

Wales Culture Recovery Fund Round 2 – Freelancer Fund

GUIDANCE NOTES

This is a grant to provide financial assistance for freelancers in the cultural sectors that are facing financial challenges as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

FOR ASSISTANCE

Please read this guidance. If you then need assistance please contact us via the channels below:

Phone: 03000 6 03000

E-mail: FreelancerWCRF@gov.wales

FREELANCER GRANT - PURPOSE OF THE GRANT

The purpose of the grant is to support freelancers who continue to face financial challenges in the period from April 2021 - September 2021 as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak.

FREELANCER GRANT – WHO CAN APPLY?

Support is available to assist freelancer professionals whose work has direct creative/cultural outcomes, who work in the five key sub sectors:

- The Arts;
- Creative Industries;
- Arts and Heritage;
- Events;
- Culture and Heritage.

Our priority for this round is helping those who remain affected by the COVID – 19 outbreak (musicians / those working in events, theatre etc).

Freelancers from the wedding and events industries are eligible to apply in this round.

To find out more please visit the eligibility checker on <https://fundchecker.businesswales.gov.wales/culture>

You will also be eligible if you're employed part-time and also have a freelance professional creative practice, however, please note this grant is targeted at freelancers in most need of support due to loss of earnings as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Income will be taken into account as part of the assessment.

If you have received previous support from either the Government Job Retention Scheme and Self-employment Income Support Scheme and are experiencing financial challenges you are still eligible for this fund, however, those that have received SEISS in previous rounds will be given a lower priority against those of similar income that have not received SEISS.

You will not be eligible:

- If you are a freelancer working in the sport sector;
- Freelancers who work in film & TV, video games, software and other digital entertainment industries are not the intended recipients of this support as these markets are now operating at normal or near normal levels. However we understand that some specific roles including those in film & TV may still be affected (e.g. writers / musicians). Where this impact can be shown to be a result of COVID-19 restrictions, we will accept applications.

This funding is specifically for creative/cultural subsectors and roles that have been forced to cease work and/or face difficulty restarting because of the impact of COVID-19 restrictions. Those in roles that have been able to continue at previous or near previous levels of activity (e.g. architects, graphic designers, games designers etc.) with or without support should not apply.

How do you define freelancer?

Freelancers are sometimes known as contractors, may run their own business and are often defined as self-employed although they may differ slightly from the self-employed. Freelancers may carry out multiple jobs on behalf of different companies, and often tend to work alone. A freelancer tends to work on numerous short-term contracts, offering services and time to various organisations in return for an agreed fee. Freelancers can include sole traders and those who work for themselves, within the defined sectors.

You may find the following definition helpful:

- “A freelancer can be defined as someone who is commissioned to produce work or provide a service for a client, on a one off or short term contractual basis.”
- “A freelancer is not someone who produces goods and then takes them to a market place (retail/wholesale outlet of any kind), this person is considered a producer for retail.”

Freelancers will need to provide: Scanned documents and photos of paper statements are acceptable forms of evidence for this purpose. Photos of screens showing statements are acceptable, however photos of mobile banking apps are very difficult to review and are not accepted.

- A declaration of income received in the years Apr 2019 – March 2020 and April 2020 – March 2021 is required, with bank statements reflecting this income for the months of January – March 2021. Bank statements will allow us to see SEISS payments made in the recent round.
- Unique Tax Reference (UTR) Number or P60
- A CV, website, or a detailed LinkedIn account.

INCOME

In terms of income, we are seeking to gather a picture of your total income for the period April 2020 – March 2021. Capturing information for the previous year (April 2019 – March 2020) allows us to compare this to your normal income.

We are asking for information about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on your personal income, we are not asking for information on turnover.

You should include personal income from freelance and any salaried work, plus grants, before tax

In order to qualify for the grant, the following parameters apply:

- The total amount of Covid-19 support grants you have received in April 2020 – March 2021 must not exceed 80% of income for the April 2019 – March 2020 trading year.

In assessing your income, we take into account any amounts received through SEISS (and other discretionary grants, but not benefits or other forms of income such as interest payments or gifts, due to the complexity of making a balanced assessment of all cases.

Proof of identification (one of the following) Scanned copies, not originals, is required as follows:

- i. Current UK or EEA photocard driving licence;
- ii. Current signed passport;
- iii. Original Birth certificate
- iv. Other (please specify).

Recent proof of address can be taken from your bank statement or one of the following (must be recent, i.e. within the last 3 months):

- i. Utility bill;
- ii. Mobile phone statement.

Where the income table does not fully represent your income position, you have the option to provide additional supporting details and to attach evidence. This is optional.

FREELANCER GRANT - HOW MUCH CAN YOU APPLY FOR?

A grant of £2,500 is available per individual, to support with immediate cash flow to help through the disrupted period.

All applications will be considered on an individual basis and payment of the grant is at the absolute discretion of the Local Authority within the criteria set out in this guidance.

FREELANCER PLEDGE

Freelancers are often active participants in their community, making a positive contribution to our social, cultural, environmental and economic well-being. The Well-being of Future Generations Act requires public bodies in Wales to enable a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language as well as think about the long-term impact of their decisions, to work better with people, communities and each other. There is an opportunity now for creative freelancers and public bodies to forge a partnership to achieve this. By encouraging you to sign up to the Freelancer's Pledge we hope you can bring your skills to assist us bring creativity and imagination to all areas of public life.

This might be co-creating solutions with the community, contributing to local development plans and development or bringing new approaches to capital projects. This could be in areas such as culture through to health or sustainable development and built environment. You may already have experience in working in the public realm with partners, be a socially engaged artist, a PTA member or trustee or just an active doer in your community who uses your lived experience to make positive change.

If you are interested in being a part of this, please opt into the Freelancer Pledge. We'll use your details to inform and involve you in developments. We value the skills and experience of freelancers. We would expect any work undertaken by freelancers as a result of the Freelancer Pledge to be paid work.

If you have already signed up to the pledge you do not need to again, we will be in touch about this in due course.

FREELANCER GRANT - HOW TO APPLY

Individuals can apply for the grant by accessing the Culture Recovery Fund Eligibility Checker on the Business Wales website <https://fundchecker.businesswales.gov.wales/culture>

If eligible you will be directed to your local authority website where you will receive guidance on how to make your application. Please apply through the local authority you are resident in not

where you may spend the majority of your time working in. If you are resident in more than one, please choose the one where you primarily live. You can only apply to one local authority.

You will need to complete all the requested fields together with the required evidence documents. Scanned documents and photos are acceptable forms of evidence for this purpose.

If you would like to complete this form in a different format please call the Business Wales helpline on 03000 6 03000.

If you do not have the facilities to complete this application online please call the Business Wales helpline on 03000 6 03000.

The Freelancer Grant is open to applications from Monday 17th May at 12 noon, until Tuesday 1st June at 5 pm.

The Local Authority has absolute discretion on the duration and terms of the fund. The Freelancer Fund is a discretionary grant and there is no appeals process. Where an application is clearly missing information, the appraiser will endeavour to make contact. However, this could add significant delay to the process.

FREELANCER GRANT - GUIDANCE ON COMPLETING THE FORM

Section 1 – Your personal details

This part asks for information about you ‘the applicant’.

Section 2 – Information about your work

This part asks for information about your range and type of work and your income over the last 2 years. Please ensure the details in this section are accurate and complete. Information on total earnings from 2019 – 20 is captured in order to allow the assessor to see the impact of COVID on your earnings.

It is the total income figures for the last 12 months (April 2020 – March 2021) that are used to assess the priority group.

You are making a self-declaration of income in this form. In assessing your income, we take into account any amounts received through SEISS and other discretionary grants, but not benefits or other forms of income such as interest payments or gifts, due to the complexity of making a balanced assessment of all cases. You should not enter this information into the income tables.

Income is personal and should cover both freelance work and any salaried work you may have.

Income should be recorded ‘gross’ – i.e. before tax is deducted.

Details of grants aimed at the self employed (such as SEISS) should go in the self employed income section.

Details of furlough payments should be entered into the PAYE section.

If unsure, or for other grants please enter details into the ‘other’ section.

Bank statements are requested for the period of January 2021 – March 2021. Bank statements are being used primarily to check SEISS payments, but may also be used as part of a more detailed assessment of your application where necessary.

Section 3 – Impact of COVID-19 on you

We need to understand how the COVID-19 outbreak has affected you and your work. Please complete this section so that we can understand why you need assistance from this grant fund. Further information can be provided through submitting an up to date CV.

Section 4 – Bank Details

Please provide your bank account details as this information will be used to make the grant payment to you if you are successful – please ensure these details are correct.

Section 5 - Declarations

Please read the declarations carefully and tick the boxes to confirm you accept and understand the declarations. Please note you will need to opt in or out of the freelancer pledge. It is very important that you have read and understood this guidance document.

Statutory authority Subsidy Control

The Funding is compatible with the applicable agreements contained in the World Trade Organisation rules, UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement, any Free Trade Agreement involving the UK the Northern Ireland Protocol and any relevant domestic legislation.

You need to enter in here any grants received under ‘De Minimis’ within the last 3 years. For example rounds of the Freelancer Fund were delivered under De Minimis, some discretionary funding or Economic Resilience Funding may also have been delivered in this way. If you have been awarded funding under De Minimis, this information will be clearly shown on any previous grant offer letters.

CHECKLIST

Your completed application form must be accompanied by proof of identification bank statements for January – March 2021, further information if needed, a UTR number / other relevant evidence if needed and CV / detailed LinkedIn account as detailed on pages 1 and 2 of this document.

FREELANCER GRANT

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE APPLICATION IS RECEIVED?

Receipt of your application will be acknowledged within 10 working days. Decisions on applications will be made based on the information provided in the application form, associated evidence and information checks that are conducted from other sources. If any data is incomplete or incorrect or the evidence provided is insufficient we will contact you, but if queries are not satisfied within the timescale specified by the local authority, the **application will be rejected**. We aim to process grant applications within 30 working days days of closure of the scheme, however this may be increased in some cases.

Applications will assessed for eligibility and prioritised accordingly. Should additional funds become available within a short period, those lower down the priority order may be able to benefit from support, however this is no guarantee additional funding will become available.

To manage this priority based scheme efficiently and effectively we do not expect that we will be notifying any applications of outcome or processing any payment until after the closure of the scheme.

PRIORITISATION

Grants will be assigned in the following priority order:

Priority	Income level in 2020 – 21 (including any SEISS payments)
1	No income
2a	Income < £4,999 and no previous SEISS

2b	Income < £4,999
3a	Income between £5,000 and £9,999 and no previous SEISS
3b	Income between £5,000 and £9,999
4a	Income between £10,000 and £14,999 and no previous SEISS
4b	Income between £10,000 and £14,999
5a	Income between £14,999 and £19,999 and no previous SEISS
5b	Income between £14,999 and £19,999
6a	Income over £20,000 and no previous SEISS
6b	Income over £20,000

Within each band, those that have had help via SEISS previously are given a lower priority than those that have not.

If applications are approved you will receive a grant offer by email notifying you of the award of the grant. Grants will be paid on the basis that 100% of the grant is paid up front.

Due Diligence may be undertaken at points during and after the approval process. You may be asked for clarifying information at any stage.

If your application is unsuccessful, you will receive an email outlining the reason[s] for rejection. There is no appeal process.

FREELANCER GRANT - GRANT REPAYMENT

Applicants should note that the Local Authority may require repayment of the grant in full or part if evidence emerges that the applicant was not eligible for the Freelancer Grant.