

FAIR PAY, FAIR PRACTICE

POLICY TOOLKIT



An Arts Council toolkit supporting organisations to develop and implement policies on fair pay and fair practice

artscouncil.ie



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FAIR PAY, FAIR PRACTICE POLICY TOOLKIT

THIS FAIR PAY, FAIR PRACTICE TOOLKIT AIMS TO PROVIDE PRACTICAL SUPPORT FOR ORGANISATIONS TO ADVANCE PAY AND WORKING CONDITIONS FOR ARTISTS AND FREELANCE ARTS WORKERS BY TURNING POLICY INTO TRANSFORMATIVE PRACTICE.



Introduction

This toolkit is to support you in developing a Fair Pay, Fair Practice policy that sets out what your organisation can and will do to advance pay and working conditions for artists and freelance arts workers. It has been developed by the Arts Council in close collaboration with your colleagues across the arts sector.

Since we launched our Paying the Artist policy in 2020, we have seen increased understanding and significantly better practice in support of paying artists and improving their working conditions. Thank you for the role you played in that progress. However, we all recognise that there is still more work to do to embed fair pay and fair practice as the norm for artists, reducing the precarity and advancing the sustainability of artistic careers. We understand that freelance arts workers face many of the same challenges as artists. As such, we now seek to effect positive change for artists and for freelance arts workers.

We are encouraged in this endeavour by the sure, strong appetite for change we heard from you during the consultation to develop this toolkit. The drive for a cohesive approach and collective action in support of fair pay and fair practice for artists and freelance arts workers aligns with movements for change we see elsewhere across the UK and Europe. For example, in Scotland, the Fair Work convention is putting fair work at the heart of its workplaces and economy. Austria has a Fairness Codex for Arts and Culture and The Netherlands' Fair Practice Code supports fair work, fair share, fair chain in the arts, cultural and creative industries. Seeing others make change happen is the inspiration and impetus for us now to work together and create the change we want for artists and freelance arts workers in Ireland.

This Fair Pay, Fair Practice toolkit aims to provide practical support for organisations to advance pay and working conditions for artists and freelance arts workers by turning policy into transformative practice.

“ I think I am going to lose as much as a third of our freelance team this year because of burn-out and low pay. Our policy needs to apply to arts workers as well as artists.

Arts Centre

About the toolkit

What is in the toolkit?

The Fair Pay, Fair Practice Toolkit includes:

- **Background and context.** An outline of what has informed the development of a toolkit for Fair Pay, Fair Practice.
- **What needs to change?** An overview of the drivers of low pay and poor working conditions that need to be reduced or eliminated.
- **What is Fair Pay, Fair Practice?** An explanation of what we mean by 'fairness' – fair pay and fair practice.
- **What can we do?** An introduction to the five Fair Pay, Fair Practice principles to guide fair pay and fair practice behaviours and attitudes across the arts sector. These principles will frame your policy response.
- **How to develop an effective policy.** A step-by-step guide on how to develop and structure a policy that can drive change in your organisation.
- **Worksheets and templates.** The reflective prompts that will help you to develop a Fair Pay, Fair Practice policy, relevant to your organisation and to the artists and freelance arts workers with whom you engage.

Who is the toolkit for?

The toolkit has been developed for organisations that engage professional artists and freelance arts workers. We hope that others, including artists and freelance arts workers, will also find it informative.

How did we develop the toolkit?

We worked with arts consultants Heather Maitland and Janice McAdam and in close consultation with your colleagues in the sector to develop the toolkit. The process involved:

- A review of national and international studies into pay and working conditions in the arts
- A review and analysis of the existing pay and conditions policies of Strategically Funded Organisations
- Consultation with a wide range of arts organisations including resource organisations and artist representative bodies. The quotes that you will find across this toolkit are drawn from this consultative process
- A survey asking artists about their experiences and perspectives
- A review of other toolkits to advance positive change in the arts
- Focus groups with arts organisations to test and strengthen the toolkit

Why a policy development toolkit?

The reason is simple: because policies make change.

95% of the 500+ artists and organisations consulted as part of the process to develop this toolkit believe that policies have made at least some impact on artists' pay and conditions.

Our research backs this up: having a policy - and enacting it - makes a difference. However, our research also shows that, in general, there is potential for organisations' policies to be more nuanced, more actionable and, as a consequence, more effective.

Each of our policies, therefore, has a part to play in this movement for change.

“ Writing the policy changed attitudes, brought clarity and identified gaps.

Strategically Funded Organisation

“ Our policy led to us making explicit commitments

Strategically Funded Organisation

Background and context

It has been well-documented, nationally and internationally, that artists and freelance arts workers tend to have high levels of self-employment with project-based careers, low pay, precarious incomes, and poor working conditions. In general, they lack effective representation, occupy a weak bargaining position in contract negotiations and are vulnerable to exploitation.

This limits the potential of artists and freelance arts workers to do their best work. It restricts opportunity and reduces diversity. It impacts wellbeing and leads to talented arts professionals leaving the sector.

A policy priority

The Arts Council is committed to advancing fair pay and conditions in the arts. We want professional arts practitioners to have productive, fulfilling and sustainable careers where they can make work of ambition and quality.

In 2020, we published Paying the Artist: a policy on the fair and equitable remuneration and contracting of artists as part of this commitment. This Arts Council policy sets out our position, expectations and commitments in relation to fair pay for artists and acknowledges our role in leading change.

Funded arts organisations have been encouraged to develop their own pay and conditions policies. Many of you have done so, strongly aligning with or adopting the value-based and best-practice principles of our Paying the Artist policy.

The Arts Council made a commitment to support Strategically Funded Organisations to develop and publish their own policies on pay and working conditions for artists relevant to their particular circumstances. More broadly, we encourage an increased openness and transparency around engagement practices throughout the arts sector. This toolkit is a key part of that support.

An appetite for change

This Fair Pay, Fair Practice toolkit has been informed by extensive desk research including a review of 19 national and international studies into artists' pay and working conditions, by close consultation with 97 people from 81 arts organisations, by a survey eliciting responses from 474 artists and by engagement with managers within the Arts Council.

Through that process we have come to understand that there is a real appetite to change forever the culture and practice of low pay and poor working conditions for artists and freelance arts workers.

Much has been achieved by the sector and by us, the Arts Council, in our respective commitments to paying the artist since 2020. It is now time for us all collectively to extend and deepen that commitment to deliver the transformative ambition of fair pay and fair practice for artists and for freelance arts workers. This toolkit supports this endeavour.

**“ We need a collective approach and cohesive action.
We all need to be seen to sing from the same hymn sheet.**

Representative organisation

What needs to change?

To create an environment in which artists and freelance arts workers can have productive, fulfilling and sustainable careers, we need to understand what needs to change.

A review of research from the island of Ireland, the UK and Europe identified a range of drivers of low pay and poor working conditions which were then validated and augmented through consultations with artists and arts organisations. Although they may manifest differently in different sectors, eight common themes emerge.

Financial instability

- Late or slow payment
- Unpredictable and fluctuating work patterns
- Having to cover the cost of materials and travel before being paid
- Not being paid until the end of a project
- No access to sick pay, maternity pay top up, paid parental leave or means tested social payments
- Pay does not cover the cost of working

Excessive unpaid additional hours

- Expectation that artists and arts workers will work additional hours without additional pay
- No pay for time spent in meetings and on project management, planning, research and development, mandatory training, promotion, setting up and clearing away, get-in/get-outs, documentation, evaluation or report writing
- Artists do not cost the work required to complete every aspect of their involvement in a project

Low pay rates

- Artists and freelance arts workers' skills, knowledge and experience are not recognised or respected
- Organisations use funding increases to do more rather than pay artists fairly
- Rates have stagnated or not kept pace with cost-of-living increases
- Flat fees do not reflect what is required to do the job
- Lack of transparency about rates
- No contract

Lack of access to work opportunities

- Few opportunities to work
- Lack of suitable and affordable workspaces
- No access to professional networks, particularly for artists from underrepresented groups
- Some cannot take up opportunities because of caring responsibilities
- Intense competition for work
- Artists and freelance arts workers subsidise projects simply to work or for exposure

Weak negotiating position

- Artists and freelance arts workers are unable or unwilling to negotiate
- Representative organisations are under-resourced
- No access to information about what artists and arts workers should expect around pay and conditions
- Artists and freelance arts workers are engaged late in the planning process

Limited funding

- Applications are often only part-funded so artists' pay is reduced to match
- Short-term projects with small budgets are more likely to be funded but excessive additional unpaid hours are proportionally greater
- If funding is cut, organisations reduce pay to maintain levels of activity

High cost of work

- No contribution to travel, accommodation or meals when working away from home
- Studio, practice and rehearsal spaces are unaffordable
- High equipment and materials costs for artists in most sectors

No control of intellectual property

- No recognition of artists' rights over their intellectual property
- Unfair buy-out clauses
- Lack of transparency about how recordings of work will be used
- Expectation that artists will showcase their work on social media unpaid

Effective policies aim to eliminate or reduce the impact of these causes of low pay, precarious work and poor working conditions

Find out more about the drivers of low pay, precarious work and poor working conditions.

artscouncil.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Drivers-of-Low-Pay-Precarious-Work-and-Poor-Working-Conditions-in-the-Arts-Sector.pdf

“ We don’t contract artists but we can and do search for the spheres in which we can influence pay and conditions

Resource organisation

“ We treat people fairly, even if they don’t work for us, for example if they audition

Theatre company

What is Fair Pay, Fair Practice?

The Arts Council believes **Fair Pay, Fair Practice** is the foundation of productive, fulfilling and sustainable careers for artists and freelance arts workers. Fairness is broader and more complex than just rates of pay.

Fair pay is about a fair exchange of value. Remuneration is fair when it equates to what is asked in terms of time, input and expertise. It will account for the standing of an artist or freelance arts worker and reflect the value created by their engagement. It applies to all potential forms of earnings including pay, salary, wages, fees, allowances, benefits and non-cash incentives, as well as income derived from rights or royalties.

Fair practice is about the terms, conditions, attitudes and behaviour that ensure an ethical and respectful environment in which artists and freelance arts workers can work effectively and where opportunities are equitable. Work practices are fair when artists and freelance arts workers are treated justly, are recognised as professionals and their wellbeing is a priority.

Fair Pay, Fair Practice Principles

There are five principles at the heart of Fair Pay, Fair Practice.

RESPECT TRANSPARENCY OPPORTUNITY
SUSTAINABILITY FULFILMENT

Each principle is as important as the others and all must work together to create the change we all seek within our sector. These five principles will shape your Fair Pay, Fair Practice policy, helping you to make the decisions about what you can do in your organisation to create positive change.



RESPECT	Valuing artists and freelance arts workers, their time and their work
TRANSPARENCY	Being open and clear; giving artists and freelance arts workers an effective voice
OPPORTUNITY	Ensuring fair and equitable access to work and career development opportunities
SUSTAINABILITY	Advancing careers for the long-term
FULFILMENT	Enabling artists and freelance arts workers to do their best work, promoting wellbeing and motivation

What can we do?

This section sets out possible actions based on what at least some organisations in Ireland are already doing to improve pay and working conditions for artists and freelance arts workers, and on recommendations made in studies from across Europe.

Every artform and creative sector is different so the challenges in implementing fair pay and fair practice differ too. Not every action will be relevant to your artform or sector. Every organisation is different so some relevant actions will not be possible within your organisation’s context, scale or resources.

Start by identifying what your organisation already does. Then look at the actions that artists and freelance arts workers say will make the biggest difference to their professional and private lives and ask **what can we do?**

“ Our pay and conditions policy was the least onerous to develop. We wanted to create it. It’s in the bones of our organisation. It reflects our practice.

Literature organisation

“ Our past experience shows us how much a policy can help. It’s worth the time spent on making it bespoke.

Strategically funded organisation



RESPECT

VALUING ARTISTS AND
FREELANCE ARTS WORKERS,
THEIR TIME AND THEIR WORK

FAIR PAY, FAIR PRACTICE
PRINCIPLES



Respect

What does Fair Pay, Fair Practice look like?

- Artists and freelance arts workers are recognised as professionals
- Artists and freelance arts workers are always paid for their time and expertise
- Fair pay is prioritised in budgets
- Rates of pay recognise skills, knowledge and experience
- Pay reflects the actual time spent on every activity required to fulfil a contract

“ We raised our rates in 2024 even though we were on standstill funding. We raised them again in January 2025 and will do so again in 2026.

Children and young people's arts organisation

“ We help freelancers to track their time so they don't work more than they are paid for

Theatre company

Respect

What can we do?

For example:

- ☐ Never ask artists and freelance arts workers to work for free
- ☐ Set pay ranges rather than minimum rates
- ☐ Benchmark your pay rates against the National Minimum Wage, the National Living Wage and the national average hourly rate, not just the creative and cultural sectors
- ☐ Regularly gather and use the data needed to benchmark your pay rates, referencing the resources created by representative and resource organisations
- ☐ Enable negotiation by meeting artists and freelance arts workers to discuss and sign contracts
- ☐ Direct freelancers to the relevant resource organisation to ensure they understand what they are worth and can get advice on negotiating for it
- ☐ Consider the impact on artists of all your decisions
- ☐ Connect flat fees to the time required to fulfil a contract, ensuring a realistic understanding across your organisation of what specific roles will involve.
- ☐ Say how many hours a freelance job is expected to require in advertisements and the contract
- ☐ Pay artists and freelance arts workers overtime if they are required to work substantial additional hours
- ☐ Pay for meetings, travel days, mandatory training, planning, research and development, preparation, evaluation and documentation as well as delivery
- ☐ If the budget does not balance, rework the project in consultation with the artist rather than reducing artists' pay
- ☐ Ringfence artists and freelance arts workers' fees in budgets

“ Our starting point is always ‘what can we change for the better’ and so it’s not hard to create good working conditions because we see and listen to artists every day. We recognise our limitations, though. Our policy is realistic, practical and honest - we don’t want to over-promise because a policy is and should be an ongoing commitment.

Limerick Printmakers



TRANSPARENCY

**BEING OPEN AND CLEAR;
GIVING ARTISTS AND FREELANCE
ARTS WORKERS AN EFFECTIVE VOICE**

FAIR PAY, FAIR PRACTICE
PRINCIPLES



Transparency

What does Fair Pay, Fair Practice look like?

- Open and early communication in which artists and freelance arts workers have an effective voice
- Artists and freelance arts workers can easily access the rates paid by organisations in their sector
- All artists and freelance arts workers have clearly written and mutually agreed contracts
- Artists and freelance arts workers have more control over their intellectual property including royalties and the online exploitation of their work
- Organisations acknowledge the unequal power dynamic when working with artists and freelance arts workers

“ We published our rates of pay on our website. We were paying those rates anyway so it didn’t make a difference to our artists but it did to public perceptions

Strategically Funded Organisation

“ We flag up our pay and conditions policy to artists. It provides peace of mind because it lists in writing everything they can expect

Visual arts organisation

Transparency

What can we do?

For example:

- ☐ Enable unpressured negotiation by meeting artists and freelance arts workers to review the project before you finalise the contract
- ☐ Publish the actual rates your organisation pays and your policy on pay and working conditions
- ☐ Ensure artists and freelance arts workers understand your organisation’s systems and protocols
- ☐ Issue clear and transparent contracts, separating fees, production costs and expenses, setting out what is required from the artist or freelance arts worker and including the payment schedule, time taken to pay invoices and how to get paid
- ☐ If you do not intend to pay for a particular activity, say so and explain why not
- ☐ Resolve issues around ownership and copyright of any artworks produced as part of the project through negotiation at the pre-contract stage. Ensure fair credit and remuneration to cover its future exploitation
- ☐ Contracts should state whether performances and artworks will be shared online including in social media. Artists should have the right to refuse permission
- ☐ Pay additional fees for limited-time online sharing rights of artworks and recorded performances, particularly if they are not behind a paywall

“ Our policy on pay and conditions is part of an Artist Policy that starts with a statement of care that promises to treat all our artists and freelance contractors with respect, transparency, and professionalism. We also direct artists to useful resources in our policy, such as the Spark Arts for Children’s Code of Care, a toolkit which helps artists clearly express their needs, so they feel able to do their best work. This means that together we can get on and enjoy the job and the process.

Baboró International Arts Festival for Children

Opportunity

What does Fair Pay, Fair Practice look like?

- More flexible working practices are enabling more artists and freelance arts workers to take up work or career development opportunities
- More artists have access to suitable and affordable workspaces
- Artists and freelance arts workers have equal access to professional networks

“ We make our schedules as flexible as possible to allow artists to do commercial work like voice overs

Theatre company

“ Disabled artists and freelancers are doubly disadvantaged. We need to capture the data and specifically address the issue.

Representative organisation

OPPORTUNITY

ENSURING FAIR AND EQUITABLE
ACCESS TO WORK AND CAREER
DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

FAIR PAY, FAIR PRACTICE
PRINCIPLES



Opportunity

What can we do?

For example:

- ☐ Build fair pay and fair practice into your Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy
- ☐ Cultivate opportunities for artist development, mentoring and multiple engagements over time
- ☐ Offer paid opportunities to emerging artists
- ☐ Build flexibility into schedules so artists can fulfil their caring responsibilities or take up other paid work
- ☐ Offer networking opportunities and broker introductions
- ☐ Consult with each artist about how you might accommodate access requirements including preferred working style
- ☐ Create a fund to support the additional costs of artists with disabilities and/or caring responsibilities in accessing the work opportunities you offer
- ☐ Provide affordable workspace to enable artists and freelance arts workers to take up work opportunities
- ☐ Work with your colleagues within and across sectors, with resource organisations and with other relevant bodies to find the best way of paying artists and freelance arts workers in receipt of Disability Allowance and other social welfare payments

“ Responsiveness, connection and inclusion is at the heart of our work and of course this extends to the artists we work with. Our policy is dynamic, responding to informal discussion with company members before, during and after their contracts. The result is a much more level playing field in auditions, in rehearsal, on tour and around our training and development opportunities – and our work has been richer for it.

Anna Newell, theatre maker for young audiences



SUSTAINABILITY

ADVANCING CAREERS FOR THE LONG-TERM

FAIR PAY, FAIR PRACTICE
PRINCIPLES



Sustainability

What does Fair Pay, Fair Practice look like?

- Artists and freelance arts workers can earn a living wage throughout their careers
- Their cash flow is manageable
- Pay rates reflect the overheads involved in undertaking freelance work
- More artists and freelance arts workers have access to social supports such as sick pay

“ We work together in our sector to extend dancers’ inevitably short-term careers including physiotherapy, provision for injury and support into the future

Dance company

Sustainability

What can we do?

For example:

- ☐ Collaborate with colleagues within and across sectors to develop career paths
- ☐ Make provision for artists and freelance arts workers injured in the course of their work
- ☐ Facilitate additional income streams for artists
- ☐ Pay rates for online and in-person work that reflect the input required
- ☐ Pay annual increments to freelancers involved in long-term projects
- ☐ Budget artists and freelance arts workers’ fees, materials and expenses separately
- ☐ Ensure payments for travel, accommodation and subsistence keep pace with inflation
- ☐ Pay an instalment of the fee upfront and staged payments at milestones, setting this out clearly in the contract
- ☐ Pay artists and freelance arts workers promptly within ten days of receiving an invoice, telling them when they can expect payment
- ☐ If possible, give artists and freelance arts workers the option of flexible part-time employment so they have access to social supports and benefits
- ☐ If you have cash flow issues, commit to paying artists and freelance arts workers first
- ☐ Pay cancellation fees
- ☐ Pay for travel in advance
- ☐ Cover artists and freelance arts workers under your organisation’s public liability insurance policy or make a contribution towards the cost
- ☐ Set up an account with materials suppliers that artists can use
- ☐ Think creatively with artists about the support-in-kind they would find useful

“ Arts centres can’t engage artists as often as we would like. What we can do is influence visiting companies and promoters, for example we have paid a guarantee instead of a box office split to ensure the artists will be paid properly. When an artist complained that the promoter hadn’t paid them what was agreed and paid very late, we stopped working with that promoter. We now put residencies on the payroll as we believe organisations should pay PRSI as it gives artists a track record with Revenue that enables them to access welfare supports in the future

An Grianán Theatre

Fulfilment

What does Fair Pay, Fair Practice look like?

- Artists and freelance arts workers can work in a safe environment within a culture of care
- Artists and freelance arts workers are actively listened to and their views respected

“ It is in our interest commercially and artistically to make people happy. People are calculating what work is worth for them. It is not just about how much they are being paid. It is about working conditions

Theatre company

“ The context of the work environment matters but artists don't always know what to ask for. We actively raise their awareness

Strategically Funded Organisation

FULFILMENT

ENABLING ARTISTS AND FREELANCE ARTS WORKERS TO DO THEIR BEST WORK, PROMOTING WELLBEING AND MOTIVATION

FAIR PAY, FAIR PRACTICE
PRINCIPLES



Fulfilment

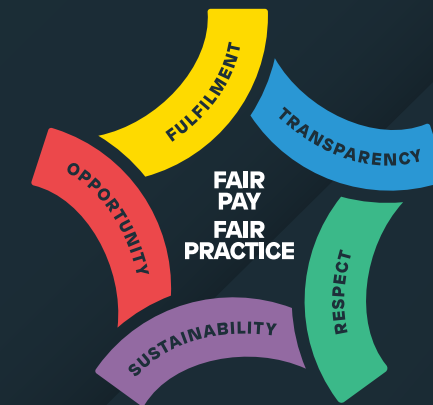
What can we do?

For example:

- Invite feedback from and listen to artists and freelance arts workers formally and informally e.g. by hosting regular coffee mornings or inviting their participation in annual reviews
- Seek to develop ongoing relationships with artists and freelance arts workers
- Include open and honest communication in your organisation's values
- Involve artists and freelance arts workers in project development as early as possible
- Prioritise improving working conditions for artists and freelance arts workers including the physical environment
- Set up an Employee Assistance Programme available to artists and freelance arts workers as well as employees or direct artists and freelance arts workers to free resources such as Minding Creative Minds
- Seek to understand the professional development needs of the artists and freelance arts workers you work with, providing relevant advice and support
- Outline in contracts the professional development supports you offer
- Respect break times
- Review shift lengths with reference to the EU Working Time Directive
- Sign up to Safe to Create

“ We aim to be a company that people want to work for so we were clear from the outset that our policy was about pay AND working conditions. It is about supporting artists and their work, paying people appropriately, and ensuring the working experience is a positive and supportive one.

Fishamble: The New Play Company



DEVELOPING AN EFFECTIVE POLICY

FAIR PAY, FAIR PRACTICE
POLICY TOOLKIT



How to develop an effective policy

What is a policy?

The terms policy, strategy and plan often get used interchangeably, but each has a very distinct meaning and purpose.

A **strategy** sets out at a high level the choices made by an organisation in relation to the focus of its work over an extended period.

A **plan** generally follows the development of a strategy and is a more detailed mapping of the actions an organisation will take and resources it will need to deliver on objectives identified in its strategy, within a set timeframe.

A **policy** sets out an organisation's position and the principles that will guide its decisions and actions in relation to a particular subject. Very often, policies exist specifically to create change.

“ We have too many policies but they are all essential. They are the visible culture of our organisation so we can lead by example. They create change and embed it in our practice so that change becomes business as usual

Visual arts organisation

“ Our pay and conditions policy meant we had to say no to projects that did not meet our standards. We see this as a short-term loss for long-term gain. We all need to be on the same page to enable these difficult decisions

Literature organisation

What should a policy include?

A good policy is a clear, intentional and living document that is regularly reviewed and updated. Its content follows a logical structure, setting out your thinking and decisions as follows:

- 1. Introduction**
Who are you? What do you do? Why? For whom?
- 2. Context**
What is this policy about? Do you need to define what your organisation means by key terms e.g. artist, arts worker, fair pay, fair practice?
- 3. Purpose**
A clear and unequivocal statement summing up the reason for your policy. Why does it exist? What are you seeking to do? Why is it important?
- 4. Scope**
Who is this policy for? What aspects of your work will it cover and not cover in the timeframe of your policy? What's going on in your organisation or in the external world that is influencing what you can and cannot do currently?
- 5. Principles**
What principles or organisational values are guiding the policy? Are there any industry standards you wish to align with?
- 6. Practices**
What are you committing to do?
- 7. Related policies**
Are there other relevant or complementary policies or documents that you need to align with or reference?
- 8. Implementation and responsibilities**
How will your policy be turned into action? Who will be responsible? Who approved the policy? When? What version is it?
- 9. Monitoring and review**
How will your policy be reviewed and kept up to date? How often will it be reviewed? Who will review it?

“ Policies can't make a difference if you don't have a clear intention or an action plan

Strategically Funded Organisation

Policy development step by step

1. Have conversations: with artists, freelance arts workers, your staff, your board

Gather information to guide your conversations. A list of resources is available

artscouncil.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Representative-and-resource-organisations-2025.pdf

“ We use Equity minimums and other festivals’ rates as external references. We also ask a wide range of musicians, not just the ones I’m booking, about their expectations

Festival

“ We undertook research into pay rates at similar organisations here and in Europe. This was a wake-up call because, although ours were roughly in-line, they were at the lower end of the range

Children and young people’s arts organisation

Talk about:

- ☐ What are you doing already: what is working, what could be changed or strengthened, what is missing?
- ☐ What’s going on in the external environment that may influence what you decide to do?
- ☐ How does this policy relate to your organisation’s values, strategy and other policies such as your artistic, EDI or climate action policies?
- ☐ What does your organisation and sector need to make the policy specific and relevant to you?
- ☐ What might your organisation be able to influence, individually and as part of collective action?
- ☐ Are there any legitimate instances where Fair Pay, Fair Practice does not apply e.g. where your organisation adopts a volunteering approach? Why?

“ We need to find alternatives to commercial models so it is not always artists that have to account for market failure

Music organisation

“ It’s worth thinking about what consultation with artists might look like. Informal conversations can be effective

Strategically Funded Organisation

2. Use the worksheet to structure your discussions
3. Use the template to turn your thinking into a policy
4. Turn your policy into transformative, practical actions using the Implementation Plan template

Summarise your organisation: who you are, why you exist, what you do, who you do it for

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WORKSHEET

WORKSHEET FOR CREATING A FAIR PAY, FAIR PRACTICE POLICY

FAIR PAY, FAIR PRACTICE
POLICY TOOLKIT



Context

In this section, set out what you understand as Fair Pay, Fair Practice, give an overview of what pay and working conditions are like for the artists and freelance arts workers you work with now and what you hope to improve for the future as part of a sector-wide movement of change.

What is Fair Pay, Fair Practice?
Adapt the definition on page 6 to make it relevant to your organisation and sector

The current state of fair pay and fair practice
What are pay and working conditions like in your sector? What, if anything, is working well to support fair pay and fair practice? What is not?

Context

What do the artists and freelance arts workers you work with say about their current pay and working conditions and what would make them better?

How is your organisation currently contributing to transforming pay and conditions for artists and freelance arts workers? Explain any exceptions to Fair Pay, Fair Practice.

Context

What could you change?

Where does your organisation have scope to create positive change? What can you control? What can you influence?

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Purpose

Sum up clearly and unequivocally the reason for your policy. Why does it exist? What are you seeking to do? Why is it important?

[illegible]

Scope

Who and what does this policy apply to?

For example: This policy is for any artist/company with whom we work, including those presenting work, our artists-in-residence, our commissioned artists, participants in our career development programme and any other creatives contracted by us. It applies to all aspects of our relationships with artists and freelance arts workers.

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Principles

How do your organisation's principles or values align with the five principles of **Fair Pay, Fair Practice**?

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Practices

Respect

How will your organisation value artists and freelance arts workers, their time and their work?

Transparency

How will your organisation be open and clear in all that you do? How will you give artists and freelance arts workers an effective voice?

Practices

Opportunity

How will your organisation ensure fair and equitable access to work and career development?

Sustainability

How will your organisation advance careers for the long-term?

Practices

Fulfilment

How will your organisation enable artists and freelance arts workers to do their best work, promoting wellbeing and motivation?

Fulfilment

How will your organisation enable artists and freelance arts workers to do their best work, promoting wellbeing and motivation?

[illegible]

Related policies

Which of your other policies are related to, impact on or are impacted by this policy?

[illegible]

Responsibilities

Who is signing off this policy on behalf of the organisation?

Who is responsible for ensuring it is implemented?

Who is responsible for implementing each aspect of this policy?

Monitoring and review

What information will you need to review this policy? How will you collect it?

How often will this policy be reviewed?

Monitoring and review

Who is responsible for making sure the policy is reviewed and signing off any change?

Who will undertake the review?

Fair Pay, Fair Practice Policy template

Use the following headings to structure your policy document. The policy you create using this template should be discussed and approved, usually by your board or trustees. The Chair should sign and date the policy as formally adopted, noting which version of the policy it is.

Introduction...

This is the Fair Pay, Fair Practice policy of [insert organisation name]

About us...

Context...

Purpose...

Scope...

Principles...

Practices...

Respect Transparency Opportunity Sustainability Fulfilment

Related policies...

Responsibilities...

Monitoring and review...

Implementation Plan template

- Your policy will include much that your organisation is already doing. Capture that here alongside what you will do to embed new actions into everyday practice.
- Your implementation plan will change and develop as you deliver your policy.

Plan template on next page.

							Fair Pay, Fair Practice Principle
							Action
							Result
							When?
							Who is involved?
							Status

Other useful resources

Listing of representative and resource organisations

The Arts Council maintains a listing of representative and resource organisations that provide a range of services and supports relevant to artists and freelance arts workers. Our listing specifically identifies the useful tools, resources, templates and guides provided by these organisations.

artscouncil.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Representative-and-resource-organisations-2025.pdf

Research informing this toolkit

In developing this toolkit we undertook a review of research that identified the drivers of low pay, precarious work and poor working conditions.

artscouncil.ie/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Drivers-of-Low-Pay-Precarious-Work-and-Poor-Working-Conditions-in-the-Arts-Sector.pdf

Arts Council policy and practice

The Arts Council's own Paying the Artist policy and Statement of Practice is available here.

artscouncil.ie/developing-the-arts/developmental-policies

Notes

FAIR PAY, FAIR PRACTICE

POLICY TOOLKIT



Published by the Arts Council 2025

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