

Pay Policy for Employed and Freelance Staff 2026-2027

Introduction

Rates of pay for the arts sector, in common with the charity sector, are low compared to many others. There is often wide disparity between the highest and lowest paid, and lack of progression, benchmarking, transparency and protection against inflation. Peak's pay policy seeks to address these issues, and to set out a direction of travel towards greater equity in line with our values and equalities plans.

Employed Staff Principles

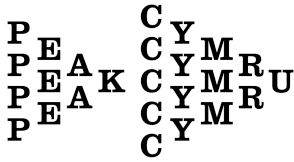
1. As an accredited Real Living Wage Employer, no-one working for Peak will be paid less than this annually published rate (currently £13.45). We pay staff members and freelancers a minimum rate of £20 per hour, equating to £36,400 per annum for a standard 35 hour per week contract.
2. Any differential between pay rates is transparently linked to a material factor. A material factor for this policy is length of service / contract, skills and qualifications, performance and levels of responsibility. Responsibility is considered as the most relevant factor in considering a differential rate at Peak.
4. Co-leadership roles include 10 days annually (pro-rated) for agreed research or training. Other staff roles also include contracted hours for work-relevant training.
5. Peak aims to address inflationary pressures by committing to an annual review of inflation rates. Whilst Peak cannot guarantee that it will have the financial resources to make year on year pay awards to address cost of living increases, it will transparently assess the affordability of pay rises within its financial forecast and consider structural changes to contracts to support staff where affordability means it cannot implement an inflation rate pay rise.

Progression - Peak sets a salary range for employed job descriptions which are informed by a scoring assessment of roles and responsibilities covering exec, co-director, manager and coordinator levels. Where possible within budgetary constraints, Peak provides annual salary increases, limited by the upper limit of salary bandings; salary bandings are reviewed biannually.

Wellbeing Budget – Employed staff are entitled to an annual wellbeing budget of £500. This budget is intended to support staff wellbeing and can be used at the employee's discretion in ways that best suit their needs. Expenditure needs to be approved by a Co-Director.

Appraisal - Peak undertakes an annual appraisal for employed staff, the purpose of which is to: invite employees to self-evaluate their performance against their job description; review progress and performance against targets and training plans and set new work and training targets. The appraisal is undertaken by a trustee / external advisor / Co-Director.

Holidays for employed staff - The annual allowance for employed staff is based on 25 days plus statutory bank holidays for a full-time contract, pro-rated according to contracted days. An annual



Christmas 'closedown' between Christmas Day and New Years Eve is given in addition to this allowance (inclusive of Christmas Day & Boxing Day bank holidays).

Maternity, Paternity and Adoption leave – please see our current policy [here](#)

Flexible Working - Peak offers flexible working, e.g. part time, flexi-time, staggered hours, job-sharing, compressed hours or annual hours, alongside an acknowledgement that physical presence is also at times required by the nature of our work.

How we set salary scales – Salary scales are established using a structured salary banding framework. We use a salary banding spreadsheet to map role responsibilities across different areas of work — including strategic planning, finances and HR — to determine pay grades.

Freelance Principles & Rates 2026-2027

Freelance pay rates paid by Peak are higher than employed staff pay rates. This is predicated on the basis that freelancers do not receive the benefits of Pension contributions, sickness or holiday pay, pay their own tax and NI and do not have the same job security as employed staff. Our remuneration policy for freelance staff, remaining the same as in 2025-2026, is built on the following principles:

1. Planning, research and evaluation days are included in freelance contracts
2. Freelancers are paid for additional meetings
3. Freelancers are paid £325 per day for up to 10 days contracted work
4. Freelancers are paid £260 per day for contracts exceeding 10 days work
5. Freelancers are paid £364 per day at Peak's strategic rate (fundraising / HR / consultants)
6. Artists are paid £81.25 for studio visits [0.25 day fee @ £325/day]

Flexible Working - Peak offers flexible working across freelance roles, e.g. flexi-time and online working, alongside an acknowledgement that physical presence is also at times required by the nature of our work.

Development and Support – Peak offers reviews for freelance staff at key intervals and discussion around personal development.

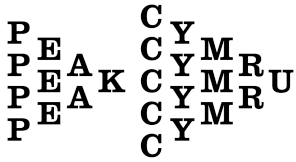
Young People

We invite Young People to take part in organisational activities such as recruitment, production and programming. We currently offer an hourly rate of £20 for this work, for a minimum of 5 hours (even if the session is shorter), equating to £140 for a 7-hour day. We additionally offer travel and access costs, and development support specific to the individual, e.g. mentoring.

For participation in programmes, we offer Young People bursaries, set according to age. For day-long workshops, we offer young people aged 18-30 years £60/day and young people under the age of 18 £30/day. For shorter drop-in sessions and development workshops we offer dedicated transport bursaries. For all programmes we offer access costs in addition to the programme bursaries.

Travel & Expenses

Due to the nature of Peak projects and funding structures, we cannot define a catch-all policy for travel and expenses. However, we work to the following general principles:



- Where possible, we encourage staff and freelancers to travel to Peak sites via public transport and we set meeting and event times in conjunction with train and bus timetables where appropriate.
- Employed staff do not claim travel to and from Peak sites but in some contexts, where staff are based more than one hour away from Peak sites, we may contract staff to travel to site for a set number of days per week. If they are required to be present in addition to those contracted day they can claim mileage for those additional journeys. Employed staff can claim expenses for journeys made to meetings and events at other sites as part of their Peak work. Mileage can be reclaimed at 55p/mile.
- For residencies and smaller invitations (one off workshops, talks etc.), contributors are offered travel expenses to and from Peak sites. Mileage can be reclaimed at 55p/mile. For contracts offering ongoing work, freelancers are expected to cover their own travel expenses.
- For residency programmes or instances where freelance staff or artists are residents at Peak sites or undertaking research visits, we offer per diems of £30/day or a lesser amount if specific meals are covered/hosted by Peak.
- When employed staff undertake research visits, or spend time away to undertake work commitments, they are entitled to take per diems of £30/day or a lesser amount if specific meals are covered by Peak.

Access Support Costs

All Peak projects include ringfenced funds to support access costs for freelance staff, contributors and participants. The amount of budget varies between projects and funders but as a minimum we resource an equivalent of 10% of the programme budget/contract for access costs and will always strive to support collaborators and their needs. Access costs might include rest days (time and extra accommodation), fees for support workers and other bespoke needs.

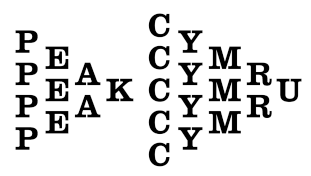
Paying Staff and Contributors

Salaries for employed members of staff are paid monthly by transfer directly into individual's nominated bank/building society account. Payments to employees are made on the 28th day of each month. However, if this day falls on a weekend or bank holiday, payments will go into individuals' accounts on the following working day. Employees will receive an itemised pay statement of their earnings and deductions on the date on which they are paid.

It is the responsibility of each employee to ensure that the organisation:

- has details of his/her bank or building society account number and sort code
- is advised of any changes to his/her bank or building society account
- is told about any payment anomalies that the employee discovers (e.g. overpayment of wages) at the earliest opportunity.

Freelance staff and contributors will be paid within 14 days of production of an invoice outlining the hours worked and any expenses that have been incurred that have been agreed with Peak in advance. Please email invoices to a Peak co-director or staff member you have been working with.



Review

This Pay Policy will be annually reviewed.

Last reviewed and updated: July 2026

Updated by: Louise Hobson, Ellen Wilson and Melissa Appleton