

# Youth Music's flexible funding policy

Our approach to flexible funding supports applicants and funded partners to budget in a fair and sustainable way.

The image below summarises the three budgeting principles that make up our approach to flexible funding:

- Equity and wellbeing
- Beyond delivery
- Room to adapt



# Applicants

From consulting with applicants, we know that there is often a perceived pressure to present budgets to funders that maximise delivery costs and so-called 'value for money', and minimise overheads, planning and reflection time.

If you're applying to Youth Music, we encourage you to use our budgeting principles to ensure that your budget is fair and sustainable for everyone involved. This means accounting for the real costs of your project, not just the delivery time.

Our budgeting principles are:

## Equity and wellbeing

**Paying people fairly:** Paying people fairly should be a priority. As a minimum, you should pay the Real Living Wage. But freelancers should expect more than this. If you're contracting music leaders, remember to build in time for planning and reflection too. A real living wage is not a real living wage if you're only working 2 hours per week. If you engage part time workers or freelancers, try and meet the terms of the Living Hours scheme. If that's not possible, speak to your freelance workforce about how to make it easier for them to engage in multiple contracts.

**Removing barriers to access:** Include budget to remove barriers to access. These might cover things like travel, food, or equipment. If you charge young people to attend sessions, ensure this is not a barrier. A flexible and easy-access fee remission policy is a must. Consider what access costs there will be for your workforce, particularly if you're partnering with Disabled people or people on low incomes.

## Think beyond delivery costs

The true costs of delivering a music project with children and young people are likely to involve things like venue hire, music leader fees, equipment and marketing. Including enough budget for reflection and evaluation will help you to deliver the project well and adapt to what you're learning.

We know that many grassroots organisations don't have regular core funding. Ensure you recoup the real value of core costs from your project funding. This is essential to support your organisation to be financially sustainable. The budget in your application to Youth Music can contain a mix of delivery costs and core costs, and you set the ratios for each. Think about including ongoing core costs (such as salaries for staff who aren't working directly on the project) and project-based core costs. These could include developing your policies and practices around safeguarding; equality, diversity and inclusion; or environmental responsibility.

## Leave room to adapt

Build flexibility into your budget by including some contingency costs (up to 10% of your Youth Music grant). This gives you room to adapt in response to learning. It gives you more space to innovate, respond to young people or take up new opportunities. If you're running a programme across multiple years, consider budgeting for inflation beyond year one. We rarely increase overall grant amounts but have a flexible approach to budget changes, so long as our grants criteria are still met.

## Funded Partners

The cost of living crisis means projects are facing increased costs such as staff payments, overheads, access and wellbeing support. Our flexible funding means that:

- There's room to make changes with your grant when it comes to things like budgets, grant reporting timescales and project outputs.
- While we can rarely increase the overall amount of your grant, we can be flexible about the programme to help you deal with current needs. For example, scaling back delivery outputs (e.g. number of workshops or events) so that grant money can be diverted to core costs or used to increase pay rates.
- As a living wage funder, we'd encourage you to ensure fair pay and especially to pay the [Real Living Wage](#). The current Real Living Wage is currently (January 2024) £12 per hour and £13.15 in London.
- We can bring forward some of your last grant payment if you need it for cash-flow.

You'll need to run most changes by us unless they are minor or cost less than £1,000. If your project outcomes are the same, you're on top of the project management, then it's likely we'll be happy with your request. Please contact your Grants and Learning Officer if you wish to request a change.

# YOUTH MUSIC

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