

# REBALANCING AND REIMAGINING

STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT  
ARTS AND PERFORMANCE  
FREELANCERS

TASGLU LLAWRYDD **CYMRU**  
**WALES** FREELANCE TASK FORCE

## Executive Summary

The Wales Freelance Taskforce was launched during the Covid-19 crisis to strengthen the influence of the self-employed theatre and performance community in Wales. We are part of the UK Freelance Taskforce instigated by Fuel and other organisations via an open letter.<sup>1</sup> We are 14 Wales-based freelancers, sponsored by but unaffiliated with organisations in Wales (see Acknowledgements), from a range of backgrounds and roles.<sup>2</sup> The 13-week pilot Taskforce (15th June - 11th September 2020) has advised Welsh Government (Creative Wales) and Arts Council Wales (ACW), launched the Wales Freelance Survey, spoken with over 450 freelancers and organisations, and facilitated a range of projects and conversations to improve understanding and awareness of freelancers' needs (see Actions).

Despite representing over 70% of the theatre and performance workforce, very little data has been collected on freelancers in the performance sector in Wales, so we launched the Wales Freelance Survey.<sup>3</sup> Its data provides an insight into the current situation (see Appendix 1 and 2), helping us understand the urgent need for a more equal, diverse, resilient, and community-focused industry in Wales.

The financial impact of Covid-19 is evident across the theatre and performance sector, but financial hardship has fallen disproportionately on the freelance workforce:

- 94% of theatre and performance freelancers in Wales lost work due to Covid-19.
- The vast majority (90%) had lost up to £20,000 of earnings.
- 47% received no financial support from the Government's SEISS scheme.
- 27% do not have sufficient income to live on.
- 33% do not know whether they will stay in or leave the industry.
- 79% said their well-being was negatively affected.
- 70% do not feel included in planning for the future of the creative sector in Wales.

---

<sup>1</sup> Fuel Open Letter to Theatre and Performance Makers: <https://fueltheatre.com/an-open-letter-to-theatre-and-performance-makers/>

<sup>2</sup> Representation on the Taskforce: <https://fueltheatre.com/freelance-task-force-representation/>

<sup>3</sup> Routes to Recovery report: <https://www.curtaincallonline.com/storage/app/media/uploaded-files/Routes%20to%20Recovery.pdf>

Individuals most in need of support are:

- Deaf and disabled workers.
- People who are Black, Asian, or of mixed/multiple ethnicities.
- Those with caring responsibilities.
- Recent graduates.
- Early career workers.

We are at a critical juncture, where the actions of organisations, government, and stakeholders over the coming months will shape the future of our sector. This report aims to be a stimulus for action and change. We summarise our work over the last 13 weeks then present recommendations for organisations, government, and stakeholders to rebalance and reimagine our sector, while strengthening and supporting the freelance community. We present the data and analysis from the Wales Freelance Survey in Appendix 1 and 2.

## Introduction: Rebalancing and reimagining our sector

This report highlights the need for a rebalancing of the theatre and performance sector in Wales to empower and include freelancers, especially those who have been historically marginalised. Our recommendations (numbered) include:

- ensuring marginalised people and those with protected characteristics are represented in and meaningfully engaged with organisations (1-30)
- changes to organisational governance (31-35)
- organisations and Arts Council Wales (ACW) taking more responsibility for the long-term development and upskilling of freelancers (36-58).
- changes to Arts Council Wales' funding schemes, application mechanisms, and accountability processes (59-71).
- strategies for development and sustainability of Welsh language work (72-77)
- more subsectoral and regional analysis by ACW, and we start by offering recommendations to develop the Dance sector (78-82) and north Wales (83-87).

Organisations can use this moment to take stock of their community and reflect on how they sit within it: do you develop or produce any Welsh-language work? Are the only people of colour or deaf and disabled people you work with freelancers? Can you share more of your space/resources with the freelance workforce? Can more of the freelancers you engage be based in Wales?

We propose longer-term funding models for individuals and an overhaul of the current application mechanisms for creative project funding. There is a need for better investment in communities, like those in north Wales, which seem to be regularly overlooked. Taking the Wales Freelance Survey as a springboard, we would like to see a longitudinal study to measure the impact of Covid-19 on freelancers in Wales' creative industries.

We want to stress to government, funders, and stakeholders that the Covid-19 emergency for theatre and performance freelancers is far from over. The sector is likely to be one of the last to re-open fully, and we risk losing skilled theatre and performance freelance workers: almost half (47%) received no support from the government's SEISS scheme, over a quarter (27%) cannot afford to pay their bills at the moment, a third are uncertain about their future involvement in the industry, and many have re-directed careers (with the hope of this being a temporary measure). Respondents to the Wales Freelance Survey

said they felt on a 'cliff-edge', others said they had 'no safety net for the future' and 'I have no idea how we will survive'.

As well as highlighting deep inequalities within our sector, Covid-19 has demonstrated the possibility of robust, honest discussion in offering collaborative solutions. As the sector recovers from the crisis, we should build on these inclusive and collegiate conversations, ensure promises become actions, help make change happen at a quicker pace, and insist on transparency and accountability throughout. We must protect the precarious freelance workforce through each phase of recovery. We recognise that there is much work to be done for organisations and freelancers to recover alongside each other, and alongside their communities — the aim of this report is to help facilitate this.

# **Actions of the Wales Freelance Taskforce**

**(June - September 2020)**

## **Logistics and Operations**

- Established weekly meetings with rotating chairperson and minute-taker.
- Agreed Accessibility and Welsh Language Policy. Organised a translator (provided by Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru) and Accessibility Fund (by Arts Council Wales).
- Wrote to Arts Portfolio Wales companies asking for them to donate funds to support our work (eg. paying freelancers for advice or for BSL interpreters). Thanks to these organisations who supported us: Ballet Cymru, Blackwood Miners Institute, Emma Evans, Tanio, Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru, Theatr Clwyd, and Wales Millennium Centre.
- Social statistics: On Twitter we currently have over 600 followers, with 185 tweets in 3 months. On Facebook we currently have 589 likes and 469 engagements.

## **Advising and Lobbying**

- Encouraged freelancers in Wales to write to their MPs asking for emergency support.
- Wrote to Arts Council Wales and Welsh Government to ask that 25-30% of any additional emergency funding for arts, heritage, and cultural sector goes to freelancers, along with recommendations for the application mechanism for this funding.
- Set up regular consultations with Arts Council Wales senior leadership, including discussions on re-opening grant funding and a new support strand for September 2020.
- Advised Creative Wales and Welsh Government on the details of the Freelance Fund (part of the £53m emergency package announced by Welsh Government).

## Projects and Policy Initiatives

- Launched the Wales Freelance Survey with 420 respondents, the first survey of its kind to get a greater understanding of the situation for freelancers in Wales. The data is available online (Creative Commons license) at *freelance.wales* or *llawrydd.cymru*, and has been used in our consultations with Arts Council Wales, Creative Wales, and Welsh Government.<sup>4</sup>
- Launched the Our Voice project to collect the experience of Welsh and Wales-based Black Artists.
- Launched a well-being project for actors.
- Contributed to the Freelance Taskforce UK guide on best practice for organisations and freelancers.
- Drew up a proposal for a Basic Income for theatre and performance freelancers in Wales. Consultation about this is ongoing with ACW, Equity Wales, and Welsh Government. The Future Generations Commissioner for Wales has called for a Basic Income pilot for creatives giving this proposal political traction.

## Listening and Consulting

- Hosted 8 Green Room meetings to aimed at capturing the voices, opinions and ideas of freelancers across the sector in Wales. We discussed particular concerns, roles, or protected characteristics with freelancers in each Green Room:
  - Stage Management
  - Dancers
  - Pregnant People
  - Rhondda Cynon Taff freelancers
  - Freelancers working in the Welsh Language
  - Deaf and disabled freelancers
  - Neurodivergent Actors
  - Recent Graduates and Facilitators.
- Hosted a UK-wide large-scale meeting for freelancers to speak to organisations about what freelancers need in order to make their best work, and how

---

<sup>4</sup> Survey data is licensed under a Creative Commons license CC-BY-NC-SA: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/>

organisations respond in order to support them.

- Held 12 meetings with organisations about their response to Covid-19's impact on freelancers, recommending best practice as the crisis unfolded and strategies for recovery.
- Attended/contributed to meetings across the UK, including: Arts Councils Wales and England, Creu Cymru, Equity, Privilege Cafe, SOLT and UK Theatre, People Dancing, Rural Touring Forum, UK Taskforce and its subgroups, What Next? Cardiff.
- Met with Equity Wales to offer freelancers' perspectives on the impacts of Covid-19, Welsh Government's re-opening guidance, data gathering, Wales' Cultural Contract and Basic Income.
- Responded to media requests for interviews on BBC Radio, S4C News, Creative Cardiff Podcast, and Eisteddfod Amgen.

# Recommendations

## Inclusivity and diversity

### Gender

The Wales Freelance Survey shows that women were paid less compared to men, even when controlling for age. 46% of non-male respondents said that they had insufficient support at work, many calling for '*more robust support systems*'. Respondents cited becoming new mothers, child care, and age as barriers. One respondent said:

*'During Covid I have fallen into a full time mother role with the only time to work being on the weekends when my partner isn't working full time. I haven't had the same chance to be creative as I would normally.'*

The average annual salary for men is in the £15-20,000 band, while the average annual salary for women is in the £10-15,000 band, suggesting that on average women are paid 25% less than men.

Women are also more likely to supplement their income with work outside the creative sector.

We recommend:

1. Organisations should report annually on gender pay gap and steps being taken to eliminate this (this should be publicly available and accessible).
2. Organisations should review the employment and cultural opportunities they offer to those who identify as women, non-binary, and/or transgender, and take steps to improve this.
3. Organisations should support new mothers re-entering the workforce by paying them for 'keeping in touch days' during their maternity allowance period.

## Caring responsibilities

23% of respondents had caring responsibilities (including caring for adults), and 76% of these said that they had inadequate support when working in the creative sector. 78% said changes in their caring responsibilities due to the Covid-19 crisis had affected their ability to work in the creative industry during this time.

We recommend:

4. Organisations sign up to the Parents in Performing Arts (PiPA) charter.<sup>5</sup>
5. Organisations work with freelancers to create a 'back-to-work' plan that ensures they can meet their caring responsibilities while working to their potential.
6. ACW includes childcare as an access need.
7. Larger Arts Portfolio Wales (APW) organisations should have in-house creches or arrangements with local childcare facilities to enable parents and carers to work the flexible hours that theatre and performance requires.
8. Organisations continue to engage people to work from home where this enables people to balance their caring and work responsibilities.
9. Venues offer dedicated child-friendly spaces.

---

<sup>5</sup> PiPA charter: <http://www.pipacampaign.com/charter/>

## Ethnicity

53% of respondents who were Black, Asian or of multiple/mixed ethnicities said that they had insufficient support at work, citing poor representation - especially in the technical and production field, doubts about the possibility of getting work consistently, and feelings of tokenism (*'I am the go to guy to fill the 'BAME' checkbox'*).<sup>6</sup>

Freelancers who are Black, Asian, or of multiple/mixed ethnicities lost more earnings, were less likely to have sufficient income, and were more likely to apply for ACW's urgent response fund. We need to address practices which lead to freelancers who are Black, Asian, or of mixed/multiple ethnicities having fewer career opportunities than White freelancers.

We recommend organisations:

10. Contact the Black, Asian, mixed/multiple ethnicity freelancers in their networks in order to seek their voice in what changes need to happen to create a more supportive environment for freelancers of diverse heritage.
11. Create a plan of action or redraft their Strategic Equality Plans - with clear statements of the intended achievements, and specific time-lines for each action point - to address diversity within the organisation. This plan should be published, fully accessible, and reviewed annually to drive forward change.
12. Report annually on race pay gap and steps being taken to eliminate this (this should be publicly available and accessible).
13. Share their data on representation annually (eg. #PullUpOrShutUp campaign).<sup>7</sup>
14. Ensure that all staff undergo regular Diversity and Inclusion training as well as Anti-racism training (ensure this training is delivered by non-white people) in order to ensure the workplace is a supportive and healthy environment for all staff.
15. Include more people who are Black, Asian, or of mixed/multiple ethnicities as arts associates.
16. Offer free or discounted spaces for people who are Black, Asian, or of multiple/mixed ethnicities to develop and test their ideas. The cost of renting spaces and ticket prices can be a major barrier to access and engagement.
17. Offer free or discounted theatre tickets for people who are Black, Asian, or of multiple/mixed ethnicities (eg. Black Ticket Project).<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> The number of Black, Asian, Mixed/Multiple and Other respondents was low (5%), so conclusions may be less statistically robust.

<sup>7</sup> Pull Up or Shut Up: <https://www.instagram.com/pullupforchange/?hl=en>

<sup>8</sup> Black Ticket Project: <https://www.blacktheatreive.co.uk/news/black-ticket-project-creating-opportunities-for-young-black-people-to-access-theatre>

We recommend ACW:

18. Should make the existence of a robust diversification strategy part of the criteria for the award of grants.
19. Hold all bodies and individuals who receive funding accountable for progress towards greater inclusivity and diversity within their workforces by making such progress part of the criteria for the award of grant. Progress would be monitored in such areas as data collection, strategic equality plan targets, evidence of diversity in senior management and boards (see recommendation 71).

## Deaf and disabled freelancers

43% of deaf and disabled respondents said that they had insufficient support at work, citing poor understanding or accommodation of access needs, perception as *'irritations'* rather than *'assets'*, and highlighting the importance of the availability of regular mentoring and assistance.<sup>9</sup> A participant in our deaf and disabled Green Room said:

*'Access and inclusion needs to be backstage, onstage and in front of the stage (the audience).'*

We recommend organisations:

20. Contact the deaf and disabled artists in their networks in order to seek their voice in what changes need to happen to create a more supportive environment for deaf and disabled freelancers. Change to benefit a group of people must occur with the input of that group.
21. Include deaf or disabled freelancers as arts associates.
22. That deaf and disabled access is built into work from early stages and is not viewed as an 'add on'.
23. Report annually on disability pay gap (this should be publicly available and accessible), and steps being taken to eliminate this.
24. Offer free or discounted accessible spaces for deaf and disabled people to develop and test their ideas.
25. Offer free or discounted theatre tickets for deaf and disabled people.
26. Ensure that all staff undergo regular inclusion training.
27. Make more of their work spaces fully accessible.
28. Take into consideration the pace of getting back to work for those who will continue to 'shield' because of underlying health conditions. Solutions may include offering phased-return and job share scenarios, as well as working from home where possible.

We recommend ACW:

29. Make it possible to apply for funding in BSL or other accessible methods (see recommendation 67).
30. Include more deaf or disabled freelancers as arts associates.

---

<sup>9</sup> The number of respondents was low (5%), so conclusions may be less statistically robust.

## Governance

### Diversify boards of management / advisory committees

Boards of management / advisory committees of APW organisations are not diverse enough:

- 2.6% are Black, Asian, or of Multiple/Mixed ethnicities.
- 4.8% identify as disabled.
- 3.2% are Lesbian, Gay or Bisexual.
- Because the numbers are so low on Transgender people, the data is suppressed to protect confidentiality.<sup>10</sup>

Many freelancers we have spoken with have called for a reshaping of senior level spaces.

We recommend organisations:

31. Draw up a plan within the next 6 months for diversifying their boards of management by August 2022, to enable a plurality of voices to strengthen their organisation at the highest levels. Where, in order to achieve this, it could be necessary to consider shorter terms for board members and a cap on multiple terms, organisations should do this.

### Freelance representation

One respondent wrote that organisations should ensure that *'freelancers have a seat at the table where decisions are made and not ignored from those conversations'*.

We recommend organisations:

32. Aim to have at least 2 theatre and performance freelance workers on their board by August 2022.
33. Training/support for board members to understand what freelance workers can contribute.
34. Training/support for the theatre and performance freelancer/s to better contribute the processes and outcomes of board meetings.
35. Review honorariums for board members in order to ensure full engagement with groups with lower representation such as freelancers.

---

<sup>10</sup> Arts Council Wales Strategic Equality Plan (2018/19 data): <http://arts.wales/sites/default/files/2020-01/Annual%20Report%202018%20-%202019%20Strategic%20Equality%20Plan.pdf>

## Strengthening and developing the freelance sector

### Freelancer development

Respondents called for organisations to *'take responsibility for the freelancers they rely on in normal circumstances'*, increase *'outward engagement'*, *'access to training to develop a sustainable practice'*, and focus on their local artists, while reducing barriers to space and access.

We recommend organisations and ACW:

36. Expand affiliation programmes, especially targeting under-represented groups or art forms / roles (this includes dance and technical and production freelancers). Associate programmes are a helpful way to make freelancers feel like they belong somewhere. Association with an organisation can be the difference between a marginalised voice getting funding or not.
37. Expand their organisational training to include freelancers, by offering free places on courses or training which the organisation plans to offer internally.
38. Offer development opportunities without a public-facing / performance element.
39. Enhance support for freelancers by offering access to space, expertise, HR department, and equipment where possible.
40. Share their online platform by regularly signposting freelancers and their work on their websites and on social media, even if they are unaffiliated with the organisation.

## Recovery

Survey data shows freelancers are concerned about wages, protections, well-being, and returning to outdated models of working. Organisations and individuals need to recover side-by-side, and these are suggestions for how this can be achieved.

We recommend organisations:

41. Prioritise engaging and supporting Wales-based freelancers.
42. Protect their 'freelance spend' as proportion of turnover.
43. Formalise arrangements for contract cancellation to ensure that they are not disadvantageous to freelancers. For instance, contracts due to start within the next 3 months might be honoured on a sliding scale.
44. Include income protection insurance and sick pay guarantees in freelance contracts.
45. Increase diversity targets from pre-Covid-19 levels.
46. Employ freelance artists and technicians in their core teams (part-time or full-time) wherever possible. We would like to see many more artists and technicians embedded in venues in longer-term roles — this would inform operations, develop creative thinking, and this would also provide a safety net which invests in the people who help make the work.
47. Dedicate support to first-time ACW grant applicants (of any experience or age) or those who have been unsuccessful, especially with marketing plans and budgets.
48. Interview and audition across Wales, in order to expand their pool of workers and cater for those who may not be able to afford to travel to, for example, Cardiff to interview.
49. Make an effort to contract new workers and new graduates, consider the career development opportunities that could be offered to freelancers. Although organisations may want to re-employ previous workers, extending the pool of freelancers should be a priority, which will strengthen the freelance sector while at the same time enlarging the range of workers available to organisations.
50. Seek to employ new freelancers as part of each project (ie. which the organisation has not worked with before) — a possible target might be 20% of the team.

## Best practice

Working at a venue or with an organisation, especially for the first time, can be a daunting experience. Welcoming, stable work environments are crucial in ensuring freelance workers do their best work, and it helps their well-being. We ask organisations to build on how they communicate with and facilitate freelancers working within their organisations.<sup>11</sup>

We recommend organisations:

51. Give freelancers agency when discussing terms of work, consider reasonable timelines and workload, fairly paid.
52. Be more forthcoming with detailing fees and expenses at early stages of agreement, do not wait for the freelancer to ask.
53. Ensure freelancers have been introduced to the core team and have been given a welcome pack with key information (in accessible formats, where needed), including WiFi codes.
54. Offer (paid) debrief sessions for freelancers who have worked with you to learn from their experience with your organisation.
55. Ensure someone with mental health first-aid training is available during working hours.
56. Provide dedicated space for freelancers to work for the duration of the contract, with storage space (eg. a locker) and WiFi access.
57. Offer the same level of discount (at venue's cafe, restaurant, and shop) to freelancers as offered to employed/permanent staff.
58. Respond promptly to contact from freelancers or from work applicants who have been unsuccessful, including feedback points where possible.

---

<sup>11</sup> Creative and Cultural Skills Best Practice guide: <https://www.ccskills.org.uk/articles/working-with-the-self-employed-a-best-practice-guide-for-businesses>

## Arts Council Wales funding models, application process, and policies

Respondents showed a desire for changes in the current funding models and systems from ACW. They wrote:

*'funding systems are too constrained, restrictive...you are labelled to fit into a certain box'*

*'there needs to be greater commitment and imagination on ACW's and larger organisations' part on ways of sustaining income and careers for freelancers'.*

### Longer-term investment

We recommend ACW:

59. Create longer term funding models for individuals (1-3 year). For example, Arts Portfolio Wales Individuals to work within communities (similar to UK Taskforce's proposal for portfolio organisations in England or Strike a Light's 'Let artists be artists').<sup>12</sup>
60. Open longer-term (1-3 year) funding models for project funded organisations, so they can deliver a raft of projects, build relationships and transition more easily between project funding and Arts Portfolio Wales (APW) status.
61. Encourage organisations to employ more artists and technicians in longer-term roles (see recommendation 46).
62. Consult with Welsh Government on piloting a Universal Basic Income scheme, using theatre and performance freelancers in Wales as a testbed, as recommended by the Future Generations Commissioner.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup> Strike a Light initiative: <https://strikealight.org.uk/2020/07/09/let-artists-be-artists/>

<sup>13</sup> Future Generations Commissioner on Universal Basic Income: <https://www.futuregenerations.wales/news/future-generations-commissioner-calls-for-a-universal-basic-income-pilot-for-creatives/>

## Application process

The extensive application processes for ACW project funding are a barrier for many, especially those who are deaf or disabled, have caring responsibilities, or very little support. Respondents wrote:

*'I dont think they made their application process easy for people who are new to the process'*

*'funding application forms are deeply inaccessible in terms of jargon, additional documentation, communication barriers and funders' general austere nature that is off-putting to neurodiverse people'.*

We recommend:

63. 'Light touch' applications, to increase accessibility and avoid freelancers working an unreasonable amount of unpaid hours writing the application ('I never have time to fill in the huge forms'). Many were complimentary of ACWs emergency funding application mechanisms, and future grants applications could be modelled around this success. We recognise the need to ensure that public money is appropriately spent with accountability, but there is much that could be done to simplify applications while still ensuring this.
64. De-prioritising venues or organisations as project partners and expand the definition to include community groups, public service bodies, or a collective of freelancers.
65. ACW Officers or ACW Arts Associates to offer support to first-time applicants (of any experience or age) and feedback to those who have been unsuccessful.
66. Strengthening and supporting technical and production freelancers (eg. stage managers, lighting designers) with grants for developing practice (including buying equipment and training opportunities) and research. ACW should advertise and ensure processes allow for applications from technical or production freelancers who may not be able to provide a creative project.
67. ACW considers allowing a range of formats in which it accepts applications, for example video applications (for those who are dyslexic), voice recordings (for those who are blind or partially sighted), and applications in BSL (for those who wish to use BSL instead of Welsh or English) — see recommendation 29. ACW should consider offering funding, where necessary, to complete such applications.

## **Data collection and policy development**

Our Wales Freelance Survey was a first step in getting a snapshot of the immediate situation for theatre and performance freelance workers in Wales (see Appendix 1 and 2).

We recommend ACW:

68. Undertake a structured programme of data collection on freelance workers in Wales. Specific topics might include: the continuing impact of Covid-19, progress on inclusivity targets, analysis of subsectors, improving visibility of the Welsh language, and reports on equal pay.
69. Undertake regional studies to look at the strengths and weaknesses of the arts sector in particular regions, specifically north Wales and west Wales.
70. Provide support for the creation of a mapped directory to give a platform to Wales-based freelancers, including technical and production freelancers. This can platform those with protected characteristics, Welsh speakers, new parents and recent graduates (see recommendation 49).
71. Hold organisations accountable for achieving progress under the annual Equal Pay and Inclusivity reports (see recommendations 1, 11, 12, 23, 31), and that such progress should be a criterion in future funding decisions (see recommendation 71).

## Welsh Language

Respondents expressed many concerns around the development of Welsh-language work in Wales, in terms of scale, experimentation, and APWs over-reliance on other, Welsh-language companies to provide this work on their behalf.<sup>14</sup> They cited a lack of experimental spaces in Welsh, lack of a range of Welsh-language opportunities in Welsh-speaking areas, and the limited 'fringe scene' in Wales being largely through the medium of English. These suggestions will contribute towards the Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 initiative to extend the number of Welsh speakers to 1 million by 2050.<sup>15</sup> Publicly-funded organisations must take their share of responsibility for achieving this.

### Make work in Welsh

Although almost three-quarters of respondents can use at least some Welsh, in 67% of the projects they were involved in respondents used less than 20% Welsh.

We recommend:

72. APWs (except National Theatre Wales and non-language based companies, eg. dance companies) should develop or produce at least one Welsh-language production per year. This work should not always be small scale and could consider using subtitle systems to provide an English translation.
73. ACW should hold these APWs accountable, possibly along the lines of the way that countries such as France have a minimum threshold for French language songs on radio.<sup>16</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> Wales is a bilingual nation with two official languages - English and Welsh. 19% of the population speak Welsh. There are two national theatres: Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru (Welsh) and National Theatre Wales (English).

<sup>15</sup> Welsh Government's Cymraeg 2050 Report: <https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-12/cymraeg-2050-welsh-language-strategy.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> France's Toubon Law: <https://www.alphabet-linguistics.com/loi-toubon-understanding-french-language-regulations/>

## **Supporting Welsh-language work and creatives**

We recommend:

74. Organisations should aim to ensure that 20% of their associate roles should be held by and development opportunities should be given to Welsh speakers.
75. Venues offer longer-term slots (eg. more than one night) for visiting Welsh-language work. This will promote their own audience development and help a sustainable Welsh language business model.
76. Organisations ask what role the Welsh language has to play in their organisation, within their community, and how it can be better used or advocated for (consult Mentrau Iaith).
77. Organisations analyse their audience development and marketing models for Welsh-language work and work alongside (learn from) Welsh-language organisations (including community theatre companies) to improve this.

## Subsectoral and Regional analysis

Part of the work which needs to be taken forward following the Wales Freelance Survey is more detailed analysis of subsectors and geographical regions within the theatre and performance sector in Wales. Because of the time-limited nature of this Taskforce project, we are not able to do this, but we suggest this is something which ACW can do, either using data from this survey or from future surveys (see recommendations 54 and 55). For indicative purposes and to highlight a subsector and region which seems in particular need, however, we present here some data and recommendations relating to the Dance sector and north Wales.

### Dance

Survey data and conversations with dance freelancers in Wales demonstrate a lack of funding, infrastructure, and support for dance. 76% of dance artists earn £15,000 or less compared to 42% of respondents as a whole, 71% supplemented their income compared to 45% of respondents as a whole, and 41% don't know if they will stay in the industry compared to 33% of respondents as a whole.

ACW data shows that dance-specific APWs receive 6% of total portfolio funding. National Dance Company Wales receives only 32% of the combined budget for Theatr Genedlaethol and National Theatre Wales.<sup>17</sup> Only 4% of lottery funding in 2019/20 went to projects where more than 50% of the project was dance activity.<sup>18</sup>

We recommend:

78. ACW should increase funding levels for dance (via the portfolio/lottery and strategic funds)
79. ACW should develop a strategy for dance in Wales in consultation with those who are part of the sector including freelancers.
80. ACW should ensure dance sector knowledge is present and an active part of dance grant award decision making.
81. Dance APWs should share access to space and other resources with freelancers and project funded orgs.
82. Venues and production houses should ensure they are presenting/commissioning/producing/supporting dance and engaging dance artists as part of their activity.

---

<sup>17</sup> Arts Council Wales Financial Statement, p. 134: [https://arts.wales/sites/default/files/2019-02/Report\\_and\\_Financial\\_Statements\\_2017-18.pdf](https://arts.wales/sites/default/files/2019-02/Report_and_Financial_Statements_2017-18.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Data from Arts Council Wales Evaluation and Research department.

## North Wales

Respondents living in north Wales (15%) identified a lack of regular opportunities and lack of experimentation ('safe spaces'), a feeling of isolation ('cut off') from the arts industry, and a 'north south divide' or 'Cardiff-centric' attitude to arts and culture in Wales. Survey data shows that 41% of respondents living in north Wales don't know if they will stay in the industry, compared to 33% of respondents as a whole. 57% of respondents from north Wales supplemented their income with work outside the creative sector, compared with 45% of respondents as a whole.

We recommend:

83. ACW should increase funding levels for north Wales (via the portfolio/lottery and strategic funds)
84. ACW and north Wales based APWs should develop a system which connects organisation and freelancers, to facilitate space booking
85. Mapping freelancers in north Wales by creating an accessible directory system (see recommendation 68 and 69).
86. APWs tour to north Wales more frequently, ideally performing for more than one evening at any venue.
87. APWs interview and audition in north Wales, in order to expand their pool of workers and cater for those who may not be able to afford to travel to, for example, Cardiff to interview. Alternatively, consider paying all or a proportion of travel expenses for those travelling from further afield.

---

## Acknowledgments

This report was written and compiled by Steffan Donnelly, while a member of the Wales Freelance Taskforce, in September 2020, with input from Connor Allen, Garrin Clarke, Deborah Light, Krystal Lowe, and Hannah McPake. It is informed by findings from the Wales Freelance Survey (with further analysis by a researcher at the University of Worcester) and a plurality of voices from the Wales Freelance Taskforce and their conversations with over 450 freelancers and organisations across Wales. Please contact [walesfreelancetaskforce@gmail.com](mailto:walesfreelancetaskforce@gmail.com) for more information.

### Members of the Wales Freelance Task Force:

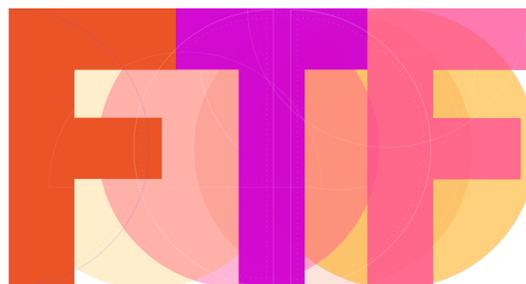
Connor Allen	Jafar Iqbal	Mathilde Lopez
Shakeera Ahmun	Zosia Jo	Anthony Matsena
Sarah Argent	Angharad Lee	Hannah McPake
Steffan Donnelly	Deborah Light	Glesni Price-Jones
Garrin Clarke	Krystal Lowe	

### Organisations in Wales which have sponsored a member of the Freelance Taskforce are:

Fio	National Dance Company Wales	Theatr Genedlaethol Cymru
Hijinx Theatre	Rubicon Dance	Theatr Iolo
National Theatre Wales	Taking Flight	Wales Millennium Centre

### Other contributors:

Chris Batsford (ACW statistical data), Stephanie Back (BSL and captioned video), Lois Donnelly (statistical analysis), Ioan Gwyn (Welsh audio version), Krystal Lowe (English audio version), Sofi Nowell (easy read version), Megan Pritchard (cover design).



## Appendix 1: Wales Freelance Survey Data Report

The following pages summarise the responses to the survey which ran for 3 weeks from 22nd July to 7th August 2020, receiving 420 responses (74 responded to the Welsh version, 346 responded to the English version). Full data is available for download on the **freelance.wales** and **llawrydd.cymru** websites (Creative Commons license).

### Age

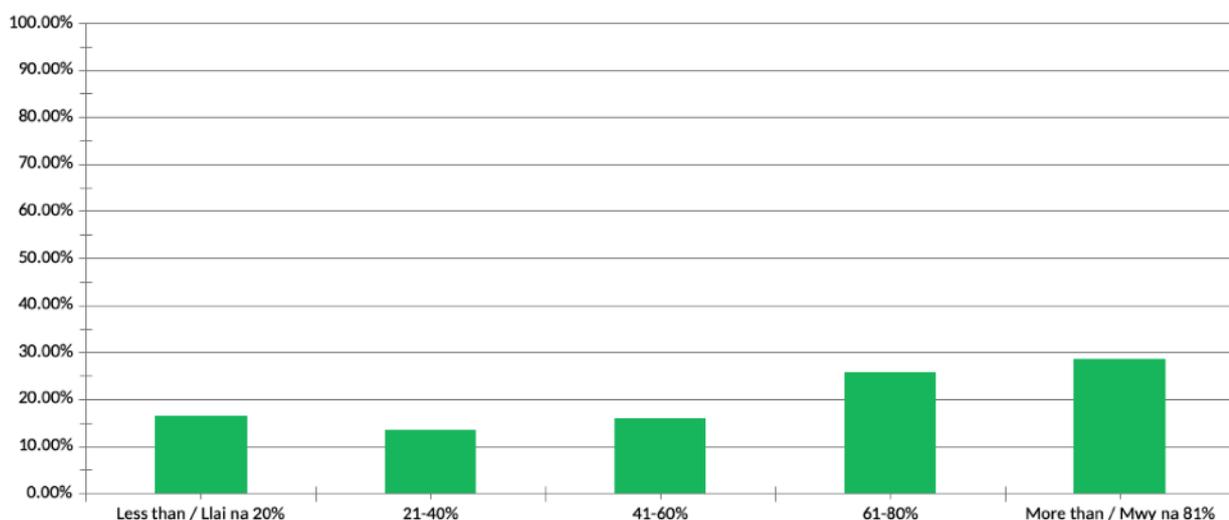
There was a strong response to the survey across ages, though there were relatively fewer responses in upper age-brackets, with the majority of responses (39%) in the 25-34 bracket.

### Location

There were respondents from all local authorities in Wales, but the majority were from Cardiff (42%). Grouping the Local Authorities by region shows that most (74%) are located in South Wales, with 15% in North Wales and 11% in Mid and West Wales.<sup>1</sup>

Respondents who were more likely to work within a 50-mile radius (i.e. more locally) were also more likely to have lost fewer earnings during Covid-19. This suggests that those working closer to home were less likely to be disrupted in their job during the Covid-19 crisis.

Figure 1: Roughly what percentage of your work takes place within a 50 mile radius of this area?



<sup>1</sup> *South Wales*: Merthyr Tydfil, Neath Port Talbot, Swansea, Bridgend, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Vale of Glamorgan, Cardiff, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent, Torfaen, Newport, Monmouthshire.

*Mid and West Wales*: Powys, Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire.

*North Wales*: Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Gwynedd, Isle of Anglesey, Wrexham.

Respondents living in North Wales identified a lack of regular opportunities and lack of experimentation ('safe spaces'), a feeling of isolation ('cut off') from the arts industry, and a 'North South divide' or 'Cardiff-centric' attitude to arts and culture in Wales.

## Work area

For over half of respondents (55%), most of their work (over 61%) takes place within a 50 mile radius of where they live. However, this is not true for 29% of respondents, for whom less than 40% of their work takes place within 50 miles of where they live (Figure 1).

## Gender

The responses were slightly weighted towards women (52%), with 48% men, and the remainder transgender, binary, other, or preferring not to say. 46% of non-male respondents said that they had insufficient support at work.<sup>2</sup> Many cited becoming new mothers, child care, and age as barriers.

Women were paid less compared to men, even when controlling for age. Although most men and women were paid £15-20,000 per year, more (double) women than men were in the £5-10,000 earnings band, bringing the average earnings for women down.

The average annual salary for men is in the £15-20,000 band, while the average annual salary for women is in the £10-15,000 band, suggesting that on average women are paid 25% less than men.

Women lost fewer earnings, even when controlling for earnings level. This may be because women earn less to begin with, but also because their jobs may have been more robust during Covid-19 - for instance, women are highly represented in Participatory Practice and Arts Education, and may have been able to continue some of this work during Covid-19 (eg. via Zoom).

Women are more likely to supplement their income with work outside the creative sector.

There was no statistically significant gender difference in APW employment before Covid-19, but during Covid-19 APW employment favoured women.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Where questions were asked about adequate support, these were directed to those who were in a "protected characteristics" category such as gender, ethnicity, disability. In other words, they were not asked of those who were in the "default" position in relation to those categories (eg. men in the case of gender, etc.).

<sup>3</sup> All references to 'before Covid-19' refer to the year before March 2020.

## **Ethnicity**

The number of Black, Asian, Mixed/Multiple and Other respondents were low (5%), so conclusions may be less statistically robust.

53% of these respondents said that they had insufficient support at work (citing poor representation - especially in the technical field, doubts about the possibility of getting work consistently, and feelings of tokenism).

Black, Asian, Mixed/Multiple and Other respondents lost more earnings, were less likely to have sufficient income, and were more likely to apply for ACW's urgent response fund.

## **Deaf and disabled**

Again, the number of respondents was low (5%), so conclusions may be less statistically robust.

43% of these respondents said that they had insufficient support at work (citing poor understanding or accommodation of access needs, perception as 'irritations' rather than 'assets', need for regular mentoring and assistance).

## **Welsh Language**

29% of respondents do not speak Welsh. However, 48% are comfortable holding basic or advanced conversations in Welsh and 21% are learning Welsh.

Although almost three-quarters of respondents can use at least some Welsh, in 67% of the projects they were involved in respondents used less than 20% Welsh. During the Covid-19 crisis, the proportion of projects with low usage of Welsh actually increased slightly to 75%.

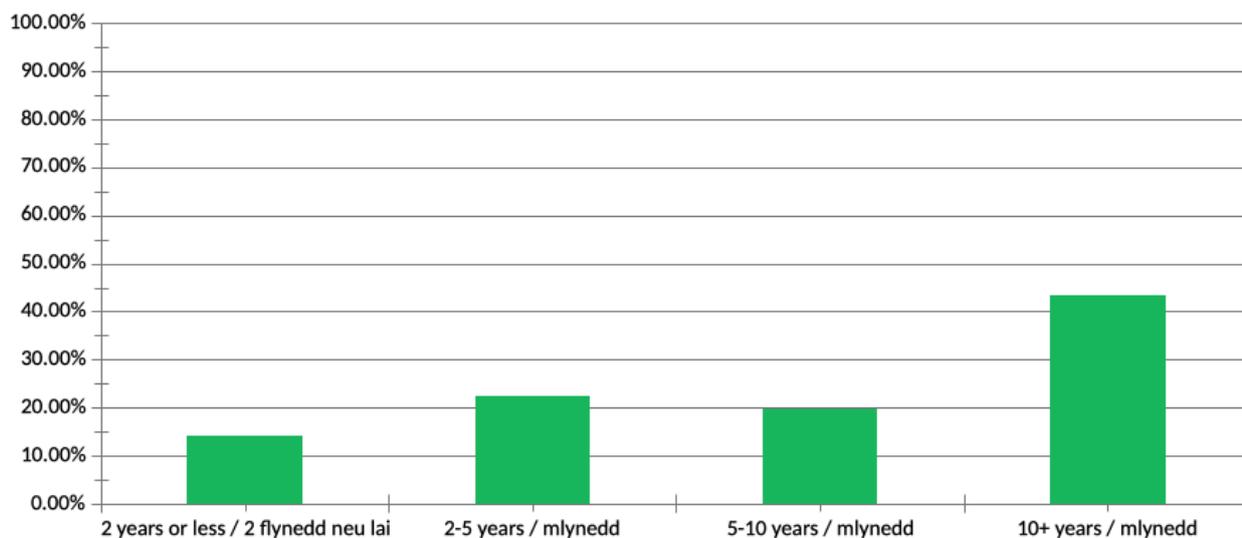
## **Career length**

63% of respondents had worked in the sector for more than 5 years, and 14% had worked in it for less than 2 years (Figure 2).

## Caring responsibilities

23% of respondents had caring responsibilities, and 76% of these said that they had insufficient support. 78% said changes in their caring responsibilities due to the Covid-19 crisis had affected their ability to work in the creative industry during this time.

Figure 2: How long have you worked in the creative sector as a freelancer?



## Portfolio careers

Nearly all freelancers in Wales have “portfolio careers”, where they work in multiple roles across different fields. Respondents ticked an average of 3 possible work disciplines in a list of 24, with the most frequent being acting, arts education, directing, performing, and production/stage management.

## Earnings

The most common level of annual earnings was £15,000-£20,000, with 61% of respondents earning less than £20,000. (Figure 3). Higher earnings brackets had progressively fewer respondents, apart from a small group (6%) that earned £40,000 or more.

45% of respondents needed to supplement their creative sector work with other income. (Figure 4).

94% of respondents had lost work due to Covid-19. The vast majority (90%) had lost up to £20,000 of earnings. (Figure 5).

Respondents who did not supplement their income were more likely to lose more earnings. This may be because not diversifying left them more vulnerable during Covid-19.

Figure 3: How much money (pre-tax) do you usually earn per year from this work?

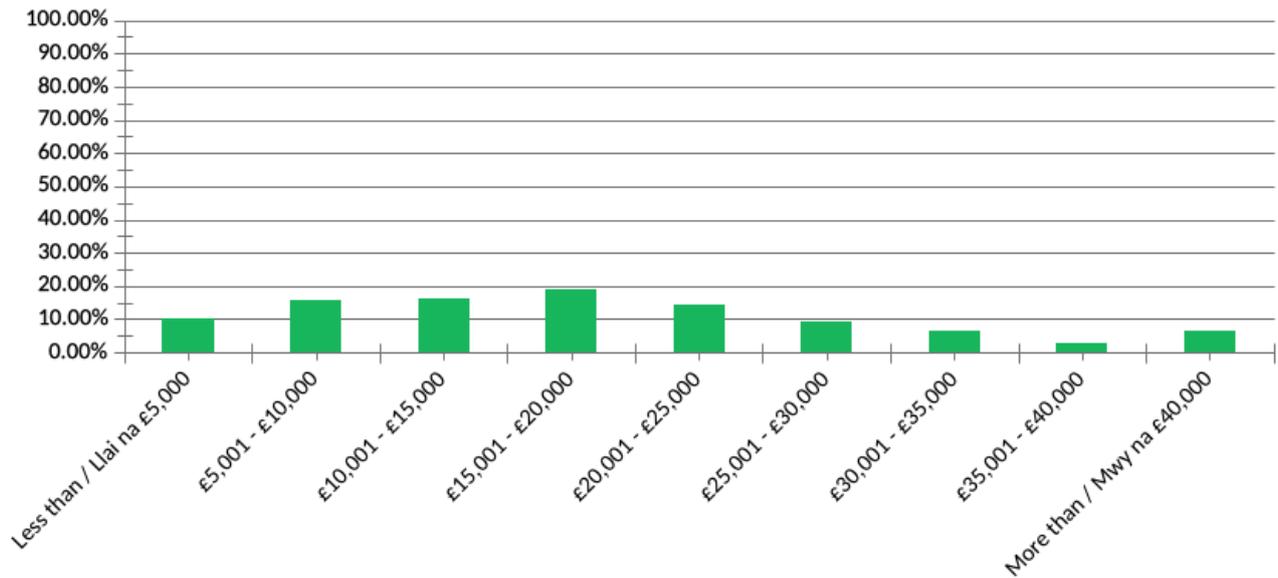


Figure 4: Do you usually need to support/supplement your income from the creative sector (i.e with other work/benefits)?

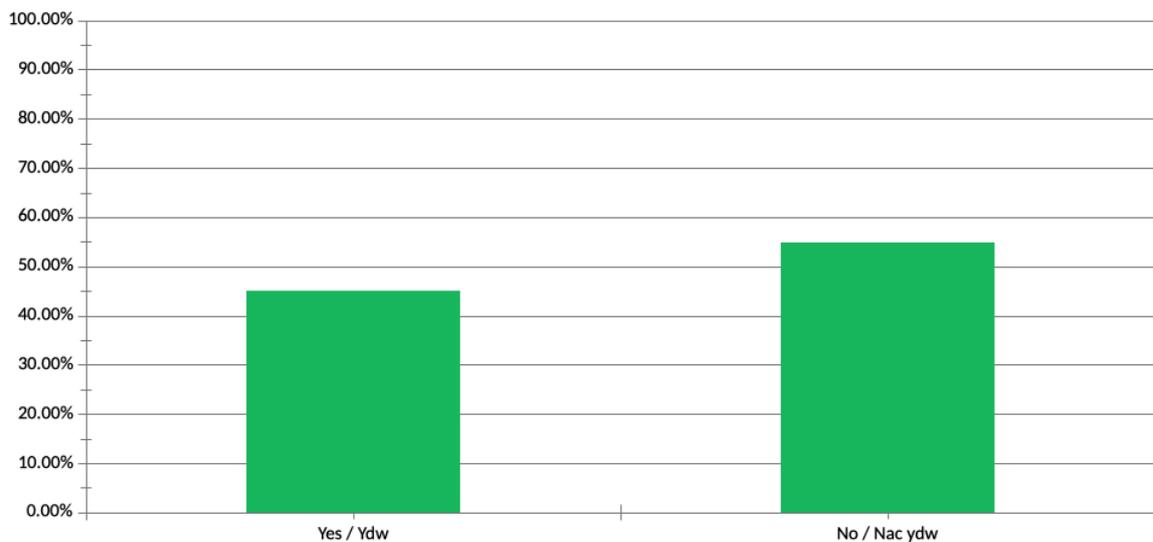
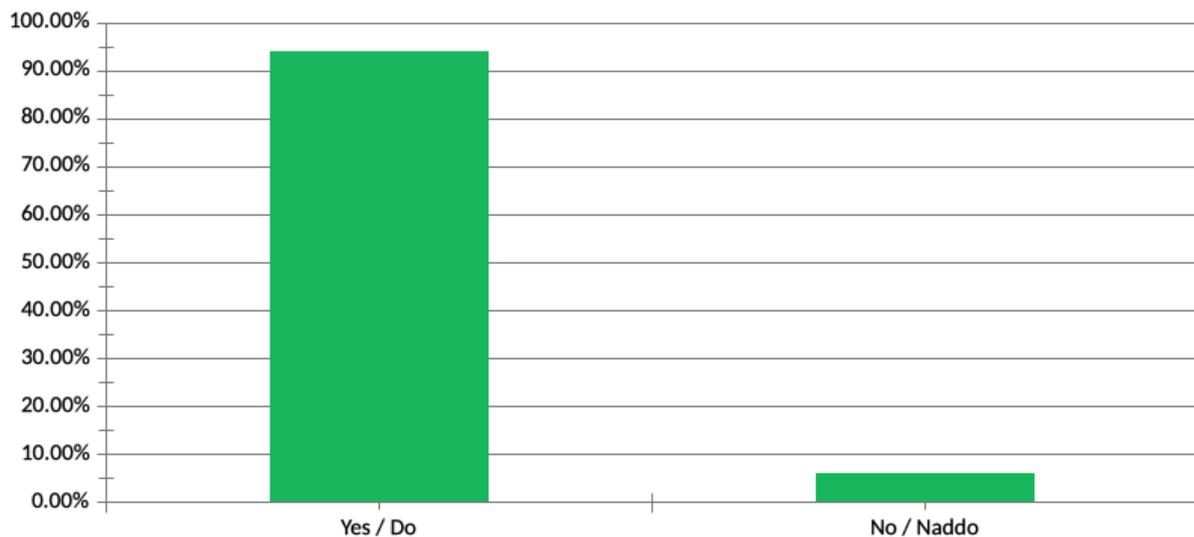


Figure 5: Have you lost work due to coronavirus?



### Employment status

67% of respondents are self-employed, and a minority (5%) were an employee (PAYE). However, a substantial minority (25%) fall into both categories - they are both self-employed and an employee (PAYE).

### Union or industry body membership

63% of respondents were members of a union such as BECTU or an industry body such as People Dancing.

Respondents who were less likely to be members of a union or industry body were much more likely to lose work. This may be because such respondents were less able to contest loss of work.

Respondents who were not members of a union or industry body, were much more likely to work closer to home (i.e. within a 50-mile radius).

The longer respondents had worked as freelancers, the more likely they were to be members of a union or industry body.

### Arts Portfolio Wales (APW) companies

In the year before the Covid-19 crisis, 55% of respondents had undertaken paid work by an APW, but this fell to 25% during Covid-19.

In the year before the Covid-19 crisis, 77% of respondents had undertaken paid work by a non-APW company, but this fell to 39% during Covid-19.

Women and Welsh-speakers were more likely to receive earnings from APWs during Covid-19.

### **Financial support**

Nearly half (47%) of respondents received no financial support from the UK Government's Self Employed Income Support Scheme (SEISS), and 81% received no financial support from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) through their employer (furlough).

Respondents were less likely to receive SEISS if:

- They earned more. This is probably because of the £50,000 limit on SEISS applications.
- Supplemented their income.

Respondents were more likely to receive SEISS if:

- They had worked in the sector for longer.
- They were members of a union or industry body. This may be because the union/body informed them about it.

Older respondents were less likely to apply for Universal Credit (UC).

The lowest success rate in receiving UC was in the 25-30 bracket.

Respondents who applied for ACW Urgent Response Funds (URF) were less likely to receive UC. This is perhaps because a successful URF application would affect funding via UC.

Of the 27% of respondents who applied for Universal Credit or other social security benefits, 72% received them.

11% of respondents received charity support during the Covid-19 crisis.

Welsh-speaking respondents were more likely to receive charity support.

Over a quarter of the freelance workforce in Wales cannot afford to pay their bills at the moment. Some 27% of respondents have fallen through the cracks in terms of financial

support, in that they did not have sufficient income to live on, either through work, government schemes, grants, loans, or benefits.

Those who have sufficient income to live on made possible largely because of re-directing work ('taking work in the retail sector', 'found another job - not industry related'), spending personal savings ('i.e. the Rainy Day fund that freelancers should aim to have because we don't get sick pay, compassionate leave etc. '), relying on family support or household income (eg. partner/spouse's earnings), and because there are very little additional outgoings at present (eg. travel). Many wrote about having 'no safety net for the future', holding on 'by the skin of my teeth', being 'extremely worried', with the impossibility of 'covering all expenses'.

One respondent noted: 'working class Welsh freelance creatives, do not have money behind them to carry them through these kind of times and support their families etc. Our options for supplementary work will be narrow too as everyone in Wales will be going for temporary menial jobs as their industries and work places also reduce staff.'

### **Arts Council Wales (ACW) emergency funding**

ACW emergency funding strands had very low uptake amongst respondents.

Only 13% of respondents applied to the Urgent Response Fund (URF), with 74% of these being successful. Only 15% applied to the Stabilisation Fund (SF), with 75% of these being successful.

Respondents who received support from the URF and SF were more likely to have sufficient income. This may have been precisely because they received the funding.

The older respondents were, the more likely they were to apply to the SF.

Respondents who had been paid by APWs and non-APWs previously were more likely to receive SF money.

Respondents who were paid by non-APWs were more likely to be successful in applying to the Stabilisation Fund.

## **ACW applications before Covid-19**

The low rates of application for the SF and URF contrast with the 38% of respondents who applied for an ACW grant to undertake a creative project before Covid-19. Of these, 64% had success with more than 50% of their applications.

ACW grants were more likely to be applied for before Covid-19 by respondents who were: older, Welsh-speaking, freelancers for longer, or who work more locally (within 50 miles of their home).

Respondents who had applied for an ACW grant before Covid-19, were more likely to apply to the SF, perhaps because they are already familiar with ACW funding systems and mechanisms.

Respondents who received an ACW grant before Covid-19 were less likely to apply to the SF and also less likely to receive SF funding.

## **ACW response**

15% of respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with ACW's response, but this is outweighed by 31% who were satisfied or very satisfied. However, there was a significant proportion of 'don't-knows' (19%). (Figure 6).

This suggests that those with sufficient funds and who feel plugged into the system are more likely to feel satisfied with the response.

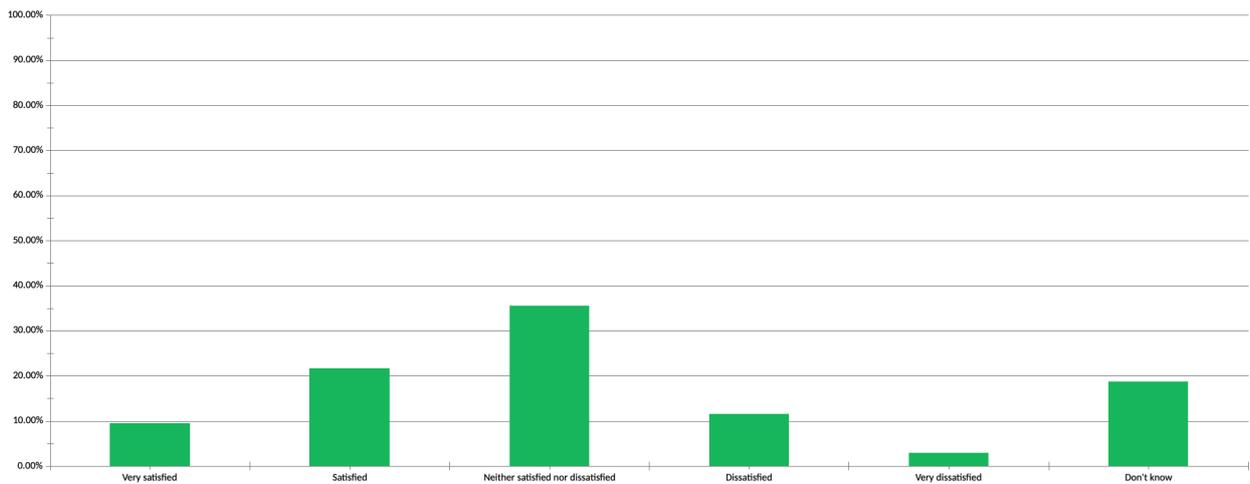
Respondents were more likely to feel satisfied with the ACW response, if they:

- Received ACW grants before Covid-19.
- Worked with APWs and non-APWs.
- Received support from ACWs Stabilisation Fund.

However, respondents who received ACW grants before Covid-19 were less likely to be satisfied with the ACW response.

Respondents who felt most negatively about Covid-19 tended to be less satisfied with the ACW response.

Figure 6: How satisfied are you with Arts Council Wales' response to the Covid-19 crisis?



### Welsh Government response

40% of respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the Welsh Government's response, with only 20% satisfied or very satisfied. The proportion of 'don't-knows' was 6%. (Figure 7).

Respondents who were more satisfied with Government response tended to be those who were paid by APWs, or had received SEISS or SF support.

Respondents who felt most negatively about Covid-19 tended to be less satisfied with the Welsh Government response.

Figure 7: How satisfied are you with the Welsh Government's response to the Covid-19 crisis, in relation to culture and the arts?

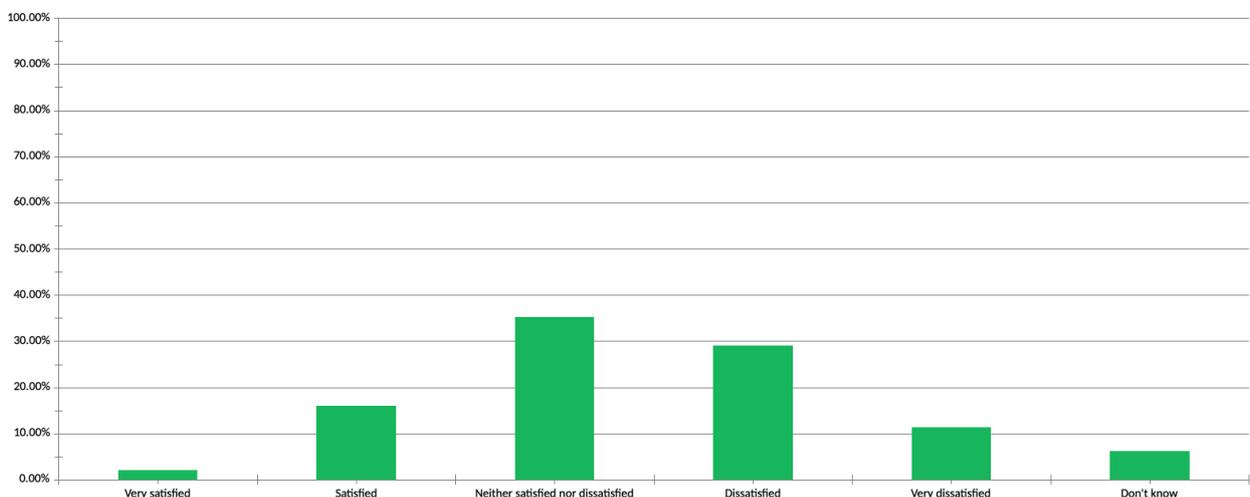
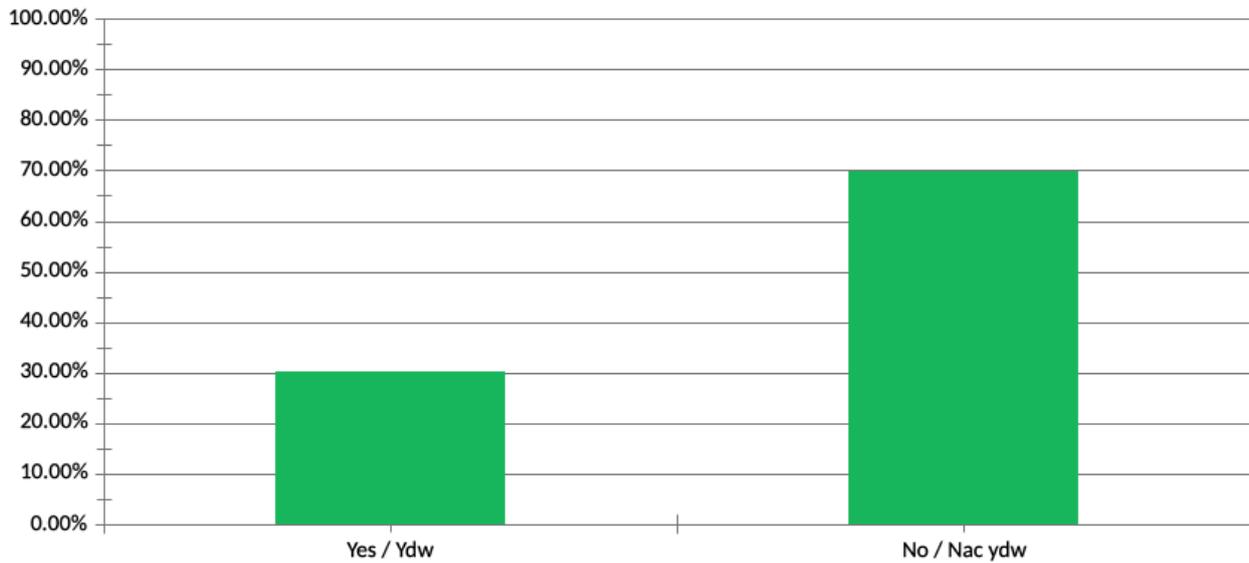


Figure 8: Do you feel included or represented in planning for the future of the creative sector in Wales?



### Representation in planning for the future

70% of respondents did not feel included or represented in planning for the future of the creative sector in Wales. (Figure 8).

Respondents who had lost fewer earnings felt more included in planning.

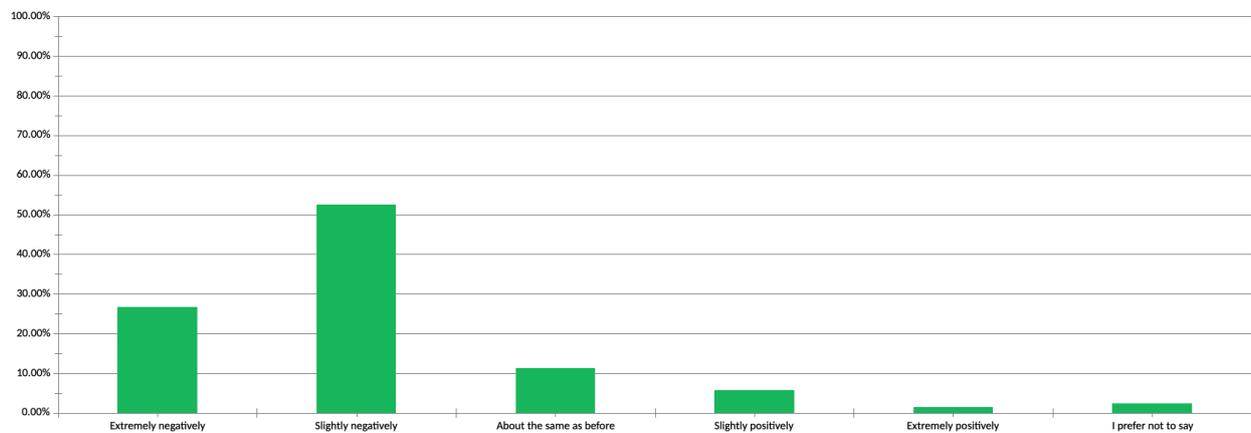
Respondents who were considering leaving the sector felt less included in planning.

Respondents tended to feel more included in planning if they:

- Had lost less money due to Covid-19 or had sufficient income
- Had been paid by an APW during Covid-19
- Had applied and/or received SF support
- Or had applied for an ACW grant before Covid-19.

This suggests that those with sufficient funds and who are plugged into the ACW system feel they have more input because they know how things work and they have had previous support from that system.

Figure 10: How has the current Covid-19 crisis affected your well-being, if at all?



## Well-being

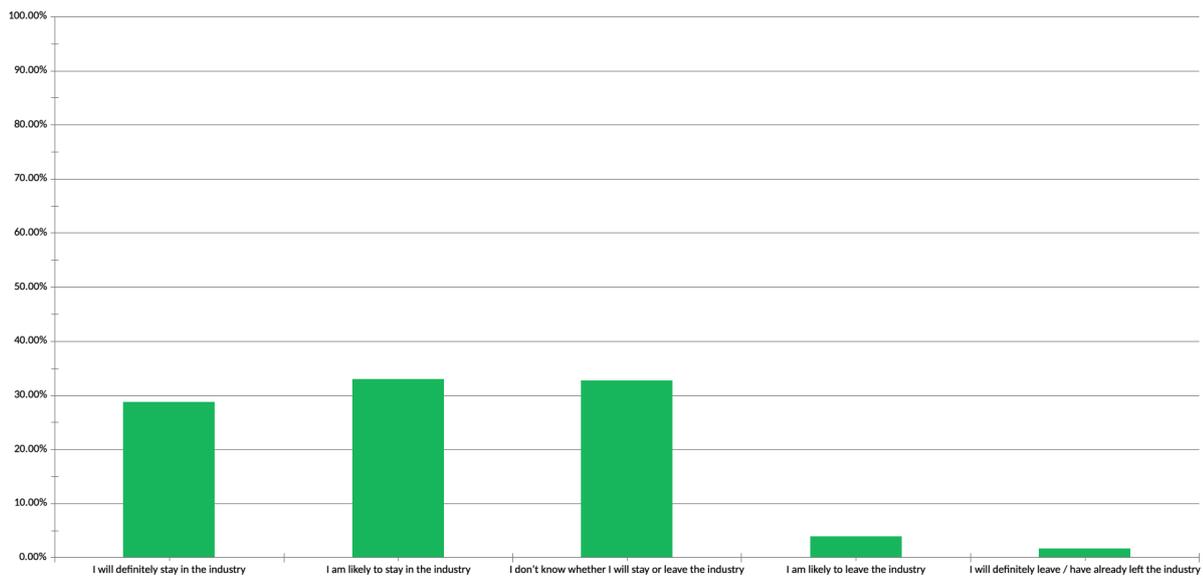
The Covid-19 crisis has had a significant effect on individuals' well-being, with 79% being slightly or extremely negatively affected (Figure 10). Respondents who felt most negatively impacted were likely to be leaving the sector.

However, this does not seem to have affected individuals' commitment to the sector: 62% of respondents say they are likely or will definitely stay in the sector, and only 5% say they will leave or have already left the sector. Another 33% of respondents said that they have made no decision as yet about leaving or staying (Figure 11).

Respondents whose well-being was most negatively impacted were:

- Older people.
- Welsh speakers.
- Those who had lost work.
- Those who are not a member of unions or industry bodies.
- People paid by APWs during Covid-19.

Figure 11: Thinking about the future, which of the following statements apply to you?



## Future priorities

When asked about what the priorities for freelancers would be over the next 6 months, respondents overwhelmingly focused on financial support (eg. further grant schemes, paid work, basic income, tax payment plans etc.) and on returning to work.

Guidance and clarity on future opening and process was frequently referred to, as was support for mental health and well-being.

Other frequent comments include:

- Rethink about freelancers and their value in the sector.
- Diversifying practice, support for training for future employment.
- Living Wage and Basic Income for arts and performance freelancers.
- Free education opportunities and upskilling.

## Appendix 2: Comments selection from the Wales Freelance Survey

### Funding systems

*“funding systems I find are too constrained, restrictive and you are labelled to fit into a certain box”*

*“I can never apply for ACW grants - I never have time to fill in the huge forms”*

*“Funding application forms are deeply inaccessible in terms of jargon, additional documentation, communication barriers and funders general austere nature that is off putting to neurodiverse people.”*

*“Mae angen lot fwy o ran ymroddiad a dychymyg ar ran y Cyngor Celfyddydau a'r cwmnïau mawr pan ddaw at ffyrdd o gynnal incwm a gyrfaedd artistiaid llawrydd. Prin iawn yw'r syniadau hyd yn hyn, a mae eu hagwedd tuag at dderbyn syniadau wedi bod yn negatiff iawn.”*

### Deaf and disabled freelancers

*“People have so little awareness of neurodiversity. They don't know how to accommodate for ND audience members and they don't know how to bare with ND people they are working with. They see us as irritations rather than assets.”*

*“the cultural sector in Wales and beyond has systemic and institutional barriers towards the inclusion of disabled people.”*

*“In the past, regular mentoring and help with management/co-ordination/life balance and study skills from a very good disability resource centre really helped transform my achievements for the better. “*

*“Greater support into the industry with potential governmental support in grants and funding to help make the industry more welcoming to those with disabilities”*

### Leaving or staying in the industry

Many who are uncertain explained their desire to work because of love and experience (*‘I love my job’, ‘I have been working as a Backline Technician and Stage Manager for over 45 years, I'm not going to quit now’* and *‘I've spent 25 years working on my practice’*), but there was uncertainty about recovery, less opportunities and pay in the future, and need to

supplement income with other work (*'I want to [stay in the industry] but I don't know if I can'* and *'I want to I will just need work'*) or leave Wales for work (*'But probably not in Wales'*)

*"The future is very uncertain for me"*

*"Im on a cliff edge"*

*"Hard to see how I can continue as an Actor - parents have historically helped with childcare but this doesn't feel like a viable solution anymore. I feel like I will need to try and find something that has more predictable hours so that I can manage both parenting and work. I have had very little time to myself so it is hard to find time to look for work."*

One respondent's contract was extended by six months and *'without this support I would be seriously considering leaving the industry and trying to find more stable and reliable employment'*.

*"I like many others cannot afford to stay in the industry at this point in time and am seeking other work."*

*"Feel forgotten about and left out in the cold. Will leave industry soon at this rate."*

*"Everyone I know who is welsh and making good money in the creative industry left wales when they had the chance. People making £££££ out in Nashville, London, Edinburgh, Australia. I'm starting to think I should have too. Or just stack shelves. Every who books me from England pays a few thousand to book me. Welsh artists barely have a couple hundred. I've even had english artists apologise for budgets being 'only a few thousand', when it's actually X5 larger than the average welsh band."*

*"This has really effected my mental health and has made me question wether to find a job outside of the industry going into the future."*

*"I would like to return but I obviously can't wait indefinitely before looking for a more secure alternative"*

*"I really want to stay in the industry and I don't know what else I would do. But financial stability, access to opportunities and infrastructure change is an ongoing concern and cause of stress."*

*"I'm scared and worry that the amount of opportunities will decrease even more as more venues and big companies pursue co-productions and become risk adverse."*

*"It's made me question my place and value in this industry."*

*"Currently looking for an alternative short term job until I can return to the industry when it is back on it's feet"*

*"I wish I wasn't freelance right now."*

*"Personally I'm scared of having to retrain at my age - how on earth do I go about that and what opportunities are there for people of my age suddenly having to change direction?"*

## **Funding schemes**

*"All my face-to-face classes have ceased. They provide a modest but regular income for me. As my freelance work represents less than 50% of my income I have been unable to apply for freelancers financial support from government."*

*"Without organisational support, the majority of my income is 'box office'. I work with vulnerable groups who are unlikely to be meeting for some time yet and who are mostly 'digitally excluded', making the transference of activity on-line inappropriate for most. I have spent a lot of time during lockdown up-skilling in digital technology and keeping up-to- date with sector conversations during this difficult time. I have also maintained contact with my usual participants as far as possible (unpaid)"*

*"Also I have not tried to apply for any of the grants as it feels like the window of acceptability and reasons for needing help/support etc is rather narrow. I suspect many of us don't feel entitled."*

*"The whole funding mechanism and criteria is set up in such a way that regular freelance musicians are unable to access these schemes. I was ineligible for any of the support funding set up for C-19."*

*"I didn't know about any of the schemes run by arts council wales"*

*"Dwi ddim yn siwr pa waith trafod mae CCC yn ei wneud nag efo pwy. Mae dweud 'rydym yn siarad efo partneriaid' yn pointless oni bai ein bod ni'n gwybod pwy yw'r partneriaid hynny, i ehangu'n ymwybyddiaeth os ydym neu os nad ydym yn cael ein cynrychioli"*

## Impact on freelancers who are Black, Asian, or from mixed/multiple ethnic groups

*"Racism is a recurring subject"*

*"I have wondered in the last year or so whether I'd hit some glass ceiling of 'Welshness', where I'm just a bit too different to work consistently here...I suppose that's how systemic biases work."*

*"I generally personally feel supported, I feel that I am the go to guy to fill the 'BAME' checkbox, leaving me wondering if I'm there for my skill or to gain access to funding pots that wouldn't be available if I wasn't there. Also please don't use the term 'BAME' it makes me feel like less of a person."*

*"There is a dearth of BAME representation in the technical field"*

## North Wales

*"Dim digon o gyfleoedd yn y Gogledd. Dim digon o 'safe spaces' i drïo pethau"*

*"It is very difficult to access opportunities across the county when looking after a child. There are not many development opportunities in Northern Wales. It is very difficult to even find out about opportunities as there is not one place and you have to spend a lot of time on Social Media and Newsletters to find them. It is difficult to access the arts scene in Northern Wales as I feel it lacks infrastructure, accountability and responsibility to practitioners."*

*"There is a real North South divide in Wales and in the North, we feel very cut off from a lot of the work and buying power that happens in Cardiff. We see a lot of work given to Cardiff and Bristol based companies who bring their own staff to the North to work, further limiting our options"*

*"Many opportunities are in South Wales, with a strong network of support, leaving Mid and North Wales out. Organisations in Northern Wales don't seem interested in supporting artists within their community, other than ones they have already worked with on a regular basis."*

*"Because I live in North Wales I feel quite isolated from the Welsh arts industry, which seems to be predominantly South Wales based."*

*“But as a Welsh person who has chosen to stay living in North Wales, I don't feel there are many incentives to help us stay living here whilst trying to hold down a career in the arts. I stay because this is my home, my family are all here and I love it, but mostly I have to go away to work. I accept this as part of being in this industry and choosing to live here - but it was much easier for me when I lived in London as that's where most auditions take place. I wish there was more help and encouragement for Freelancers in this industry to be able to more easily live and work here.”*

*“The arts in Wales is too Cardiff centric where doors are closed for those who live away from the city. Creatives move within exclusive circles and support a small group. Not inclusive or supportive of those outside the said group.”*

## **Women**

*“Mam newydd - gwaith llawrydd yn y sector ddim yn hawdd i wneud gyda babi ifanc sy'n bwydo”*

*“Angen strwythur o gefnogaeth fwy robust”*

*“During covid I have fallen into a full time mother role with the only time to work being on the weekends when my partner isn't working full time. I haven't had the same chance to be creative as I would normally.”*

*“If we are very careful the rest will see us through next year while the industry starts to recover. But after that if I have another lean year - which is likely as I don't imagine our industry will be going through a boom time with lots of work for middle aged actresses - I have no idea how we will survive”*

## **Do you have sufficient income to live on? / Oes gennych chi ddigon o incwm i fyw arno?**

Those who have sufficient income to live on made possible largely because of:

- re-directing work (*‘taking work in the retail sector’, ‘found another job - not industry related’*)
- spending personal savings (*‘i.e. the Rainy Day fund that freelancers should aim to have because we don't get sick pay, compassionate leave etc.’*)
- relying on family support or household income (eg. partner/spouse's earnings)
- because there are very little additional outgoings at present (eg. travel).

Many wrote about having *'no safety net for the future'*, holding on *'by the skin of my teeth'*, being *'extremely worried'*, with the impossibility of *'covering all expenses'*.

One respondent wrote about having to spend half of their *'small private pension pot'*.

## **Well-being**

Although some said the Covid-19 crisis had *'enabled me to slow down and reprioritise my focus'* and *'reflect'*, others have experienced *'a lot of anxiety over the future of my career and my ability to support my family'* or *'unable to undertake more work due to childcare issues'*. Financial stability, loneliness, and uncertainty around the future seems to be major causes affecting well-being.

*"Small venues and the freelancers that work in them seem to be invisible"*

*"I am so low on the ladder, no one asks me, and I wouldn't know who to approach if I had any ideas."*

*"rollercoaster"*

*"feeling stuck"*

## **ACW Response**

*"The support all seems geared towards 'creatives'. Those of us who work in production and stage management and who therefore enable theatrical work appear to have been forgotten."*

*"I dont think they made their application process easy for people who are new to the process."*

*"ACW need to realise the effect it has had on some freelancers, the psychological negatives mean some are really not in position to propose creative work for this new situation. Some of us are still struggling to keep our heads above water & to adapt to this new way of living. Totally inaccessible form, ridiculous and pretty offensive."*

*"Asking freelancers to develop projects for funding is how normal times operate. When your industry is collapsing and you can't pay the rent, it seems obtuse to ask people to compete for the funding and be judged as valid or invalid once more. Why wasn't the pot of money shared out equally amongst all who applied, if the point is*

*to stabilise individuals? By not receiving stabilisation fund, you make people even more unstable. It also adversely affects individuals mental health at a time in which we have to keep justifying ourselves, our right to work and the value we contribute”*

*“Some were incredibly grateful for the support given (I cannot thank ACW enough for their support and help) and others commented on ‘fairness’ and ‘integrity’ and quick ‘speed’.”*

*“Perhaps the response is best summed up in: ‘Best they could in a bad situation”*

*“Extremely disappointed that they made significant numbers of individual stabilisation rejections on the basis of the fund being oversubscribed when they had an underspend on the organisation fund/money available. This indicates a lack of recognition of both the value of freelancers, their capacity to respond to the situation and their need.”*

## **Class**

*“Working class Welsh freelance creatives, do not have money behind them to carry them through these kind of times and support their families etc. Our options for supplementary work will be narrow too as everyone in Wales will be going for temporary menial jobs as their industries and work places also reduce staff. The difference being that many of us will not have experience in other kinds of ordinary jobs to even get us through to interview stage.”*

## **Role of freelancers**

*“I think organisations are going to have to take a responsibility for the freelancers they rely on in normal circumstances. There should be more access to training to develop a sustainable practice, as well as sharing best practice across the sector. I'd like to see venues take more responsibility for their local artists and to reduce the barriers to space and access. More outward engagement with freelancers, rather than having to knock-down doors, which can be emotionally and financially tiring.”*

*“Freelancers need to be given some sort of assurance that their skills aren't going to be thrown on the rubbish tip.”*

*“Making sure freelancers have a seat at the table where decisions are made and not ignored from those conversations.”*

**Complete comments are available online on [freelance.wales](https://freelance.wales) or [llawrydd.cymru](https://llawrydd.cymru).**