

# **Starcatchers' Sound Seekers Trainee Recruitment Pack 2026**

## **About Starcatchers**

We champion exceptional, innovative arts and creative experiences for our youngest children, those aged from birth to 5 years old and their parents and carers. The voice, needs and interests of this audience are at the heart of all our activity, providing inspiration and provocation in the development of projects and programmes. Our work is created by highly specialist artists who are attuned to the requirements of making work for and with this unique age group. Supported by nearly 20 years of high-quality work, evidenced through research and evaluation, Starcatchers is recognised around the world as being at the forefront of artistic practice for Early Years.

## **Starcatchers Community Engagement**

We develop and deliver long-term programmes that enable consistent contact between artists and the same groups of babies, young children and their parents and carers in areas where there is identified need. Our current focus is on communities in Wester Hailes where we are based, and in Fife where we deliver a programme in partnership with Fife Gingerbread.

Community Engagement activity crosses the organisation and there are other smaller projects that connect with other areas of work.

## **The Sound Seekers Project**

The Sound Seekers project offers creative, inclusive music making sessions for young children and their grown-ups at Wester Hailes Library. The project explores new, accessible approaches to early years music-making that move beyond the traditional music workshop formats, and instead create playful, responsive and child-led experiences for young children.

The project will be delivered using a dual delivery model; bringing together a musician and an artist with expertise in working with neurodivergent children and early years audiences. Both practitioners will mentor a trainee musician who is looking to develop their skills working with early years children.

Sessions will be co-created with families in a relaxed, sensory and inclusive environment, encouraging

exploration, curiosity and musical discovery. Children and families will be introduced to a wide range of music-making experiences through a baby-led approach that incorporates Starcatchers research: Engagement signals and the Voice of the Baby Methodology.

Find out more about Starcatchers at [starcatchers.org.uk](http://starcatchers.org.uk)

**Job Description: Sound seekers trainee**

**Title of post:** Sound Seekers Trainee

**Accountable to:** Community Engagement Manager

**Terms:** 30 delivery sessions across the year, plus additional planning and reflection sessions and CPD sessions

**Location:** Wester Hailes Library

**Salary:** £150 per session

**Additional:** The trainee will be required to join the PVG Scheme or undergo a PVG Scheme Update check

### **Starcatchers Trainee Opportunity: Sound Seekers**

As part of **Starcatchers' Sound Seekers** project, we are offering an exciting opportunity for an early-career musician to work alongside our team and gain valuable insight into the processes and practices involved in delivering a participatory music project for Early Years children and neurodivergent families.

The trainee will work closely with Starcatchers staff and artists to develop the skills, confidence, and experience essential for high-quality music facilitation in Early Years

settings. This hands-on role offers a well-rounded learning experience that includes:

- **Facilitation** – Supporting the planning, delivery, and reflection of music sessions
- **Creative Development** – Contributing to the creation of engaging, age-appropriate musical activities
- **Participant Engagement** – Building meaningful relationships with young children and their families, including those who are neurodivergent

This opportunity is ideal for a passionate and emerging musician who is keen to explore inclusive Early Years practice and grow within a supportive, creative environment.

**Who This Opportunity Is For**

We're looking for a young artist or creative person who is interested in music and wants to build their skills and experience. This opportunity is aimed at someone with curiosity, commitment, and a willingness to learn — we value passion, openness, and potential as much as existing experience.

This opportunity is especially open to people from Wester Hailes and to those who feel underrepresented in the arts. If you're passionate about creativity and curious about using music as a way to engage with very young children, we'd love to hear from you.

## **Essential**

- Aged 25 or under
- An interest in music or making music creatively with some experience or training in music, either self-

taught or through formal education, and confident with a musical instrument or voice.

- Enjoy trying out ideas, experimenting, or improvising
- Interested in working with and engaging very young children
- Enthusiasm to learn, develop skills, and grow as an artist within a supportive environment
- Good availability on Friday afternoons between April and December 2026 – consistency is important

**Desirable (but not required)**

- Living in, or having a strong connection to, Wester Hailes or Edinburgh

- From a background that isn't always well represented in the arts
- Interested in working with Early Years children (ages 2–5)
- Experience — through work, volunteering, family life or lived experience — of supporting children with additional support needs and neurodiversity

## **Personal Qualities**

- Friendly, approachable, and easy to talk to
- Open-minded and willing to try new things
- Reliable and motivated
- Creative and imaginative in your thinking
- Positive energy and commitment

## **Objectives and Learning Goals**

The trainee placement within Sound Seekers is designed to support the development of early-career musicians through the following objectives:

- Gain insight into the delivery and evaluation of an Early Years music project, including planning, facilitation, and reflective practice
- Increase skills and understanding in participatory music-making, with a focus on working responsively with children aged 2-5 years old and their families, including neurodivergent participants
- Develop collaborative experience by working alongside musicians and artists from diverse backgrounds and disciplines
- Build understanding of the administrative and marketing processes involved in producing and

promoting a participatory arts project, including communication, scheduling, and audience engagement

## **Outline Timetable**

### **March 2026 – Induction & Planning Phase**

The trainee will begin working with the Starcatchers team during the final stages of project planning. Key activities will include:

- Introduction to Starcatchers and the Sound Seekers project
- Meetings with the Lead Early Years Artist, Music Specialist and Community Engagement Manager to contribute ideas and participate in creative discussions around Phase One of delivery

- Helping to set delivery targets aligned with the project's outcomes and evaluation framework
- Completing a training needs assessment and creating a personalised development plan to support ongoing learning and reflection
- Completing PVG checks and undertaking relevant child protection training

## **April - December 2026 – Delivery Phase**

During this phase, the trainee will take on an active and supportive role in the project's delivery. Key activities will include:

- **Supporting Musical Sessions:** Attending regular delivery sessions, assisting guest musicians and the Lead Artist in providing open-ended musical play. These sessions are designed to help

neurodivergent families explore sound with curiosity, connection, and creativity.

- **Reflective Practice and Evaluation:** Gathering observations and reflections to contribute to the project's ongoing evaluation. Each session will include time for reflective practice using the Voice of the Baby and Engagement Signals approaches, enabling the Lead Artist, Music Specialist, and Trainee to collaboratively review and adapt their practice. Additional time will be given for the trainee to reflect on their own development, receive feedback, and access mentoring from experienced artists.
- **Progressive Leadership Development:** As the trainee's confidence and skills grow, they will be encouraged to lead selected elements of the

sessions. This gradual increase in responsibility will support their professional growth in inclusive and responsive music-making.

## **Learning goals**

Throughout the placement, the trainee will:

- Develop inclusive facilitation skills and the ability to adapt music activities to meet a range of needs
- Deepen understanding of how to listen and respond to the voices of babies and very young children
- Build knowledge of safeguarding, child development, and trauma-informed practice
- Gain insight into the Early Years arts sector, exploring potential career pathways through ongoing mentoring and support

## **To apply**

To apply for the role please:

- Provide your CV (max of 2 A4 pages)
- A covering letter (max of 2 A4 pages) outlining your experience and how you fit the criteria outlined in the job specifications.

There is an option to provide your application in video format if you would prefer this method in place of a written statement.

Please send completed applications to **Lauren at**  
**info@starcatchers.org.uk**

If you would like to chat about this opportunity before the application deadline, you can meet us at **Wester Hailes library on Thursday 5th March, 11am-1pm** for an

informal chat. Alternatively, if you have any questions about the role ahead of applying, please email Lauren McGill on the email above.

**Closing dates for applications is Friday 13th March at 5pm**

Interviews for the role will be held **on Thursday 26th March** at Starcatchers Office, Whale Arts Agency, 30 Westburn Grove, Wester Hailes, EH14 2SA.