The Vench · Senior Youth & Play Worker · interview crib sheet

Groundwork South · 20 hrs/week Mon–Fri incl. after-school sessions · £27,300 FTE (£14,560 actual) · fixed term to March 2027 · Romney Avenue, Lockleaze

My 60-second answer: "Tell us about yourself"

"I've spent ten years running children's drama clubs, and I've worked in schools as a teaching assistant and on teacher-training placements with Year 1/2 and Year 5, including lots of children with SEND and EAL. What I love is child-led, creative play: giving children the space to invent, lead and show what they can do. I know Lockleaze and I'm already working with local partners on a free drama project for Year 6s. The Vench is the heart of play here, and I'd love to help lead the team, support the staff and volunteers, and bring a creative, performance strand that residents have been asking for."

What they want (from the advert)

- **Experience with children & young people**: drama clubs, TA, placements
- **Supervising staff & volunteers**: directing TAs, running clubs with helpers
- **Safeguarding knowledge**: reporting, recording, DSL
- **Organised, good communicator**: planning sessions, parents, partners
- Enhanced DBS with Children's Barred List

The Vench in a nutshell

- Adventure playground & community centre, **45+ years**, run by Groundwork South
- Values: **child-led, inclusive, supportive, creative**
- Playground Promises: be kind · keep safe · look after our space
- Free **Supper & Play** Tue/Thu 3.30–6 (hot meal); cooking, coding, bike club; Under 5s; 11–16s; HAF holidays
- Team: Lisa (Centre Manager, Youth & Play), Iulia (Operations), Hannah (Programme Manager), Orphee (Lead Youth Worker)
- New Corner Café (shipping containers, 2025)

Why me, why here: my 3 big points

- **Creative play is my thing.** "Creative" is one of their values, but there's no drama or performance offer yet.
- **Residents asked for it.** The Lockleaze Community Plan 2026–30 asks for acting, pop-up theatre, evening/weekend activities and more for older children.
- **I bring partners and funding know-how.** HAF, Arts Council, Quartet, Children in Need; links with LNT, Unfold Community Arts, Trinity Academy (arts focus, auditorium, same road).

Wider network (show I know it)

- **Playful Bristol**: formed 2019 after the council's 2018 play cuts; the 5 adventure playgrounds: Felix Road, St Paul's, The Ranch (Southmead), Hartcliffe, The Vench
- **Adventurer's Cup** 2025, hosted at the Vench
- **Lockleaze Youth & Play Partnership** with BCC; Community Plan action: early-evening youth offer
- **Your Holiday Hub** (HAF), LNT, Life Cycle UK, DigiLocal, Play Patch, Lockleaze Sports Centre
- *Junkyard*: Jack Thorne's musical about building the Vench

Likely questions · my examples

Answer with **STAR**: S Situation T Task A Action (what *I* did) R Result + what I learned. Fill in the blanks before the day.

1. Safeguarding

"A child tells you something worrying. What do you do?"

- Listen calmly, don't ask leading questions, don't promise to keep it secret
- Write it down straight away in their words: date, time, who was there
- Report to the **Designated Safeguarding Lead** the same day; if a child is in immediate danger, call 999
- Follow up; know the low-level concerns and whistleblowing routes

My example: _____

2. Playwork & child-led play

"What does good play look like?"

- Play is **freely chosen, personally directed, intrinsically motivated** (Playwork Principles)
- Adults support, not take over; observe and step back
- **Risk–benefit**: some risk is good for children; manage hazards, don't remove challenge
- Drama link: children invent the story, adults hold the space

My example: _____

3. Leading staff & volunteers

"Tell us about a time you led or supported a team."

- Clear briefings before sessions, roles for each adult
- Playing to people's strengths; quick check-ins after
- Handling it when someone isn't following policy: privately, kindly, clearly

Example: deploying TAs on placement / helpers at drama club _____

4. Behaviour & conflict

"A session is getting out of hand. What do you do?"

- Relationships first, calm voice, Playground Promises as shared rules
- Redirect into play, separate if needed, repair afterwards
- Look for the need behind the behaviour; tell parents and DSL if it's a pattern

My example: _____

5. Inclusion, SEND & families

"How would you make sessions welcoming to everyone?"

- Visuals, clear routines, quiet spaces, choice; talk to parents about what works
- Lockleaze is Bristol's 4th most diverse ward: food, festivals, languages
- Remove cost barriers; reach families who don't come yet (schools, LNT, Hub)

My example: _____

6. Impact & funding

"How do you show a session made a difference?"

- Attendance and registrations (they use **Upshot**), plus children's own voices
- Photos, quotes, short case studies, all with consent
- Evidence funders want: HAF, Arts Council, Quartet, Children in Need

Ideas I could bring (first 3 months)

- A **drama & play strand**: games, masks, costumes, a show for families
- **Year 6→7 transition** project with Trinity Academy
- Help with **bids** and capturing impact
- A weekly **"what's on"** post/timetable; youth voice in news & website

Say it as "I'd love to help with…", not as criticism.

Questions to ask them

- What would success look like in the first 3 months?
- Is there room for a creative or drama strand?
- How is the role split between sessions, supervision and admin?
- How do you support staff wellbeing and training?
- What are the plans after March 2027?
- Exact days/hours, and how holidays work

Be upfront that I'm also developing a Lockleaze drama project, and could run it with the Vench.