

# Kay Mellor

# Fellowship 2025

## Application Information Pack

This Fellowship is supported by **Leeds Playhouse, Rollem, BBC Writers & Leeds City Council**



## What is the Kay Mellor Fellowship?

The Kay Mellor Fellowship is a year-long paid opportunity for a writer based in Yorkshire and the Humber to develop their writing for stage and screen.

The Kay Mellor Fellow will spend twelve months on attachment with Leeds Playhouse and Rollem Productions. During the 12 months they will:

- Work in tandem with Leeds Playhouse and Rollem to create **a new stage play** and **a TV pitch** starting from the same idea.
- Receive a place on the BBC Writers Voices writer development programme where they will hone their skills and industry knowledge through a range of workshops, masterclasses, panels and industry talks.

## Why have we created the Kay Mellor Fellowship?

Kay Mellor was a prolific, award-winning and highly respected writer and director for stage and screen who was born, bred and lived in Yorkshire. Her work was consistently ensemble led, Northern in character and gave voice to people often under-represented on our stages and screens, particularly women and those from working class backgrounds. Kay was a huge supporter of early career artists, especially across Yorkshire, supporting them through the work of her production company Rollem to develop their creative skills. Kay also had a long relationship with Leeds Playhouse as a writer and patron.

Leeds Playhouse is the largest producing theatre in the Leeds City Region, serving a population of 3 million people. The Playhouse works to develop artists from across Yorkshire through its Furnace Programme and is especially committed to developing new writers and under-represented voices from West Yorkshire.

In 2019, Leeds Playhouse and Rollem launched the inaugural Kay Mellor Fellowship, the recipient of which was Bradford writer Kat Rose-Martin.

In memory of Kay, who died in May 2022, BBC Writers, Leeds City Council, Rollem Productions and Leeds Playhouse have joined forces to run three further years of the Kay Mellor Fellowship with the first fellowship being undertaken in 2024 by Bradford writer Kirsty Taylor. We are now welcoming applications for the 2025 Kay Mellor Fellowship.

## Who is the Kay Mellor Fellowship for?

To apply, you must:

- Be based in Yorkshire and the Humber.
- Have written between one and three professionally produced plays for theatre. By professionally produced, we mean that everyone was paid Equity or ITC minimum rates.
- Have an idea for a new, full-length play to be written over the course of the Fellowship which you also feel could be developed as an idea for television.
- Have an interest in and passion for learning about writing for television, but no prior credits as a writer for film or television.

We particularly encourage applications from artists currently under-represented in dramatic writing, including women; Deaf, disabled & neurodivergent people (including hidden disabilities and people with chronic illnesses); people from the African Diaspora; South, East and South East Asian people; people who are LGBTQIA+; people from culturally and ethnically diverse backgrounds and people who identify as working class or face barriers due to socio-economics.

## Structure of the Fellowship

The next Kay Mellor Fellowship will run for 12 months from January 2025.

During the 12 months the Fellow will:

- Spend 12 months on attachment with Leeds Playhouse and Rollem Productions.
- Working from the same idea, develop a fully formed TV pitch and the first draft of a stage play.
- Have the opportunity at Leeds Playhouse to:
  - Potentially undertake a Research & Development workshop of the play being developed as part of the Fellowship.
  - Have access to desk space at the Playhouse (but will not be required to work exclusively from the Playhouse.)
  - Attend rehearsals, final run-throughs, dress rehearsals and other performances.
  - Have the opportunity to read, assess and feedback on scripts for the Playhouse's Artistic Planning team.
  - Observe the workings of all departments within Leeds Playhouse.
  - Read and see as many professional productions as possible of other writers' work both at Leeds Playhouse & elsewhere.
- Have the opportunity at Rollem to:
  - Develop skills in creating a TV pitch, writing for TV and pitching ideas.
  - Attend and participate in story conferences for TV drama and comedy series.
  - Observe read throughs and filming days on set.
  - Have access to desk space at Rollem (but will not be required to work exclusively from Rollem).
- Join the BBC Writers Voices cohort running from January to June 2025. During which they will:
  - Attend a range of industry and craft workshops.
  - Build a peer network of emerging writers also exploring writing for the TV medium.
  - Work with the BBC Writers team to define and develop a new series idea to outline stage.

## Key Information

**Bursary** £10,000 for the year will be paid to the recipient. (NB: The recipient must be registered as self-employed and is liable for any tax payable on the receipt of this bursary.)

### Expenses

- An additional £500 is available to enable the Fellow to go and see theatre away from the Playhouse which will be managed by Leeds Playhouse.
- For all BBC Writers activity, travel and expenses will be covered by BBC Writers.
- No further expenses will be paid, but financial support is available for covering any access requirements.

### Location

It is expected that the Fellow is based in Yorkshire and the Humber and will live within commuting distance of Leeds where both Rollem and Leeds Playhouse are based. This is because of our commitment to the local artistic ecology; people willing to commute or relocate from further afield are not eligible for this training opportunity.

### Hours

This is not a full-time role, and it is expected that the writer will undertake other paid work outside of the fellowship. We will work together to agree working hours and timetables.

### Line-Management

The writer will be line-managed and mentored by staff in the artistic development teams at both Leeds Playhouse and Rollem.

## Rights

### The Play

- The writer will grant Leeds Playhouse a first option to acquire a licence to present the UK Premiere of the play for six months after the completion of the Fellowship.

### The Pitch

- The writer will grant Rollem Productions the exclusive right to pitch the idea to broadcasters for one year after the end of the Fellowship with the aim to secure development funding for the writer's concepts.
- BBC Drama will be given the first look at the pitch before it is shared with other broadcasters.
- The writer will own the IP.
- If Rollem is successful in securing interest from a broadcaster / development funds, any scripts or further development materials will be commissioned from the writer under a separate writer's agreement with additional writer fee.

## Credits

The Playhouse will publicise the Fellowship in all programmes printed during the period of attachment. Where a production arises from any play(s) written under the Fellowship, a similar credit will be given.

## Application Process

To apply please:

- Complete the form that can be found [here](#).
- Email one pre-existing script to [kaymellorfellowship@leedsplayhouse.org.uk](mailto:kaymellorfellowship@leedsplayhouse.org.uk)
- Complete the Inclusion and Diversity monitoring form [here](#).

In the online form, as well as standard questions (for example, about yourself and your history) you will be asked:

- How does your writing resonate with the themes, values or passions of Leeds Playhouse and Rollem Productions?
- What impact would the Kay Mellor Fellowship have on your professional and personal success and what have the barriers been so far?
- To outline in detail, in 800 words, an original idea for a full-length stage play that could also be developed as a piece of television.

**Deadline: Friday 30<sup>th</sup> August at 10am**

Submitted scripts and ideas will be considered by a team of script readers from Leeds Playhouse, Rollem Productions and external artists, with the shortlist judged by a selection panel led by Amy Leach, Deputy Artistic Director at Leeds Playhouse and Gaynor Mellor, Creative Director at Rollem.

For an informal conversation or to get support in making your application please contact [kaymellorfellowship@leedsplayhouse.org.uk](mailto:kaymellorfellowship@leedsplayhouse.org.uk).

## Timeline

30 <sup>th</sup> August 10am	Deadline for applications
Sept 2024	Script reading & selection
Oct 2024	Shortlisting
Early Nov 2024	Interviews
Late Nov 2024	Fellow announced
Jan-Dec 2025	Fellowship period

The Kay Mellor Fellowship is supported by





## Previous Kay Mellor Fellow – Kat Rose-Martin

The inaugural Kay Mellor Fellow was Kat Rose-Martin, who developed a TV pitch (*Whipped*) and stage play (*Cheap as Chips*) based on the same idea, exploring the nature of exploitation in working class communities and the right of women to take up space in the world. Since the end of the fellowship, Kat has developed a number of further pitches for Rollem as well as being commissioned by Leeds Playhouse to develop *Cheap as Chips* into a full production.



*Kat said “The Kay Mellor Fellowship is an incredibly unique opportunity because you get to develop your writing for both TV and theatre, learning the similarities and differences between the two mediums. It was life changing for me. The bursary kept me in the industry when I was in a financial tight spot, it helped me develop long standing relationships with both Leeds Playhouse and Rollem, and it opened so many doors to agents and further opportunities. I thank my lucky stars that I had a full year to develop my craft, make mistakes and refine my voice. Even in the interview stage I got great feedback that I could action straight away. Kay was and is an inspiration. She put Northern voices on the stage and screen and let down the ladder to support and nurture so many new writers. I’m proud to be a tiny part of her legacy, and thrilled that this scheme is continuing so go for it, grab the bull by the horns and apply. Kay paved the way, now it’s on us to keep those warm, complex, Northern characters coming down the pipeline.”*

## Current Kay Mellor Fellow – Kirsty Taylor

Our current Kay Mellor Fellow for 2024 is Kirsty Taylor. Through her poetry, spoken word and playwriting, Kirsty has always been a champion of her home city of Bradford, showcasing and giving voice to its unheard stories. During her time with Rollem, Leeds Playhouse and BBC Writers, Kirsty is exploring stories of adoption and severance from the perspective of birth families, working with local birth mother groups to research and develop both a play and TV pitch which tells the stories of how and why children get taken into care, with authenticity, intricacy and integrity.



*Kirsty said “The Kay Mellor Fellowship is a real luxury in that you are given the money and time to develop one of your passion projects, with proper support and guidance. The BBC Voices programme has been a major highlight. I’m learning so much about the tv industry as well as creative skills and techniques to develop my writing. I’ve really valued the structure that it has given me.”*