **Professional dramaturgical feedback on your work.** Our Artistic Director will be available to discuss your ideas and help you to work through any dramaturgical issues or queries that you might have.
- **A launch pad into the wider theatre community.** You will be invited to attend Pentabus events, see shows as a representative of the company, and take part in industry activities with company members.
- **The opportunity to tutor our Pentabus Young Company and our Writers Group** (the next generation of aspiring writers and theatre makers aged 16 to 30). You will develop and lead workshops for our Young Writers both at Pentabus HQ and in other venues nationwide.
- **The opportunity to observe the work of the company.** You will attend rehearsals, dress rehearsals and other performances, gaining hands on experience of small-scale touring.

What you will give to Pentabus:

- Reading and offering constructive criticism on scripts sent to us.
- Attending workshops and rehearsals of work in production
- Assisting our Artistic Director, with artistic planning and being an active part of planning the creative future of the company.
- Engaging with rural communities to better understand them and our mission
- Lending an objective artistic voice to our day-to-day operations
- Advocating for us in the wider writing/theatre community
- Being a mentor for our Young Company Writers and taking part in planning Young Company activity.

Overview:

- You will be given a bursary of £12,000 to support you for 12 months.
- You will commit to living in Ludlow for at least 6 months of this time.
- Any additional work you do for Pentabus outside of the Bursary requirements will be recompensed at ITC rates.
- You will be required to submit two reports to Pentabus for the Jerwood Foundation for the generous supporters of the Writer In Residence Bursary.

Who is Eligible to Apply:

'This is an incredible opportunity if you are in need of time and space to develop your writing. The residency has afforded me the time to THINK BIG. This bursary is a chance for you to challenge yourself and feel supported in the process. Apply now!'

Sophie Ellerby, CSRC Writer In Residence 2019

We are looking for committed, enthusiastic and exceptionally talented writers and theatre makers in the early stages of their career. You **MUST** have a passion for theatre and a strong interest in the wider theatre industry.

You may have a relevant degree in Literature, Creative Writing, Theatre Studies, or commensurate experience in professional theatre. Ideally, applicants would either have an agent or have completed an Emerging Writers' or Artists' programme (i.e Orange Tree Writers Collective, REP Foundry, Royal Exchange Young Company etc) or have had a production of their work professionally produced, either in a Fringe, Rural Touring or Studio theatre setting.

We will accept applications from those who have applied to the bursary before – just tell us why you are applying again **and send us a different example of your writing if you were previously longlisted.**

Although we are based in a small rural town, you do not need to be able to drive in order to apply. We can help you to get around as needed for the role and Ludlow is well connected by rail and bus.

Applicants *must* be over 18 years of age.

How to Apply & Deadlines:

Fill in an application form on the Pentabus website. You can find this on the Writer in Residence Applications page of the [website](#).

You **MUST** complete all sections of the application form and equal opportunities monitoring form, and ensure you also upload the following:

- A copy of a full length play that you've written. Ideally, we'd like to read plays that have had a professional reading or production. **NB** This play will not be read unless you are longlisted. Please provide details of the production or reading with the play.
- A current writer's CV or Biog.

If you have any additional access requirements that we can support you with in order to make an application then please email projects@pentabus.co.uk

- Applications must be received by **Monday 14 July 2025 at 10am**
- Shortlist Interviews 1 – **Online week of 17th December 2025**
- Shortlist Interviews 2 – **In person at Pentabus week of the 15 January 2026**
- The Jerwood Writer in Residence is to begin their residency from Spring 2026