

Callout for Playwrights – December 2026

Strange Town offers opportunities in the performing arts to young people aged 5 to 25 in Edinburgh.

As a company, our aim at Strange Town is to enable young people to fulfil their creative potential. Whatever your background or experience, we believe everyone has creative and artistic abilities. We help young people to recognise and develop these abilities through peer and professional encouragement, participation, and example.

We are seeking up to **2 playwrights** to write a short play to be performed by our **11-14s** Performance groups.

Working from February 2026 through to a final draft in September 2026, the play would then be rehearsed and subsequently performed in December 2026.

Read on for more information about the project and the performers. If you are interested in applying, we will ask you pitch your play around prompts we have chosen and take note of the age range of the characters.

Attributes

We are particularly interested to hear from writers who fit at least some of the following criteria listed below:

Necessary

- Have previously written work for the stage in any capacity
- Be local to Edinburgh/have easy access to Edinburgh.

It is important that you have easy, regular access to Edinburgh as you will need to attend some sessions in-person. Realistically, this means we can't accept applications from much further than the Central Belt.

Desirable

- Have previously written for young performers in any capacity
- Attended Youth Theatre themselves when a child
- Be familiar with past Strange Town Youth Theatre performances and output
- Be an active part of the Edinburgh Theatre community

All about the commission and the groups

Theme

For our **December 2026** plays, we would like our writers to read the following quotes and submit a pitch inspired by one or more of these. We are not looking for an exact recreation of these prompts; we would encourage you to think outside the box.

"After nourishment, shelter and companionship, stories are the thing we need most in the world."

"...and while the future is still unwritten, the past has stories to tell."

"Stories bring us together, untold stories keep us apart"

The groups

We run two performance groups for 11–14-year-olds, one on a Wednesday and one on a Friday. These are open-access groups of mixed ability although many have previous performance experience.

Any play written would need to accommodate approximately **20 actors** with at least one role for each of them and would be approximately **45-60** minutes long.

Age

We are keen to see ideas that have **clearly considered the age group they are applying for**. Writing for 11-14s is not the same as writing for adults

We vastly prefer our young people to play parts written for their age (e.g. 11–14-year-olds playing characters suitable for those aged 11-14) Ideally we're not meant to believe that they're twice their age in a serious, naturalistic manner.

Exceptions to this might be a young person pretending to be older is the joke or part of a dramatic point (e.g. pantos, Bugsy Malone) There is plenty of additional leeway here. Scripts with non-human characters for instance (spirits, gods, choruses, ghosts, magical creatures, animals etc) are definitely doable – we're not saying that all your characters need to be humans aged 11-14, just playable by them!

Important Info

Key Dates

Playwrights must be available to attend devising sessions and readthroughs in-person in Edinburgh, although we aim to offer as much flexibility as we can and amended deadlines are also possible.

This is a rough breakdown of the proposed timeline for writers: (subject to change)

- **Application Deadline:** Tues 24th Feb, 10am
- **Interviews:** W/C Mon 2nd March
- **Role Confirmed:** Mid-March
- **Synopsis:** April
- **1st Draft:** End of May
- **Readthrough & Feedback with group:** June
- **2nd Draft:** End of July
- **3rd Draft:** Beginning of September
- **Readthrough & Feedback with group:** Early September
- **Final Edits/Adjustments:** End of September
- **Performances:** December 2026

The play would be shown for **2 performances in December 2026**. Previous performances by the 11-14s have taken place at the Scottish Storytelling Centre.

Payment

The playwright will be paid **£1000** for their writing. **This is not a fully professional rate, and we are well aware of this.** As a small charity, our resources are limited and unfortunately do not allow us to pay what we would like to. However, we are currently committed to a process of increasing our fee year-by-year to bring it more into line with the standard.

We also endeavour to help develop our writers fully and provide every assistance possible. This includes one-to-one dramaturgy sessions, additional opportunities to interact and devise with your group members as desired, and a lot of flexibility to fit our deadlines and schedule around your existing work.

For more information about this and anything else you'd like to know before applying, please don't hesitate to get in touch using the details below.

How to apply

If you are interested, [please complete the following application form](#) by no later than **10am on Tuesday 24th February 2026**.

If you have any questions, please contact James at james@strangetown.org.uk

Interviews requests will be sent out to successful applicants for the week commencing **Monday 2nd March 2026**, which will be either online or in-person.

Further info: recent scripts

We strive to provide our young members with a variety of scripts and **avoid repetition**. Here are quick summaries of recent commissions for the 11-14s:

Needles

- A horror play set on Christmas Eve as spirits from the past threaten the local children.

A Christmas Michael Miracle

- A farcical nativity-gone-wrong where the kids are left to rehearse a George Michael-themed show by themselves after their drama teacher has had enough.

The Last Wolf

- A dark thriller reinterpretation of the Red Riding Hood myth set in the modern day as wolves return to Scotland.

Vote Christmas

- A political comedy about a referendum on whether Christmas should continue and the pressure placed upon young voters.

Hacksilver

- A medieval drama following a ragtag Scottish Children's Crusade and the brutal reality behind blind faith.

I Was Here

- Two timelines cross as modern kids investigate an evacuee shipwreck from WW2

Out of the Blue Drill Hall

36 Dalmeny Street

Edinburgh

EH6 8RG

T 0131 629 0292

E info@strangetown.org.uk

W strangetown.org.uk

Last Christmas

- A Christmas caper about teenagers in charge of Earth's last spaceship

Burn the Little Witches

- A dark modern tale in a rural school about the dangers of paranoia and vindictive revenge

Tarlike

- A sci-fi Christmas adventure about kids escaping from their asteroid orphanage and the tar-creature mother who runs it.

If you have any questions about the application, commission or Strange Town, please email James at james@strangetown.org.uk