



Engaging Creative Freelancers

Best Practice Guide

A CULT Cymru resource for
organisations, engagers and members

Supporting Freelancers Building Better Work



EQUITY



WGGB THE WRITERS' UNION



Supporting Freelancers Building Better Work

Simple steps to support freelancers and strengthen the creative sector

By looking after freelancers, we not only protect their wellbeing but also build stronger, more resilient creative work for everyone. Freelancers bring creativity, expertise and flexibility to the whole creative sector, and supporting them strengthens us all.

This guide is for anyone who engages creative freelancers, from venues and producers to managers and organisations of all sizes as well as freelancers themselves. It sets out simple, good practice steps

that support wellbeing across creative environments, reflect union standards, and encourage positive conversations between engagers, freelancers and unions. Above all, it shows how small, thoughtful changes can make a big difference to people's working lives.

For further advice & support please contact the Creative Unions Learning Together - CULT Cymru cultcymru@bectu.org.uk

Best Practice For Engaging Creative Freelancers

1 Clear Communication	3
2 Inclusive and Fair Recruitment Practices	4
3 Contracts and Booking Process	6
4 Arrival and On-Site Procedures	8
5 Terms and Policies for Safe and Respectful Workspaces	9
6 Facilities and Amenities	10
7 Health, Safety and Risk Management	12
8 Information and Support	14
9 Exit and Review Processes	15
10 Expert Guidance and Support	16

1 Clear Communication



Open, respectful and professional dialogue is key to a successful working relationship.

- Setting clear expectations, agreeing on a timeline and having a list of deliverables helps ensure all parties are aligned and can work together
- Answering questions promptly and building in opportunities for updates helps foster trust and prevent misunderstandings
- Providing feedback and acknowledging achievements helps to maintain morale and supports positive collaboration.

Effective communication can enhance collaboration and contribute to a positive and productive working environment.



2 Inclusive and Fair Recruitment Practices

A clear and equitable recruitment process for both freelance and audition opportunities will create an inclusive and fair environment that will help you attract the best talent.



It's important to plan for reasonable adjustments/access requirements to support disabled freelancers from the very beginning, for example by including a budget line for reasonable adjustments/access requirements in funding applications and ensuring all staff are trained to use Access Riders as part of the booking process.

You can also:

- Use plain and inclusive language in your recruitment materials so that you don't accidentally create barriers or exclude any groups
- Check your wording to ensure that it's easy to understand and includes all the necessary information potential applicants need
- Provide information on access provisions and policies in your recruitment materials and encourage applicants to reach out with their access needs
- Advertise vacancies on diverse and inclusive platforms to reach a wide range of potential applicants



Once you've recruited someone, it's important to foster an inclusive workplace.

You can do that by:

- Recognising and making space for different ways of working and communicating: some people may need information communicated in a specific way such as, extra time to process information, access to quiet spaces or regular check-ins scheduled in advance
- Understanding that social styles vary: some people may not enjoy small talk or working in a large group but still do great work
- Being mindful of people's time: respect freelancers' schedules and make sure that timelines and expectations are clear and fair

By adopting these inclusive practices, you create an environment where freelancers feel valued, supported, and have an equal opportunity to succeed.

3 Contracts and Booking Process



Simple and transparent booking processes help to set out expectations and ensure fair and professional working conditions for everyone involved.

This includes:

- Clear, open and respectful communication at every stage
- Fair compensation that includes pay in line with union standards and reasonable expenses such as travel and materials
- Respecting and applying collective agreements where they exist
- Written contracts that clearly outline the scope of work, important deadlines, how and when people will be paid, and who owns any related intellectual property and clarity on how credit will be acknowledged

Trade unions in the creative sector provide best practice guidance, recommended minimum rates and contracts to help ensure all parties are treated fairly.



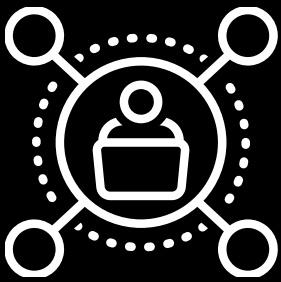
“We need workplaces for creatives that are as fair as they are functional, ensuring every individual feels valued and heard.”

Pete Bayliss. Composer, Sound Designer and Producer

Union Learning Representative and Mentor for the Musicians' Union
via CULT Cymru.

4 Arrival and On-Site Procedures

A well-organised arrival process helps to avoid stress and sets the tone for a professional and productive experience.



Before their first day:

- Give clear instructions on how to get to the venue or workplace, including opening times and clear guidance on parking and loading / unloading areas
- Let them know what tools and amenities are provided, such as internet access, staff rooms, green rooms, accessible toilets and changing facilities
- Assign and brief a designated point of contact who can answer general questions or concerns

On their first day:

- Introduce them to the designated point of contact
- Give any access codes or passes necessary for their job, including access to where they will be working, staff rooms, green rooms, changing rooms and facilities such as toilets
- Provide information about union reps, first aiders and mental health first aiders, and any workplace policies and channels for reporting bullying, harassment or discrimination

5 Terms and Policies for Safe and Respectful Workspaces

To foster a safe and respectful environment, it is crucial to share clear policies with freelancers from the outset.

Every workplace should have:

- Sexual harassment policy
- Industry code of practice and/or bullying, harassment and discrimination policy
- General code of conduct that outlines expectations for behaviour, emphasising the importance of good conduct, mutual respect, and professionalism



It is important to:

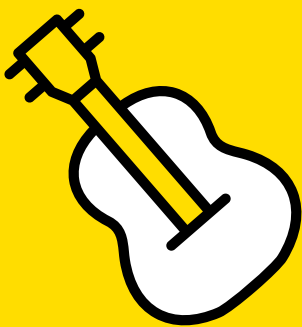
- Promote equality, diversity and inclusion through clear policies that support representation and fairness for all
- Ensure that where freelancers are at risk of bullying, harassment, discrimination, they can access the relevant processes
- Respect and give consideration to freelancers' equality and access riders
- Ensure the workplace is accessible and responsive to the needs of underrepresented groups (e.g. disabled people, carers, those from global majority backgrounds)
- Ensure that all workplace policies are readily available
- Offer appropriate channels for reporting issues and handle concerns promptly and fairly
- Prioritise GDPR and digital security by using secure platforms for sharing sensitive files and personal information, safeguarding the privacy and safety of everyone involved

6 Facilities and Amenities





A safe, well-maintained and fully equipped working environment is essential to supporting freelancers.



This includes:

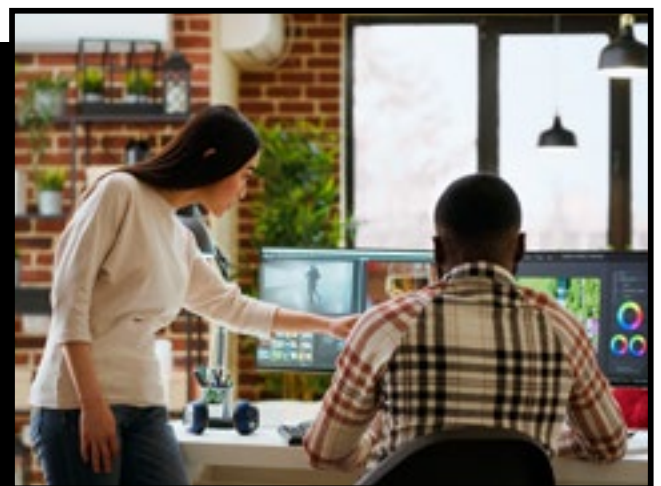
- Making essential tools available, such as reliable electricity and WiFi
- Providing clean and accessible toilet facilities
- Ensuring key amenities, such as access to food and drink appropriate to the working day, a place to rest and eat meals, secure storage for personal belongings and private changing spaces if required
- Signposting first aid kits and emergency contacts helps to ensure a safe and responsive workplace
- Ensure that signage and information are accessible to all using plain language, clear visual contrast, and formats that support different needs



Freelancers can experience a range of physical, mental and emotional risks at work. It's vital you conduct a thorough risk assessment that meets the specific needs of each project, gig or production.

This includes:

- Accounting for risks associated with lone working and working at night such as walking back to cars or taking public transport late at night/ early in the morning, helps to protect safety and security
- Standard Risk Assessments, plus Mental Health and Stress Risk Assessments to help identify and manage potential challenges



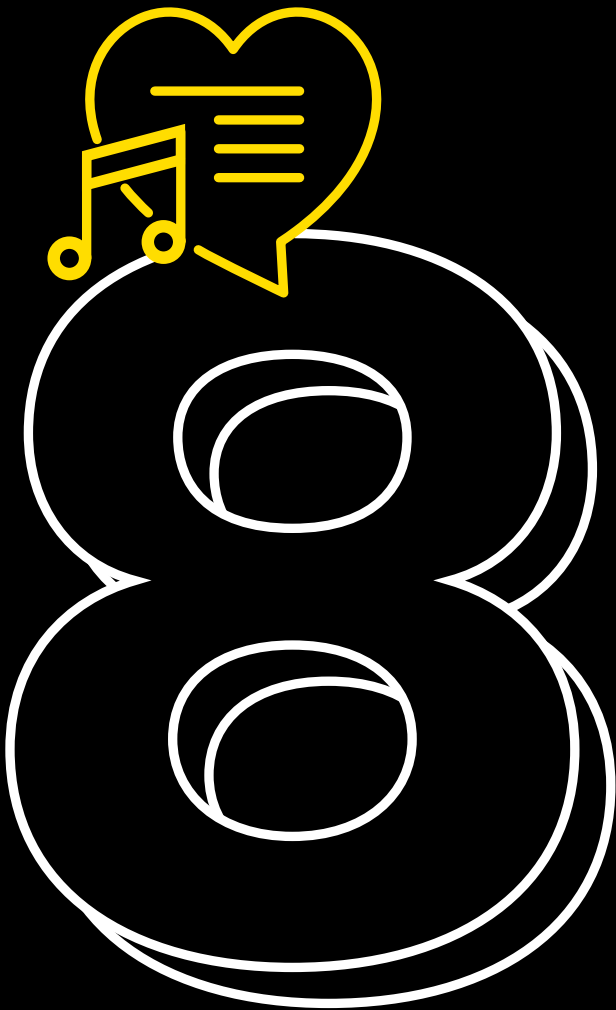
Providing relevant safety training and/or clear health and safety guidelines helps to ensure that everyone is aware of potential risks and knows how to manage them effectively.

Consider measures such as:

- Free parking on site
- Providing accompaniment for ongoing transport by 2 members of staff, unless requested otherwise
- Making details of reputable taxi firm available
- Payment for freelancers' travel that's made clear within their contract

Every workplace should have First Aiders and Mental Health First Aiders as part of the crew or team to provide emergency support when necessary. Make sure everyone knows who they are and how to contact them in case of any concerns to help ensure a safer, more supportive environment for all.





It is essential to provide freelancers with accessible information and resources that support their wellbeing and rights.

- Provide information and display posters about industry unions and organisations
- Signpost clear channels for reporting harassment or discrimination
- Share resources for physical and mental health and wellbeing to ensure that all workers have easy access to the support they need

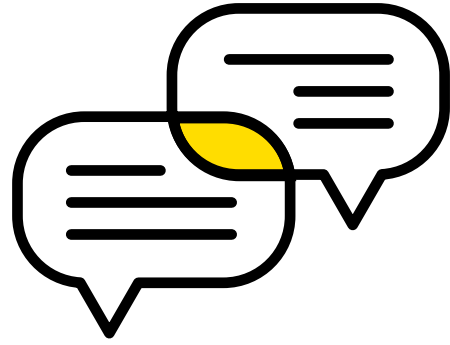
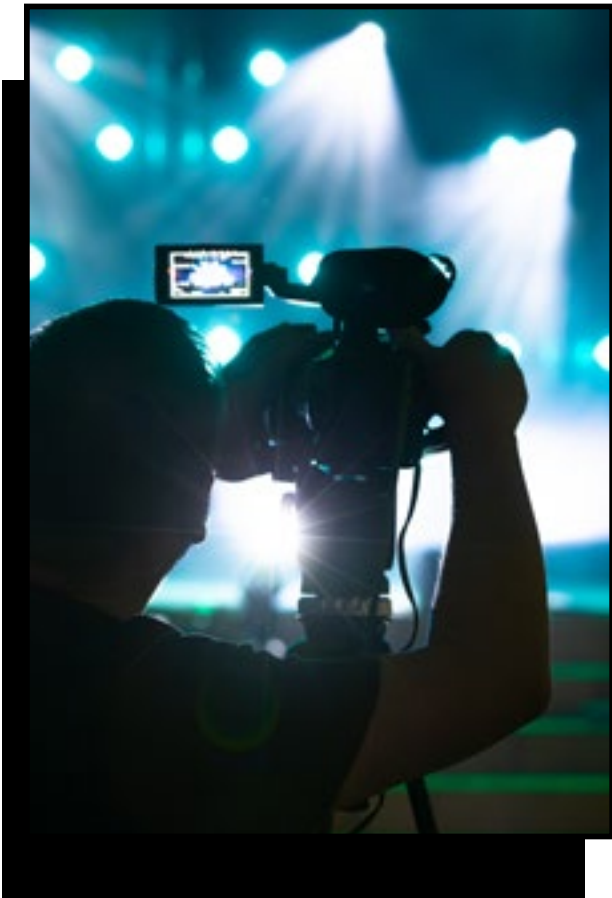
Where possible:

- Engage Wellbeing Facilitators/Coordinators to offer on-site or remote support for freelancers, ensuring access to expert help when needed
- Provide access to digital portals that contain up-to-date mental health resources, support networks and guidelines for maintaining a healthy work-life balance

Offering both physical and digital resources helps to create a more inclusive and supportive working environment for everyone.

9 Exit and Review Processes

Showing that you respect freelancers time and contributions helps to strengthen your working relationship and set a positive tone for future collaborations.



- Pay freelancers promptly and fairly in line with the terms outlined in the contract and in the relevant collective agreement
- Ask for feedback from freelancers about their experience
- Offer other forms of recognition, such as referrals, testimonials and references

This fosters trust, shows appreciation for their work and enhances both of your professional reputations.



10

Good practice is a shared effort.

If you need advice or guidance, these trusted organisations and unions can provide the support you need.

For information about union Health & Safety representatives, please contact the relevant union directly.





CULT Cymru

Supporting creative workers across Wales to reach their potential.

→ Cult.Cymru/En ✉ cultcymru@bectu.org.uk



CULT Cymru Training and Mental Health & Wellbeing Resources

Building skills, confidence and wellbeing for Wales' creative workforce.

→ Cult.Cymru/En/Upcoming-Training



Musicians' Union

The trade union for musicians, offering support and industry representation.

→ theMU.org



Equity

The trade union for performers and creative workers across stage and screen.

→ Equity.org.uk/Contact-Us



Writers' Guild

The trade union for writers across TV, film, theatre and audio.

→ WritersGuild.org.uk/Contact-Us



Bectu

The trade union for creative, technical and backstage professionals.

→ BECTU.org.uk/Contact-Us

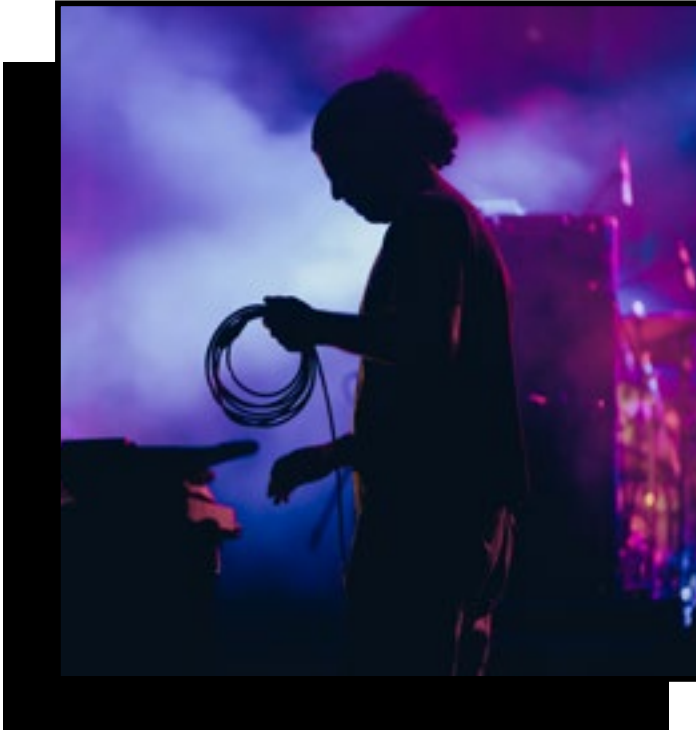


CIISA - Creative Industries Independent Standards Authority

Improving standards of behaviour across the creative industries.

→ ciisa.org.uk

One last thing...



Awareness can help us all make more positive decisions about how we work together, creating a supportive and respectful environment for everyone involved. By working together, we can make creative workplaces healthier, fairer and more sustainable.

Supporting freelancers strengthens us all, and every small step towards better practice helps build stronger, more resilient creative work for the future.

Every small, thoughtful change adds up and together can create transformative improvements in working lives.

CULT Cymru (Creative Unions Learning Together) is a joint union learning programme funded through the Welsh Government's Wales Union Learning Fund and Creative Wales. We offer a range of training and learning activities for Wales' creative workforce, employers and industry bodies, alongside bespoke programmes such as Wellbeing Facilitator placements and Mental Health First Aid training.

For information about specific training or support, or to share comments on this document, please contact: cultcymru@bectu.org.uk and we will be happy to advise or signpost support.