

National Theatre

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National Theatre launches transformational fundraising campaign, *Stories Start Here* following a flagship capital investment of £26.4m from the UK government

- Landmark investment will support urgent infrastructure repairs to parts of the National Theatre building for the first time in its history marking its 60th anniversary
- The formation of a new National Theatre Skills Centre will supercharge specialist skills needed across the whole sector, unlocking opportunities for the next generation through skills programmes delivered nationwide
- Launching the NT's most ambitious fundraising campaign to date, *Stories Start Here*: sparking imagination, nurturing talent and inspiring the world

The UK government today announced in the Spring Budget that the National Theatre will receive flagship investment of £26.4m marking its 60th anniversary, which will support urgent infrastructure updates to the National Theatre building. This government investment, the largest in the National Theatre's history, will strengthen the organisation and support the UK's globally renowned theatre-makers by providing essential, urgent upgrades to facilities and boosting specialist skills nationwide through the National Theatre Skills Centre.

Propelled by this investment, the National Theatre today launches a £125m fundraising campaign ***Stories Start Here***. The campaign, the most ambitious in its history, will raise revenue and capital funds to ensure the National Theatre, which serves 17.5 million people a year, is thriving and vital, sparking imagination, nurturing talent and inspiring the world for generations to come.

The government's commitment of £26.4m joins £35m of private sector philanthropy raised from NT supporters to kickstart the campaign, demonstrating how private and public funders can work hand in hand to deliver transformative results.

The government investment is targeted at delivering urgent capital upgrades at the National Theatre, which will ensure millions of people will continue to enjoy innovative, ambitious world premiere productions made on the South Bank, which are then shared with the world. The National Theatre's learning activity is delivered in every Local Authority in the UK, with 1 in 4

secondary school children watching productions on the NT Collection for free. The upgraded National Theatre facilities will also support a strong pipeline of future creative talent with specialist skills. To date 90% of apprentices trained at the NT have gone on to be employed in the sector.

Nearly 50 years since it first opened in 1976, the National Theatre's South Bank building requires urgent capital works to ensure it can remain open and operational. The investment will replace failing end-of-life theatre systems, support necessary repairs to the Olivier theatre scenery lift, which is vital to the operation of the theatre, as well as developing innovative solutions for the refurbishment of the Olivier theatre's unique stage drum revolve system.

The investment also supports the creation of a pioneering **National Theatre Skills Centre** which will provide engagement, skills development, career support and training opportunities nationwide across a breadth of specialisms for over 5,000 people each year, inspiring future artists, craftspeople and technicians. This funding will allow the National Theatre's team of in-house creative experts the time and resource to prioritise training rather than undertaking repairs; and offer a world-class environment in which to train the next generation. The NT Skills Centre will supercharge specialist skills needed across the whole sector, with opportunities available nationwide from entry-level to mid-career.

The National Theatre Skills Centre will increase our engagement with young people from across the nation, offering them the opportunity to work with industry-leading experts, at the National Theatre and nationwide through local partnerships. With opportunities available for young people from the age of 11+, this investment from government will allow the NT to further open up the South Bank building, expanding the number of placements across the full range of disciplines across creative, technical and business, and supporting new T Level qualifications in Production Arts as well as doubling the number of apprentices trained at the NT each year.

Chair of the National Theatre Sir Damon Buffini said, *'The National Theatre is a beacon of creative excellence, reaching millions of people globally each year and inspiring thousands of future theatre makers through our nationwide activity. Building upon the pioneering £1.6bn Culture Recovery Fund and the essential Theatre Tax Relief for the sector, this vital investment from the UK government will leverage further philanthropy as part of our multi-year fundraising campaign. Together, we will build a long-term future for our National Theatre.'*

Director of the National Theatre Rufus Norris and Executive Director Kate Varah said, *'The National Theatre is a creative powerhouse that attracts the world's most exciting theatre makers. We are immensely grateful to the government for this landmark investment, marking our 60th anniversary, which will support much needed upgrades to our infrastructure and enable artists to produce unforgettable experiences shared with millions of people worldwide every year. Along with the commitment to the new permanent higher rates of Theatre Tax Relief, this is a huge boost to the future vitality of British theatre. The National Theatre is the biggest factory in central London, and we are so lucky to have such incredibly talented creative experts working alongside and training the next generation to ensure that the whole sector can continue to thrive for many years to come.'*

Culture Secretary Lucy Frazer said: *'For 60 years the National Theatre has been at the heart of British culture, putting on productions which showcase the best of our country's creativity and hold a mirror up to society. This investment of more than £26 million will allow the National Theatre to continue to deliver world-class theatre and cultural education at their iconic London South Bank home, and reach audiences across the whole country, helping to inspire the next generation of actors, writers and theatre production staff.'*

Actor and Producer Cate Blanchett said, *'The National Theatre is an extraordinary creative hub, and a truly unique place to make theatre, producing work that is artistically bold and socially relevant. As well as making an incredible contribution to British cultural life over the past 60 years, the organisation is hugely respected on the global stage sharing theatre with millions each year. Government funding recognises the NT's remarkable work and the vital place it holds in the creative ecosystem, supporting artists to realise the full extent of their ambitions alongside investing in the next generation of theatre makers to ensure a vibrant future for the whole sector.'*

Playwright and screenwriter James Graham said *'I owe so much of the confidence and the opportunities I have as a writer to the National Theatre. From the joy of opening Dear England on the Olivier stage last summer to collaborating on a new show from Liverpool's Royal Court this year, I know how a strong, ambitious and thriving National benefits all theatres, and all artists nationwide. I'm grateful that the government are recognising its incredible contribution to our cultural life, helping the theatre to maintain its global reputation and to train and empower the next generation of theatremakers.'*

Chief Executive of The Lowry Julia Fawcett said *'No one else is doing what the National Theatre is doing – producing large-scale touring work of the highest quality and originality and, crucially, getting that work out to audiences across the country. Without the National Theatre, huge swathes of the country will lose the opportunity to see incredible stories brought to life on their doorstep and regional venues will lose income, profile and audiences.'*

Director of Cast in Doncaster Deborah Rees said, *'Cast is proud to have worked with the National Theatre over the last five years with a partnership that has brought a rich variety of programme strands to Doncaster. One of the main aims of our partnership has been to reach into communities with arts programmes and to offer people who have had little engagement with the arts opportunities to develop new skills. Connecting people and increasing skills is at the heart of the programmes and we work collaboratively with community groups and artists from a diverse range of backgrounds to create the most fulfilling experiences and exciting outcomes for our participants and audiences. Having significant partnerships of this scale is good for Cast, and also good for Doncaster. It allows us to increase the scope of our work and ultimately, being able to raise the profile of the arts in this way can attract audiences and promote a positive outlook on our great city, which will contribute to Cast's success in the future.'*

Notes to editors

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For images please click [here](#)

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About the National Theatre

The National Theatre makes theatre that entertains and inspires using its creativity, expertise and unique reach. The National Theatre shares unforgettable stories with millions of audience members across the UK and around the world – on its own stages, on tour, in schools, on cinema screens and streaming at home.

World-leading artists make their best work at the National Theatre with the widest possible audience and impact. The National Theatre invests in talent and innovation on stage and off, taking seriously its role as the nation's theatre. Of the new productions developed each year with a wide range of theatre companies, a third of that research and development resource is dedicated to shows staged at theatres outside London.

Through touring our work to local theatres and schools and nationwide education and community programmes, we are active in 71 of the 109 levelling up priority areas in the UK. A registered charity with deeply embedded social purpose, the National Theatre works with hundreds of schools and communities across the UK to fire imagination and inspire creativity, and to develop skills and pathways for careers in theatre.

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