Winning local/regional support for Paying Artists

ARTISTS’ CAMPAIGN PACK

VALUING ART, VALUING ARTISTS
CONTENTS

This pack is in three sections and contains:

What we’re trying to achieve  .................................................. 2
National campaign objectives
Regional/local campaign objectives
Campaign messages and facts

How to… .................................................................................. 4
Engage local politicians and galleries
Engage local media
Deliver a workshop

Tools .................................................................................. 10
Sample letters for MPs/election candidates, councillors and galleries
Sample press release
SECTION 1
WHAT WE’RE TRYING TO ACHIEVE

National campaign objectives

The Paying Artists campaign calls for artists to be paid to exhibit their work in public galleries. To achieve this, a-n has produced vital research on the issue, including best practice from other countries, and consultations with major galleries, artists and opinion formers across the sector. An exhibition fees framework and guidelines are currently being developed – with the help of these partners – to help galleries and artists negotiate fair pay for exhibitions in future.

To ensure fair pay for artists, the campaign aims to develop and secure:

1 • Greater transparency on artists’ pay

2 • A national policy and guidance on paying artists

3 • Pay policies to be written into funding agreements

4 • Focused research on the value of paying artists, including best practice examples

5 • Empowered artists to make the case for exhibition payments

To find out more, go to:
http://www.payingartists.org.uk/what-needs-to-happen/
What you want to achieve

Local/regional activity needs to contribute to one or more of the national objectives. In particular it should focus on empowering artists to make the case and promoting the need for gallery transparency as the first fundamental step in promoting fair payment. It’s up to you to decide how you translate these into local objectives but here are some suggestions:

- Securing a meeting with your local MP or PPC (Prospective Parliamentary Candidate)
- Signing up X00 new campaign supporters
- Securing a politician or key opinion former to speak at your campaign event
- Getting local or regional media coverage on the progress of the campaign
- Securing a politician’s support for the campaign in writing
- Getting a councillor to write to their MP asking for support for the campaign
- Getting local artists to sign up to the campaign and organise their own event
- Increasing support for the campaign online driven through social media

Useful messages and facts

Messages

- The tradition of not paying artists who exhibit in publicly funded spaces is threatening the future of our thriving and diverse arts sector
- Transparency around gallery payment policies is the first fundamental step in achieving fair pay because it will promote proper discussion around what is and isn’t deemed to be fair
- Galleries need to show they value artists and recognise the role they play in making galleries successful.
- Continuing the tradition of not paying artists could force more artists to leave the sector, gradually erode our cultural diversity and create an elite arts industry that doesn’t reflect the spectrum of human experience
- Public funding that doesn’t promote equality and diversity, and fair payment for artists, is not providing long-term value for money for the investment that taxpayers make
- Paying artists presents undeniable challenges for galleries on reduced budgets but numerous art spaces around the UK have shown that these can be overcome - check www.payingartists.org.uk for case study galleries.

Facts

Independent research published by Paying Artists last year shows that:

- Over the previous three years, 71% of artists exhibiting in publicly-funded galleries received no fee for their work. Of those who did, over a third received a fee of less than £200
- 63% of artists had to turn down requests from galleries to exhibit their work because they could not afford to do so without pay
- 57% of artists generated less than a quarter of their income through their art
- 59% did not even receive payment for their expenses leaving them not only unpaid but out-of-pocket when presenting exhibitions and less than half received production support (e.g. technical assistance etc.)
SECTION 2
HOW TO... ATTRACT SUPPORT FROM LOCAL POLITICIANS AND GALLERIES

Key points:

• Engage influencers on their own terms. This means a small bit of research to identify what their interests/proposed policies/pressure points are by broadening your argument beyond your own individual complaint that you are not paid.

• Use whatever local statistics and information you can get to reinforce your argument

• Be absolutely clear about what it is you are asking them to do (sign up to the campaign, attend a meeting etc.)

• Be positive and constructive wherever possible i.e. avoid conflict and criticism. Use positive examples/case studies from your own or other cities which show how paying artists is achievable.

• Don’t give up – if at first you don’t get any response from the people you have contacted, follow up with a phone call- they are busy and may just need prompting. Or try contacting them through social media
Engaging any audience is about telling them both what they want to hear and what you need them to do.

Check out the individual agendas of the people you are targeting and translate Paying Artists messages into their own objectives, showing how support for Paying Artists can help them achieve their own goals.

Have a look at their websites, their profiles, and social media profiles (particularly Twitter) to work out where they are coming from and wherever possible use hard, clear statistics to support our arguments and messages – the more local and recent the better.

Some cities will have conducted economic impact studies showing the value of culture/cultural organisations to the city economy so try finding these and – if they exist - use them to strengthen your case.

For example, if a local election candidate is campaigning for fair pay for workers at a local factory, you need to talk about artists as another critical group of low paid workers. You can then extend the argument to show how low pay for artists is not just an issue for artists but has repercussions for the whole city, i.e. it could ultimately threaten the future of visual arts in the local area and the local £x million visitor economy. If you need to, check the Securing the Future of Visual Arts document on the website to see how the campaigns links these different arguments.

If you’re targeting a local gallery, see what the gallery’s artistic director has been saying via Twitter/recent press releases etc. about their own ambitions for the future. Remember, we need to encourage their support and not alienate them so make sure you frame your argument in constructive terms which shows how paying artists can ultimately contribute to their agendas rather than hinder them.

If you’re targeting the local council, look at council arts/ culture policies, public comments and twitter feeds of the portfolio holder for culture/leisure and translate your case into their terms.

Inevitably, the local authority will be committed to making significant cuts in arts/culture spending so it’s vital to construct your argument carefully.

Even if your local council has cut gallery funding to the bone, this potentially means they are under even greater pressure than ever to deliver value for money – and they can only do that by encouraging galleries to spend the funding they receive as fairly and equitably as possible.

Again, many of these arguments are set out in the Securing the Future of Visual Arts document, elsewhere on the campaign website and in the sample letters provided below so make yourself familiar with them and get used to connecting the case of individual artists to bigger/broader issues which will engage others. Few influencers are likely to be interested in the story of a few ‘hard done by’ artists.
HOW TO... DELIVER A PAYING ARTISTS EVENT

• Make it interesting – policymakers and media will only come to an event on paying artists if it offers something different. You are artists so be creative!

• At the same time, tailor your event to the audience you are inviting. If you are organising a forum to discuss policy issues with an MP, organising a flash mob will likely be inappropriate and mean your arguments are not taken seriously.

• Designing your event also depends on the space available. Some halls and rooms will be better for a circular discussion, or podium or a panel. Avoid power point presentations at all costs, unless they contain images, graphics and a few key points. This will put people to sleep!

• Give your keynote speaker (policymaker) an opportunity to speak and adopt the arguments of the campaign. Make sure you send them a short briefing in good time before the event, so they can incorporate them into their speech.

• Ensure opportunities for the participants to contribute and ask questions. A lively discussion will leave people feeling more positive and interested in the campaign, and increase their chances of signing up.

• Give people plenty of notice of the event to increase chances of them coming and promote the event using a range of different channels e.g. your local radio station, newspaper, student newspaper/newsletter, social media etc.

• Refreshments – a well-refreshed audience make better participants

• Photos – make sure you get photos of the event, and post them on social media at the time. This will not only generate a buzz round the event, but will ensure others retweet/repost your pictures spreading more coverage of the event and its messages. This includes photo opportunities with policymakers and gallerists

• Social media engagement: Make sure to give people the #payingartists hashtag at the start of the event so they can tweet/post during speeches and questions

• Clear messaging – introduce the event by highlighting the key messages of the campaign. This will set the framework for the event, and make sure everyone is clear what you’re campaigning for.

• Have key statistics and facts to hand – you don’t want to be caught short if someone asks you for more information during the event

• Give the audience something they can do – close the event by telling the audience what they can do next (sign up, promote the campaign, write to their local gallery/MP etc)

• Post the event: write to the keynote speaker/s and participants thanking them for their contribution and ensure you keep them updated with updates on the campaign
HOW TO... ENGAGE LOCAL MEDIA

Key points:

• Know what the media wants from you
• Stay focused on the messages you want to get across
• Pitch your story well
• Ensure your online communications (website, social media etc) are relevant and up-to-date

What local media want from you

Unexpected/unusual stories or pictures – local news (and news of all kinds) is very often about the unexpected/something different that has happened. In some areas, the mere fact that artists are campaigning for a better deal from local galleries may be ‘different’ enough to enable you to qualify on these grounds.

Superlatives – local media love stories which suggest that their area is either the first or the best in some respect but any claims either way must be strongly reinforced with statistical evidence. An obvious line is to tell them this if the first time artists in the area have ever campaigned together in this way (i.e. it is a unique campaign)

Pictures/images – Think hard about developing a strong picture opportunity and give journalists enough notice about it. As above, think about unusual pictures which at the same time help tell the story – artists doing something ‘unusual’ outside a local gallery obviously would start to interest local media. Make sure to think how these would look when posted on social media.

People – Media want stories that are relevant to the public - you want to win public support. Sometimes there is an overlap between what campaigners and media want to achieve and this is a perfect example. Try and relate your stories as much as possible to the impact on ordinary people and make paying artists relevant to them. You could use the living wage argument because it broadens your case and actually shows that you are on the same ‘side’ as them. Equally, you could make the point that in future members of the public may end up with galleries which feature art which has nothing to do with their own lives because it has been produced by artists from privileged backgrounds because they’ll be the only ones able to afford to work for nothing. You could go further to say that the campaign is about securing the future of visual arts for future generations of local residents. Also showing that you have the support of local people in one way or another will add weight to your story and your argument.
Use of key words – certain words really resonate with journalists and can mean the difference to your story being picked up. For example, if you’re organising a workshop for artists and galleries, try calling it a ‘summit’ instead – journalists will be more attracted to the story. Better still, if you can add some superlatives to it and call it a ‘unique summit’. Alternatively you could issue a ‘warning’ about the risk to the arts sector if they don’t sign up to the campaign.

What you want from the media

It sounds obvious but getting media coverage must only be a means to an end. Five minutes on local BBC means nothing if it does not contribute to local/national campaign objectives and messages. Do a sense check at all stages of dealing with the media to make sure you are still getting what you need out of the relationship.

For example, did your media story lead to better engagement with your political targets? Did it encourage more people to sign up to the campaign? How many more followers did you get on social media?

Final point with media – be reliable, get them what they need as soon as you can, and follow up a piece of media coverage with a thank you. Sustained engagement with media will increase the likelihood that they’ll continue to cover the campaign and support your messages beyond one article.

Pitching your story

There’s (at least) 3 steps to pitching a story to local media:

1. Draft a compelling press release (if poss with an interesting photo opportunity)
2. Email release to local journalists
3. Phoning journalist/newsdesk to check they received the emailed release. Most journalists receive dozens if not hundreds of emails a day and will often not notice an emailed release unless it is flagged up to them in some other way
Drafting a press release

Even if you phone them up about a story, journalists will almost always ask for a press release. It’s a good thing too. Having your story written down makes it easier to get your messages across in the way you want.

The following simple tips and sample release in the Tools section will help:

1. **First paragraph** – tell the story in less than 30 words, think **Who? What? Where? When? and Why?**

2. Remember ingredients of news. Above all, **make sure your story is new!**

3. **Think about the reader/listener**

4. **Pyramid approach** – put most important info at top - sub-editors will cut a story from the bottom up

5. Put direct **quote** in the third or fourth paragraph (max two pars). Use real, informal speech without jargon.

6. Always put a contact **name and number** at the end of the release.

7. **Is there a picture** to help tell the story and are you giving enough notice to media to cover it

8. **Write it ‘straight’** – leave witty headlines to sub editors

9. **Break info up** into main story, Notes to Editors (for detailed background) and Picture Opportunity (if you have one) – see press release sample in toolkit’

10. Email release to a **named reporter** at least two days before your event if possible. Follow up email with call to check the reporter/newsdesk has received it and ask if it is of any interest. NB: press releases should be embedded in email ie not sent as an attachment and press release headline should be copied in to the subject of the email

11. If artists taking part in your campaign come from areas/suburbs where they have their own ‘very’ local media (e.g. small weekly paper) make sure you do a separate version of the press release to tell them an artist who is local to them is involved in the story. This way you will boost your chances of getting coverage beyond the main local BBC/citywide newspaper.
Sample Letters

The following letters are intended to show tone, style and structure for writing to key influencers – use them simply as a guide which helps you structure your own ‘local’, nuanced case as the scenarios they represent may well not match your own. For example, if you are contacting a local gallery you will need to check that it does not have an obvious policy on paying artists and find out if it receives money from the local authority or Arts Council England (or both).

Sample letter to MPs/PPCs

Dear [insert name of MP/PCC]

As local artists, we believe you can play a leading role in securing the future of [name of city]’s thriving cultural sector and the very significant benefits that it delivers.

For decades, galleries across the UK have had a tradition of not paying artists who take part in publicly funded exhibitions (research conducted on behalf of the largest artists membership organisation in the UK shows that 71% of artists exhibiting in publicly funded spaces received no fee for their work.)

This is wrong on many levels. Public investment in the arts should promote equality and diversity – and that should mean fair pay for everyone – including artists. More practically, as local artists, we are finding it increasingly hard to work for nothing in this climate and some of us are seriously considering leaving the sector. The implications of this are not just personal. If large numbers of artists are driven out of the sector it will trigger a gradual erosion of [name of city]’s cultural economy and the civic distinctiveness which makes it so special.

We do not pretend that paying artists is easy for galleries on reduced budgets. However, we know, from examples in other cities, that it can be done.

We also know that local politicians like you can play a leading role in making it happen and invite you to demonstrate your support for this important local issue by [insert detail of specific request – attend a meeting/sign up to the campaign etc].

We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.

Yours faithfully

[insert names of as many local artists as possible]
Dear [insert name of director/artistic director]

As you will know, the Paying Artists campaign is encouraging publicly-funded galleries to be more transparent in their policies on paying exhibiting artists and ultimately introduce a fair system of payment.

While we understand that this represents a significant culture change and added financial burden for galleries already suffering from reduced public funding, we know these challenges can be overcome and want to work with you to explore ways in which this can be achieved.

We believe artists – like everyone else - should receive a fair wage for what they do and that it is important for public funders to realise the full value of their investment. In a climate of funding cuts, not receiving pay only makes it harder for artists to make their work pay, forcing them to take other work and threatening the diversity and excellence which underpins the reputation of galleries like [insert name of gallery].

We would like to meet with you to discuss the challenges in adapting your policies to support this important principle and explore ways in which these challenges can be overcome.

Perhaps you could let us know when you are free to meet.

Yours faithfully
Dear [name of councillor]

[city name] is one of several UK cities where galleries do not pay exhibiting artists – despite receiving public funding from you as the local authority.

As local artists, we object to this on the moral grounds that public investment in galleries in the current climate must, more than ever, support equality and fairness for everyone – including artists.

[city name] is not alone in this. Research conducted on behalf of the largest artists membership organisation in the UK shows that 71% of artists exhibiting in publicly funded spaces receive no fee for their work. It also shows that 63% of artists have had to turn down requests from galleries to exhibit their work because they could not afford to do so without pay.

Our genuine fear is that many of these artists – both in [city name] and beyond will struggle to continue producing work in these difficult conditions. We know you want to maintain the vibrancy and diversity that underpins this city's civic distinctiveness, visitor economy and national reputation. So let's work together to find a way to pay our artists, and give them the respect and reward they deserve for enriching our society.

We realise that galleries face challenges in dealing with their own diminished budgets. However, we know too that no-one will ultimately benefit if the current situation is allowed to continue. More importantly, we know that many other galleries have successfully overcome these challenges.

We would like to meet with you to discuss how we can work together with local galleries [insert specific names] to explore these opportunities, ensure real value for the public investment in them and ensure that [city name] continues to benefit from a thriving cultural sector.

Perhaps you could let us know if you are free in the next couple of weeks to meet?

Yours faithfully
News Release

Picture opportunity: 10am, April 27th, [insert location here]
[insert date here]

Artists take to city streets in campaign for exhibition pay

Galleries urged to be transparent in artist payment policies

[city name] artists have issued a stark warning as they [insert brief description of public activity/stunt] to highlight the impact of not being paid for taking part in publicly funded exhibitions.

Up to 20 local artists will [more detail on public activity eg create an installation in the middle of the main shopping centre] on Wednesday morning as part of a national campaign to highlight the challenges artists face over not being paid to exhibit their work in public galleries.

The Paying Artists campaign produced research last year showing that 71% of artists don’t get a fee for exhibiting in publicly funded galleries – with 63% of artists having to turn down gallery requests because they can’t afford to do it for nothing.

Our campaign research has identified a number of successful galleries around the country which operate transparent and fair payment policies.

[city] artist Dave Brush said: “The arts play a massive role in the culture and economy of this city. However, we have a real concern that if we don’t start getting paid to show our work in exhibitions, more of us will be forced to stop taking part in exhibitions altogether and find alternative employment which does pay.

“We also know that galleries have differing views on what ‘fair payment’ means. That’s why we are calling on all local publicly funded galleries, not simply to pay artists, but start by being transparent about their payment policies so we can have an open discussion about what fairness really looks like.

“We know galleries around the country are having a hard time with funding but the tradition of not paying artists started long before public sector cuts.”

The campaigners have created an innovative installation of a job centre and artists working other jobs to make ends meet, to show the reality of life as a visual artist and encourage galleries to be more transparent about their policies on paying artists and explore examples of other galleries which have managed to incorporate payment for artists within existing budgets. These activities form part of the Paying Artists campaign, working to build public awareness of the lack of payment for artists.

Ends

Picture opportunity:
[insert time and place of pic opp and compelling description of what photographers will see if they turn up]
Note to editors

1. The Paying Artists campaign has 5 key objectives:
   - Galleries to adopt transparent policies on artists’ pay
   - Government and strategic arts agencies to issue national policy and guidance to provide clarity and minimum standards on artists’ pay
   - Funding bodies to write pay policy in funding agreements
   - Government to initiate a national review of the contribution of visual arts to the UK economy and communities, the role artists play and assets they create and the extent and impact of no or low pay on artists livelihoods and wellbeing.
   - To support artists to make the case themselves for payment

2. Full details of the Paying Artists campaign are available at www.payingartists.org.uk. You can follow the campaign at #payingartists.

3. The a-n survey was conducted over a 2 week period amongst just over 1,000 a-n artists and members of AIR (Artists Interaction and Representation). See all Paying artists research reports at http://www.a-n.co.uk/publications/topic/4082494

4. The Paying artists research and campaign is led by a-n The Artists Information Company. a-n’s mission is to stimulate and support contemporary visual arts practice and affirm the value of artists in society. Founded in 1980, it is a significant national visual arts network and lead body for visual artists, publishing the Code of Practice for the Visual Arts, visual arts contracts, fees guidance and conducting on-going research into artists’ practices and livelihoods. Through AIR: Artists Interaction and Representation, a-n ensures that the professional needs and artistic aspirations of 18,000 visual artist members are represented and impact on consultations and debate on developments in arts and cultural policy, arts education and social change. www.a-n.co.uk

Further information from Dave Brush on [insert mobile number]
payingartists.org.uk

facebook.com/AIRartist

https://twitter.com/AIR_artists