

Festivals Edinburgh Fair Work Policy

Effective from July 2023

1. Policy Context

Festivals Edinburgh practises Fair Work principles proportionate to the scale of our organisation, in line with the Scottish Government's [Fair Work First](#) policy which supports employers who adopt fair working practices, specifically:

- payment of at least the real Living Wage;
- provide appropriate channels for effective workers' voice, such as trade union recognition;
- investment in workforce development;
- no inappropriate use of zero hours contracts;
- action to tackle the gender pay gap and create a more diverse and inclusive workplace;
- offer flexible and family friendly working practices for all workers from day one of employment; and,
- oppose the use of fire and rehire practice.

2. Industry Context

Festivals Edinburgh recognises the strains of common working patterns in the Creative Industries, as well as the higher than average job satisfaction that people often experience in this sector - and we strive to minimise the former and maximise the latter.

In February 2023 the UK Creative Industries Policy & Evidence Centre (PEC) published the [Good Work Review](#) - the first examination of job quality across the entire UK creative industries - with Creative Scotland as the Scottish [partner](#) in this work. The study found that 'people working in the Creative Industries tended to have higher job satisfaction than workers in other sectors, could work more flexibly, and found their work to be an outlet for their creative passion'. However, they also found that there was 'lower than average pay in some sectors, long hours, evidence for poor workplace culture, and unequal access to the creative industries, with many people needing to work for free to get a foot in the door'. Due to structure, practices, informality and culture there is a continuing need to improve job security, training, diversity and inclusion, and workplace health and wellbeing.

In terms of the skills and development opportunities we can offer workers, we are encouraged by forecasts that predict creative sector jobs will be future facing jobs resistant to automation. A 2021 UK Government report on the [Potential Impact of Artificial Intelligence on UK Employment and the Demand for Skills](#) concludes that 'jobs will be created to provide relatively hard-to automate services that are in greater demand due to the additional real incomes arising from higher productivity generated by AI - these include health care services but also other personal services and the artistic and creative industries'.

3. Festivals Edinburgh Practices in line with Fair Work First Criteria

3.1 Payment of at least the real Living Wage

- Festivals Edinburgh is an accredited Living Wage Employer with the [Living Wage Foundation](#), paying above the real Living Wage to all employees.
- When engaging relevant freelance contractors, we refer to Creative Scotland's [Rates of Pay Guidance](#).

3.2 Appropriate channels for effective workers' voice

- Festivals Edinburgh employs around 6 full-time equivalent staff and this small scale is valuable in fostering a collegiate approach.
- There are routine channels for effective staff voice through fortnightly all staff meetings where each member of staff brings a project, opportunity and challenge to mention, and all staff are encouraged to contribute to shared learning and problem solving.
- Staff typically meet their managers individually once a week for a regular two-way dialogue.
- In all meetings we strive for openness, transparency, dialogue and acceptance of different viewpoints.
- FE makes staff aware of the processes set out in our staff handbook for raising issues outside of team meeting and line management channels where appropriate, including provisions to raise issues with the Director or a member of the Board if necessary, as part of informal and formal stages of our grievance policy.
- In addition to these provisions, we will consult staff on the usefulness of an anonymous online 'suggestion box' with submissions regularly shared with management.
- We welcome staff members joining a trade union of their choice and we will make explicit mention of this in future employment contracts.
- At the end of an employee's contract with Festivals Edinburgh, we set up an exit interview to understand their reflections, issues and recommendations from their time with the company.

3.3 Investment in workforce development

- Festivals Edinburgh invests in workforce development through a range of informal and formal opportunities. We acknowledge that as a small organisation there are limited opportunities for internal progression, but there is a strong track record of staff progressing to opportunities across our member festivals, partners and stakeholders and we work to continue to foster these pathways.
- Fortnightly meetings where all staff share current opportunities and challenges are a real-time opportunity for sharing learning and problem solving across the team, in a positive spirit of mutual coaching.
- Individual management meetings provide regular opportunities to discuss and understand areas of interest for development.
- FE ensures that each member of staff has regular contact with one or more working group of specialist festivals staff, which offers continual developmental opportunities to draw on the

knowledge and advice of these professional communities of practice. Staff are also encouraged to use these networks for independent one to one professional advice where relevant.

- All staff have an annual allowance equivalent to the price of around four average festival tickets, to ensure they are able to develop their understanding of recent programming by our member festivals.
- FE maintains membership of professional industry networks including the Green Arts Initiative, Federation of Scottish Theatre, Culture Counts, UK Theatre, Creative UK and the European Festivals Association, to help staff can take advantage of relevant industry training courses, conferences and workshops.
- FE also makes staff aware that we set aside an annual budget for a small allowance for paid professional development per person, which can be used for activities agreed between the member of staff and their manager that contribute to professional development.
- For approx. 4 seasonal staff employed annually by Festivals Edinburgh for special projects around the peak summer festivals season, we hold an induction session where new colleagues meet the year-round team, hear about the wider work of Festivals Edinburgh, and are encouraged to share thoughts and questions. In one to one discussions during seasonal contracts we try to understand how the experience can help with career development, for example shadowing other team members at relevant meetings or being introduced to contacts who could help with information about future opportunities.

3.4 No inappropriate use of zero-hours contracts

- It is Festivals Edinburgh policy not to use zero-hours contracts.

3.5 Action to tackle the gender pay gap and create a more diverse and inclusive workplace

- Festivals Edinburgh monitors the gender pay gap and the diversity characteristics of our currently 6 FTE workforce with an anonymised survey, to inform management decisions to help make Festivals Edinburgh a more diverse and inclusive workplace.
- We work to implement robust and transparent recruitment and selection procedures that encourage a more diverse workforce, in line with our Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion policy
- We advertise all contracts of over six months in duration, and our default practice is to advertise all shorter term contracts unless there is a business case agreed with the Director that justifies why any smaller contract may not be advertised, for example due to urgency or specialist skills required.
- To maximise employment security, even though the majority of our income is annualised, we offer open ended employment contracts where we assess that there are good prospects for renewal of grant contracts.
- We will not use unpaid interns, and will ask contractors to declare they do not use unpaid interns.
- We offer regional transport season ticket loans and a salary sacrifice Cycle to Work scheme to support employees with more affordable travel options.

3.6 Offer flexible and family friendly working practices for all workers

- We recognise that flexible and family friendly working practices can help workers align with family life, caring commitments and management of health conditions.
- We highlight in our recruitment details that we are happy to consider proposed flexible working arrangements that balance workers' needs with operational requirements.
- For example, several current staff benefit from compressed hours and part-time remote working arrangements.

3.7 Oppose the use of fire and rehire practice

- Festivals Edinburgh is opposed to the use of 'fire and rehire' practices. This is the terminology currently most used to describe the practice of 'dismissal and reengagement'. It is described by ACAS as one option that may be available to an employer seeking to effect changes to employees' contractual terms; it involves dismissing employees and immediately re-engaging them on a new contract with new terms.

4. Responsibility and review

The Director and the Board of Directors are responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented. An annual review will be carried out by the General Manager and any recommendations for change will be considered by the Board or relevant committee.