

Fierce Festival Freelance Policy

March 2022

Introduction

Fierce works with freelancers regularly and in a variety of roles across our festival and other projects. This policy outlines our philosophy and procedures for working with freelancers and sits alongside our Recruitment Policy which deals specifically with the recruitment for new roles, both freelance and salaried. This policy is based on our core values:

- Trust: we seek to build trust by being open and honest about our relationships with freelancers including how we recruit, fees we offer and the work we expect.
- Joy: we will do everything we can to ensure working for Fierce is an enjoyable experience and that freelancers feel just as much a part of our team as any staff on salaries.
- Disruption: we do not always employ the person with the most experience, we give less-experienced freelancers the opportunity to develop into their role, it is more important that we enjoy working with each other.
- Rigour: we recruit and manage freelancers with the same rigour we apply to salaried staff and expect the same levels of rigour in their work for us.

We recognise the value of the freelance workforce and know that not everyone has the ambition to be in a salaried role; we want to support that workforce that is vital to our sector. Our policy for offering roles as freelance rather than salaries is when at least one of the following is true:

- The role is less than 1 year in length;
- It is attached to a specific project with a limited timeframe for delivery;
- The hours are irregular or will change across the lifespan of the project.

Recruitment of Freelancers

When we go to open recruitment for freelance roles at Fierce we do so using our usual Recruitment Policy, with the same rigour as we apply to recruiting salaried staff and with the same procedures.

There may also be circumstances when we approach known freelancers for specific roles and either directly offer them the work or ask them to interview without having to write an application. This could happen if:

- They have successfully done the role, or a very similar role at Fierce before;
- We have interviewed them for a different role in the past and thought that their skills and experience were more suited for a role other than the one they applied to;
- We know them through work on other projects, with partners or work we have done with them in the past outside of the context of Fierce and think that their skills and experience are suitable for the role.

We do this because we recognise that recruitment processes are time-consuming and exhausting, particularly for freelancers who necessarily have to do this more

frequently, and for the staff who administrate these processes at Fierce. As there is usually only one role, it also leads to several people being disappointed. We commit to publicly advertising 50% of roles on any project so that we are regularly meeting new people.

This process is at the discretion of the core team; there is no promise of repeat work for freelancers, no matter how amazing we think they are. We want to reward loyalty and hard work but must also respond to the needs of individual projects which may call for people with particular lived or professional experience. We also know that recruitment processes can help to introduce us to new people and have previously gone on to offer freelance work to people we have interviewed for other roles.

Professional Development and Support

Fierce offers freelancers support and development relevant to their roles on an informal and ad-hoc basis.

We recognise that freelance staff are often denied the opportunity to undertake training offered to salaried staff so whenever we have general training (i.e. not specific to a person's role) for salaried staff, this will also be offered to freelancers working with us at that time. This kind of formal training is not something Fierce do often but will be offered more widely when it does happen.

We do not usually require specific qualifications for roles at Fierce, and where we do, these will usually appear on the desirable rather than essentials skills list on the job description where it is possible for Fierce to pay for or facilitate that training. This would include things like First Aid at Work, but would not include things like a driving licence.

Freelancers working with Fierce are offered an opportunity to observe a Board meeting. This is part of our wider commitment to transparency and helps to equip more arts professionals with the experience and knowledge that might enable them to join a Board themselves or become a future arts leader.

Communication & Resources

All freelancers will be offered a Fierce email address, access to the relevant folders on our shared drive and any other systems they need to be able to access to effectively do the job we are asking of them. We set up WhatsApp groups relevant to specific projects which we will invite freelancers to join; these are particularly important during delivery but we do not expect out of hours communications from any freelancers.

We value freelancers' time and aim to only invite them to necessary meetings, as well as offering opportunities to meet online to save travel time and costs where appropriate. It is also important to us that freelancers feel a part of the organisation and so they will be included in relevant organisation-wide communication and invited to special and social events.

Whilst we ask freelancers to provide equipment such as a laptop and phone to enable them to do their job, we will provide any additional resources specific to the role. We also want freelancers to be comfortable using the Fierce office, access space, meeting rooms and facilities both when they are working for us and outside of their hours, space permitting.

Fees and Payments

We will be clear about what fees we are offering when we advertise or approach people for roles and these will be written into job descriptions and contracts from the outset. Fierce budgets are tight so fees are not usually negotiable but when we budget for projects, we ensure that we are accounting for fair pay and realistic expectations of the time a job will take; we do not expect anyone to work unpaid hours.

Our current freelance fees are currently calculated on the following scale (aligned with salaried staff wages):

Assistant roles: £140 - £160/day

Coordinator roles: £160 - £180/day

Management roles: £180 - £200/day

We will agree a payment schedule with freelancers when they start in their role that works both for them and for the cash flow of the project they are working on. We ask that invoices are submitted at least 5 days prior to the agreed payment date and include the following information:

- Contact details including name, email address and phone number
- An invoice number
- Details of the agreed work, daily rate and total amount being invoiced for
- Bank details to enable payments by BACS

Freelance staff are responsible for their own tax and National Insurance.

We do not expect freelancers to cash flow Fierce activity and occasions where they are asked to spend out of pocket for expenses should be rare. However, we appreciate that due to the nature of our work this will sometimes be necessary. Freelancers will be asked to submit receipts and an expenses form for any out of pocket expenses as per our Expenses Policy.

Access, Care and Accountability

Fierce aims to support all freelance staff through a working culture which has been carefully cultivated to be care-centred and responds to new colleagues as they join the team, giving them agency to influence the ways we work together and support each other. We place care around our relationships with freelance staff, respecting boundaries and valuing the unique perspectives brought by an individual's skills and experience.

On a practical level this means that we actively encourage access statements and will endeavour to meet any access needs that freelance staff raise with us at any point during their employment.

We have an Employee Assistance Programme which includes access to counselling and a wellbeing app which is available for all freelance staff whilst working for Fierce. This service is totally confidential and is paid for by Fierce to support the health and wellbeing of all of our staff.

We want to be accountable for our actions and ensure that we stay true to our values; with regards to freelancers this includes being transparent about how decisions are made, how the organisation is run and ensuring people have the opportunity to ask us questions, offer ideas, raise challenges and have conversations. We aim to be approachable and provide these opportunities with regular meetings and discussions in a work context. The Co-Directors and Chair of the Board are available via email or phone if any freelancer wants to ask us anything privately.

Name & Role	Email	Number
Paul Burns: Chair of the Board	paul@wechtie.com	07779572469
Clayton Lees: Director (Artistic)	aaron@wearefierce.org	07746974900
Pippa Frith: Director (Producing)	pippa@wearefierce.org	07500015298
Catherine Groom: Director (Operations)	catherine@wearefierce.org	07533411525