

Information Sheet: How to pay artists

If you are employing artists in any capacity it is extremely important that you budget to pay them correctly. Bear in mind that professional artists and performers are highly skilled and have usually spent some considerable time in training and developing their practice. This should be recognised in the fees they receive for work which they undertake.

It can be tempting to hope that, because you are a community group or poorly funded voluntary organisation, an artist may be prepared to do you a favour and work for less than the going rate. You need to remember that for the artist, although such work is almost certainly a vocation, it also represents their bread and butter. Quite literally!

Some professional artists and performers will be members of a union or professional body – such as Equity, the Artists Union or the Musicians Union – which will give advice on the appropriate costing for a piece of work.

Generally, when considering a budget for work with a visual artist you should think loosely along the lines of:

- Commission for a specific piece of work – cost set by the artist based on the proposal
- Sessional cost of employing an artist to work with a community group etc. – in the region of £225/day for one-off or short-term pieces of work (this will vary depending on the experience of the artist)
- Residencies or longer term pieces of work – consider this on a pro rata salary basis depending on the skills and experience you require from the artist. A salary could range from £16 000 to in excess of £30 000. Work this out on a weekly or monthly basis depending on the length of the residency you have available

Usually artist's fees are paid *on top of* expenses for materials and travel. The cost of preparation and planning should be negotiated individually with the artist when planning a piece of work.

Nationally recognised minimum rates are set by the entertainment unions and the appropriate employers' bodies. Entertainment union members can access information about rates from their union. Obligations are also imposed on the employer regarding the National Minimum Wage and the Living Wage. You can find out more information on this at www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates

For further information:

Artists Union England - for visual artists
www.artistsunionengland.org.uk

a-n The Artists Information Company – for visual artists
www.a-n.co.uk

BECTU – for technical staff
www.bectu.org.uk

Equity – for actors, singers and dancers
www.equity.org.uk

Musicians' Union – for musicians
www.musiciansunion.org.uk

Writers' Guild – for writers
www.writersguild.org.uk

You'll also find information about paying artists for exhibitions here: <http://www.payingartists.org.uk/>

