The Stables | Wavendon | Milton Keynes

Come and join The Stables team!









Bar & Catering Manager

Job Pack

Job Description

Job Title: Bar & Catering Manager

Reports to: Head of Operations

Responsible for: Casual duty bar and catering team

Key contacts: All other staff and volunteers, external suppliers, artists and customers

Location: The Stables, Milton Keynes

Contract: Full-time / Permanent / Annualised Hours

Salary: circa £30,000 - £32,000 per annum, depending on experience

Pension: Employer contributions matching employee contributions up to 3% of salary

Working pattern: A flexible rota combining daytime administration with evening and weekend service

About Us

The Stables is based in Milton Keynes and is one of the UK's leading independent music venues with a vision to engage the widest range of people with music in all its diversity. We enrich people's lives by offering opportunities to access, participate in and experience live music and the arts more broadly.

We present around 400 concerts and events each year across all genres, alongside an extensive programme of learning and participation. We also founded and produce IF: Milton Keynes International Festival, a multi-artform biennial event that transforms the city into a stage.

The Stables and IF: Milton Keynes International Festival are operating names of Wavendon AllMusic Plan, a registered charity. We are proud of our reputation for world-class music and events, a warm welcome and high standards of customer service.

The Stables is located in one of the UK's fastest growing and most economically vibrant cities and is part of Arts Council England's National Portfolio.



The operation and purpose of the role

The Stables operates a busy, bar service around its performance programme, with activity on up to seven nights a week. Bar service is normally concentrated into the hour before a show and a busy 20-minute interval, alongside preparation and closing duties. A small pre-show dining offer serves up to 40 covers over two hours.

The Bar and Catering Manager will bring a passion for great service and lead a welcoming, efficient and profitable bar and catering operation, combining hands-on service with ordering, stock control, financial reporting, staff management and customer experience.

Key Responsibilities

Team leadership and development

- Manage and support paid staff and volunteers across the bar and catering operation, setting clear priorities and expectations.
- Contribute to recruitment and arrange induction and role-appropriate training for paid staff and volunteers.
- Develop team knowledge of customer service, products and operating procedures, supported by clear briefings and guidance.
- Maintain regular team communication, effective handovers and accessible operating procedures.

Staffing and service planning

- Prepare paid staffing rotas and roles within agreed budgets and to meet expected demand, including your own service shifts, coordinating kitchen cover as required.
- Agree volunteer requirements with the Volunteer Engagement Manager, who remains responsible for volunteer scheduling.
- Review cover before each service and agree how to address gaps through authorised staffing or service adjustments.
- Balance service commitments with management duties, agreeing priorities with the Head of Operations.
- Foster a culture of teamwork, professionalism and community within the hospitality team.

Hands-on service and customer experience

- Lead from the front during agreed shifts, working behind the bar and supporting catering service as required.
- Oversee service preparation, opening and closing, including interval pre-orders, replenishment and team briefings.
- Set practical service standards that support efficient delivery and a welcoming, accessible customer experience.
- Respond to customer queries and concerns, using feedback to improve service and support team development.
- Maintain bar and cellar standards, including product quality, line cleaning, safe handling, glass washing and equipment care.

Catering and event coordination

- Coordinate pre-show dining, artist hospitality and catering for private hires and meetings with paid staff and volunteers – working within agreed budgets.
- Agree catering priorities, staffing and service standards, supporting day-to-day kitchen delivery and resolving operational issues.
- Plan bar provision for hires, special events and IF: Milton Keynes International Festival with the Head of Operations.

Ordering and stock control

- Manage bar and catering orders with the relevant paid staff, matching deliveries to demand, storage capacity and approved budgets.
- Review suppliers' prices, quality, availability and delivery reliability to secure value within agreed purchasing authority and manage supplier relationships.
- Check deliveries against orders, maintain purchasing records and arrange secure storage and stock rotation.
- Carry out regular physical bar and kitchen stocktakes with the team, maintaining accurate quantity records.
- Reconcile stock against purchases, sales and recorded losses, investigating discrepancies and agreeing corrective action.
- Record returns, breakages and wastage, identifying opportunities to reduce losses.



Financial control and development

- Monitor sales, purchasing costs and gross margins against agreed budgets and targets.
- Report trading results, stocktake findings and significant variances to the Head of Operations and Finance team.
- Recommend practical improvements to sales, costs and margins, following through agreed actions with colleagues.
- Develop the bar and catering offer with the team to meet audience needs and support trading targets.
- Review pricing displays and promotions with relevant colleagues.
- Maintain accurate till, card-payment, float and cashing-up procedures, including secure closing arrangements.
- Keep EPOS products and prices current and investigate payment discrepancies.

Compliance and safe operations

- Act as Designated Premises Supervisor and maintain alcohol-service procedures in line with the premises licence.
- Maintain a bar and catering compliance schedule, with clear responsibility for completing, reviewing and following up checks in line with food hygiene, licensing and health and safety regulations.
- Oversee food and drink safety procedures and records, including allergens, cleaning, storage and temperature controls.
- Allocate service checks to appropriately trained paid staff and volunteers, reviewing completion and addressing omissions.
- Maintain age-verification, refusal-of-service and incident-recording arrangements.
- Arrange compliance induction and refresher training, maintain records and support inspections and audits with venue colleagues.
- Report faults, incidents and maintenance needs, taking immediate action within your training and authority.
- Escalate unresolved safety or compliance risks promptly to the appropriate colleague.

Wider operational responsibilities

- Attend operational meetings, share bar and catering updates and follow through agreed actions.
- Undertake other reasonable duties consistent with the role, training and agreed contracted hours.

Person Specification

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Job Related Experience	• A passion for great bar service and practical experience of managing or supervising busy bar operations, including preparing for short, high-demand service periods. Practical knowledge of cellar management, product quality, line-cleaning procedures, stock rotation and safe handling of cellar supplies. • Experience of ordering, stocktaking, stock reconciliation and controlling wastage and costs. • Ability to lead, organise, brief and support a team, providing clear guidance and role-appropriate training. • Ability to plan staffing and service arrangements around demand, available cover and agreed budgets. • A strong customer-service approach and confidence handling operational problems and customer concerns. • A personal licence holder with a sound understanding of safe bar operations, responsible alcohol service and accurate compliance records. • A working understanding of food hygiene, allergens and safe food storage, with the ability to maintain accurate records and recognise when advice or corrective action is needed. • Good organisational, numerical and record-keeping skills, with confidence using EPOS/till systems and spreadsheets. • Ability to interpret sales, stock and gross-margin information to monitor costs and improve trading results. • Ability to combine hands-on service with reliable administration, clear communication and effective handovers. • Availability for an agreed flexible rota including evenings and weekends, within the appointed contracted hours.	• Experience in a theatre, music venue or another bar-led operation with time-critical service peaks. • Relevant food-safety, supervisory or first-aid qualifications. • Experience coordinating a small catering operation, including restaurant front-of-house service, dietary requirements and liaison with kitchen teams. • Experience working with volunteers and coordinating with a volunteer-management colleague. • Experience of supplier negotiation and using gross-margin information to improve trading performance.
Personal Qualities	• Approachable, calm, and supportive under pressure. • Professional, adaptable, and willing to ‘roll up sleeves’ when needed. • Strong attention to detail with a commitment to consistent, high-quality service. • Warm, customer-focused manner with a genuine love of live events and hospitality. • Enjoys working in a busy environment and adapting to the pace and flow of events. • Ability to work as part of a team and on own initiative.	
Other	• Ability to lift and move equipment and supplies. • Willing to undergo training. • Flexible approach - hours will vary according to business needs. Daytime, evening and weekend work.	• First Aid Certificate. • Current driving licence and own transport.

Key Terms and Conditions

This is a full-time role (40 hours per week).

The Bar & Catering Manager will work in Milton Keynes. The Stables is based in Wavendon, and IF: Milton Keynes International Festival takes place in and around central Milton Keynes.

The working pattern will be set as part of a flexible rota combining daytime administration with evening and weekend service.

Full-time holiday entitlement is 20 days per annum plus bank/public holidays, increasing by one day for each completed year of service up to a maximum of 25 days per annum.

The role is eligible for workplace pension auto-enrolment in accordance with statutory requirements. The employer contribution is currently 3%. These arrangements may be amended in accordance with legislation and organisational policy.

The appointment will be permanent, subject to satisfactory completion of a four-month probationary period. Following successful completion of probation, the postholder will be eligible to participate in the organisation's discretionary performance-related bonus scheme, in accordance with the scheme rules in force at the time.

Full terms and conditions will be provided with the formal offer of employment and set out in the employment contract.

Application Process

If you would like an informal discussion about the role or have any access support requirements, please contact Joana Cooper by email joana.cooper@stables.org or phone on 01908 280828.

Please submit your CV and covering letter explaining how your experience and skills meet the requirements of the role.

Applications should be submitted to joana.cooper@stables.org by **midday on Monday 30 November.**

The Stables is an equal opportunities employer, which is actively seeking to employ people currently under-represented in the creative and cultural sector. This includes young people, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities.