

Festival Event Manager

Job Description & Person Specification

May 2026

Word Up North is a Yorkshire-based literature development organisation with a mission to raise up voices, stories and writers in the north of England. Our work fosters a love of reading, writing and creativity within individuals and communities, and uses the power of the written and spoken word to create positive change. We are proud to be a registered charity and an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.

Since 1973, our organisation has produced the **Ilkley Literature Festival**. It is the longest-running literature festival in the north and second oldest in the UK. Each autumn, the programme features authors, poets and artists from across the UK, attracting more than 13,000 people over 17 days.

Type of contract:

Freelance

Salary:

£17.20 per hour

Holidays:

N/A

Responsible to:

Executive Director

Responsible for:

Stage Manager, Technical Manager, volunteers

Hours of work:

Shifts as required during the Ilkley Literature Festival

Evening hours fall between 5pm – 10pm

Weekend hours fall between 9am – 10pm

Dates:

The 2026 Festival runs from

Friday 2 – Sunday 18 October

Location:

Venues around Ilkley town centre

Word Up North Ltd
2nd Floor Offices, Fairfax House
38 The Grove, Ilkley, LS29 9EE
Tel: 01943 601210 | email: info@wordupnorth.org.uk
www.wordupnorth.org.uk | www.ilkeylitfest.org.uk

Purpose of the Role

To deliver the 2026 festival, we are seeking experienced Event Managers who will support our team to produce events in a range of venues across Ilkley. These take place on weekday evenings and weekends.

Each venue has a dedicated team which includes an event manager, venue technician, stage manager, box office assistant and a group of volunteers. Working together, they produce high-quality, welcoming and accessible events for authors and audiences alike.

Tasks & Responsibilities

These will include, but not be limited to:

Venue Management

- Overall responsibility for the event venue, ensuring it is set up as required and ready to open for both authors and audiences
- Manage seating requirements for events based on audience numbers
- Ensure Health & Safety procedures are adhered to so the venue is safe for all staff and visitors
- Where necessary, work with any venue duty managers / onsite staff to ensure the smooth running of events

Team Management

- Work with the venue technician and stage manager to ensure venues are set up as required and ready for the arrival of authors
- Lead on pre-event briefings for the venue team
- Manage volunteers assigned to each event – briefing them as required and assigning roles and responsibilities to each
- Conduct emergency evacuation briefings for all staff and volunteer members

Front of House

- Work with the box office to understand audience size and any access needs for audience members
- Ensure provisions are made for any access requirements in advance
- Work with box office and volunteers to welcome audiences to venues
- Address any ticketing / access issues as they arise
- Ensure audiences are seated and events begin on time

General

- This role requires the ability to lift and handle light event equipment e.g. tables and chairs, event boxes and signage
- Awareness of equality, inclusion and accessibility for live events

Person specification

Essential skills and experience

- Experience running live events for paying audiences / customers
- Excellent organisational skills, with the ability to think and plan ahead
- Excellent people and communication skills with high standards of courtesy
- Ability to think on your feet and adapt to unforeseen situations
- Excellent time-management
- Understanding of health & safety procedures

Essential personal qualities

- Confident and organised
- Enjoy being in a customer facing role
- Able to use initiative to overcome unexpected issues and solve problems
- Able to adapt to rapidly changing priorities
- Able to sustain a high level of energy and concentration

Desirable skills, experience and personal qualities

- Experience working in similar festivals / live events
- Understanding of basic technical equipment used in live events
- Current First Aid Certificate
- Current DBS Certificate
- Driving licence and access to a vehicle

Location

You will be working in festival venues around Ilkley, West Yorkshire. You will need to be able to get to and from Ilkley easily, including after events in the evenings.

To Apply

Please complete the application form [HERE](#).

If you have any questions or queries about this role, or the application form, please contact us via recruitment@wordupnorth.org.uk

Diversity, Equality & Inclusion

We are committed to developing and retaining a workforce that is representative of the diverse communities that we serve. We're striving to build an inclusive workplace culture where all employees feel valued, and our rich diversity is celebrated by everyone. We encourage people from all sections of our community to apply for jobs with us.