

Musinc Policy for Working with Freelancers

This Policy was introduced in August 2024 and will be reviewed annually by the Musinc core team. If this isn't your experience of working with us, please talk to us.

1. Context

We recognise the vital role freelance workers play in the cultural sector, and how much we should gain from these relationships. We believe it is important to acknowledge the challenges that freelancers face that are not shared by salaried staff, and to find ways of providing employment on a more equitable basis. This policy sets out our commitment.

2. Policy

Musinc employs musicians, practitioners, and other creative staff on a freelance basis, primarily to deliver creative learning activity.

We are committed to treating freelancers fairly and respectfully, recognising that you do not benefit from the same terms and conditions as salaried staff. We recognise that we are dependent on the artistic output of freelance staff to maintain Musinc's offer, and seek to establish a more balanced, symbiotic relationship.

This commitment is demonstrated by the following:

2.1 Supporting artists and freelancers.

Applying to us

- We aim to streamline application processes whilst ensuring they are accessible to all. We will always advertise the timeline of deadlines, shortlisting, interviews, and appointments. We will give general feedback to all applicants, and individual feedback to any applicants we interview.

We will always ask for any access requirements at the point of offering interviews and will endeavour to fulfil these.

Contact and Communication

- Freelancers will always have a named point of contact within the organisation, and access to other staff to support their work and practice.
- We value freelancers time and will seek to streamline contact time and meetings and save travel time and costs by offering opportunities to talk by phone or meet online.
- If we are contracting you on a freelance basis to deliver a programme of work for Musinc, you will be given a written brief as part of your contract, a project coordinator, and a line manager (Musinc manager). We will discuss all relevant areas of delivery expected from both parties prior to work commencing.
- Freelancers working regularly with us become part of the fabric of who we are and will be included in relevant organisation-wide communication, invited to all-staff meetings and special events.
- We like to plan well in advance and for all activities to run smoothly and as stress free as possible for all involved. This means that freelancers should expect to be asked about the arrangements for your activity in advance of delivery, to enable rooms, equipment, refreshments etc to be set up prior to the start of your activity.
- For larger scale events and productions, it is likely we will put a team together including technical, programming, front of house and event support. We will work with you to ensure that the level of support we can offer, and any associated costs are clear and agreed in advance.

Correspondence

- Most of our correspondence takes place by email and we aim to reply to emails from artists and freelancers we are working with, wherever possible within 5 working days. We aim to reply to emails from artists and freelancers new to us within 20 working days.

Administration

- We acknowledge how time-consuming administration is and will always look at ways to keep this to a minimum for freelancers in areas such as applications, contracts and information-based forms.

DBS

- We will require facilitators to have an up-to-date DBS check to carry out your work with us. If you don't have one in place, we will request this for you.

Freelancers providing performances or concerts may be required to have an up-to-date DBS check to carry out their work. We will discuss this with you beforehand.

PLI

- We will require facilitators to have an up-to-date Public Liability Insurance in place to carry out your work with us.

Professional Development and Training

- If we offer freelancers support and training, we will always be clear about what that is, and when it will be available. We will endeavour to provide options of times for training to take place, in order to best suit our workforce.

Musinc endeavours to cover any costs involved and you will be paid for your time when attending training, in line with our rates of pay (see handbook).

- Wherever possible, we will open training sessions available to salaried staff and to freelancers who work regularly with us.

Resources

- We will make Musinc's resources available to freelancers working with us, including access to workspace and equipment.
- We know how important it is to feel comfortable and like you have a base in a building so whilst working at Musinc, freelancers will have access to our office and the attached kitchen, which is equipped with a fridge, kettle and microwave.

Induction

- If you are new to Musinc, we will give you a welcome meeting and a guided tour of the building when you arrive to begin work. This will cover everything you need to get started on your project and is a chance to get to know the team better. We will largely leave you to get on with your work, but your named person will be on hand for queries and questions.

Access Requirements

- We will ask if freelancers have any access requirements when we start working with you. We endeavour to meet the access requirements of all members of staff, including freelancers, and to fulfil access riders.

2.2 Other terms and conditions

Fees and Payments

- Musinc prioritises paying freelancers as quickly as possible and will endeavour to process invoices that we receive within 3 working days. As per Middlesbrough Council's payment terms, invoices will be paid within 30 days.

Please note, Middlesbrough Council offers a Supplier Incentive Programme which freelancers can sign up to for quicker payment. Please visit: [Middlesbrough Council | Supplier Incentive Programme \(oxygen-finance.com\)](https://www.middlesbrough.gov.uk/supplier-incentive-programme) for more information.

- We always agree fees and payment schedules in advance and are honest and upfront about what we can afford. We outline suggested pay rates in our handbook which are reviewed annually in line with national guidance.

We expect freelancers to scale the activity to fit within the available fee, not to reduce your fee or work unpaid hours. We want freelancers to tell us if our expectations are bigger than the fee available.

- We acknowledge that freelancers must make provision for your own sick pay, holiday pay, pension, training and development and other costs within your fees, so we set our rates of pay higher than the salaried equivalent.
- Freelance staff are responsible for your own tax and National Insurance. We will ask you to confirm this when you complete your supplier form as well as on your invoice.
- We do not expect freelancers to cashflow Musinc's activity. Any additional costs for activity should be agreed in advance with the Musinc project coordinator and will be paid directly by Musinc.

Planning and Agreements

- We will always agree fees, arrangements, responsibilities, timescales and deadlines for activity in writing. For regular activities this will be outlined in your contract, and for cover work this will take the form of an email exchange. We are happy to provide more formal paperwork if requested.
- If delivery circumstances change, for Musinc or for freelance staff, we will try and find alternative ways for freelancers to engage in your contracted work and receive payment as planned, providing alternatives (streaming, blended delivery, online) are appropriate, practical and possible for the purpose of the work.

Our reporting and evaluation requirements are outlined in your contract and are set in line with the requirements from our funders. The timeline for these requirements has been set to spread workload across the duration of your project, as we know administration can be time consuming.

Postponements and Cancellations

- Your contract will outline in writing what will happen in terms of fees if the activity is postponed or cancelled.

Policies and Information

- Where relevant, we will share our Safeguarding Policy with freelancers in advance of starting work and arrange safeguarding training and DBS checks when required.
- Freelancers are also required to have Public Liability Insurance in place for the duration of their work with us.

When things go wrong

- Sometimes things go wrong. We hope our own systems will pick this up, or that by establishing honest relationships based on trust, freelancers will be able to tell us if something goes wrong. Any issues can be raised with your main point of contact or directly with the Music Inclusion Manager. We will always respond.

This policy is discussed and reviewed annually to ensure best practice.

If you have any questions or concerns about this policy, please contact musinc@middlesbrough.gov.uk

If you have a safeguarding concern please contact our Designated Safeguarding Officer, Samantha Knight (Samantha_knight@middlesbrough.gov.uk)