

Applying for Support to Develop Your Skills

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Who Are We?

Help Musicians is a charity that loves music and for 100 years has been working hard to make a meaningful difference to the lives of musicians across the UK. We want to create a world where musicians thrive.

We're Here to Support You

If you've any questions about the support we can offer, want to talk through your plans, or are looking for advice about the application process, you can book some time to talk it through with one of the team [here](#).

How Can Help Musicians Help You Develop Your Skills?

A musician's financial position shouldn't be a barrier to delivering their full potential, so we can provide financial support help you to learn new skills or develop the ones you have to help you sustain your career. This support is specific to your career needs, so you can specify opportunities relevant to your own circumstances and ambitions. This could be anything from 1-on-1 time with a mentor to structured online courses.

You can apply for up to £1,500 to take-up opportunities that enhance your skills, career or musical practice. This could be a conference to learn more about the industry, an online course to enhance your performance skills, growing new abilities or perhaps some time to work with a respected peer.

Examples of this include:

- Online courses, 1:1 coaching sessions, fees to attend virtual conferences, online song writing academies and virtual masterclasses.
- Short periods of training with a leading professional in your field to improve your creative practice and skills.
- Short periods of intensive learning or skills development exploring new technologies, in order to support and adapt your practice or performance in music.
- Short periods of online/virtual mentoring offer support and advice ahead of an important career opportunity or transition.

Eligibility

Who Can Apply?

Musicians of all genres and disciplines are welcome to apply. You might be an instrumentalist, composer, producer, conductor, vocalist, singer-songwriter; a musician of any discipline. You can also apply as a group of musicians if you're looking to develop your skills collectively.

To apply you must:

- Be aged over 18
- Be in financial need and without significant backing
- Already have an active career and be able to clearly demonstrate your work to date
- Be a UK resident*

*We refer to the UK residency rules noting that you are eligible for our support:

- If you are a UK National living in the UK you automatically qualify
- If you are a non-UK National, you have been living in the UK for at least 183 days and have the legal right to live in the UK

If Applying as a Group

- 50% must meet the criteria as above
- You must have been established and playing together regularly for at least 1 year
- The group should be made up of no more than six members

Ineligible Activities

During these uncertain times, we're unable to support opportunities that may be cancelled due to the pandemic. Therefore, we ask that all activities are able to take place under the current restrictions.

Here are the activities considered ineligible:

- Activities that take place within 3-months of a submitted application
- Activities that are not primarily focused on developing a career as a musician
- Activities incurred as part of a promotional campaign (this includes PR, production of merchandise, creating music videos, manufacture and distribution etc)
- Formal courses of study, training or research (this includes undergraduate study, postgraduate study, year-long courses, PhD study)
- Support for the continuation of regular one-to-one lessons

- Purchase of musical equipment, production and composition software/hardware, performance related technology
- Purchase or hiring costs of vehicles
- Recording costs (studio hire, engineering, mixing, mastering)
- Commissioning costs
- Touring costs
- Attendance as a performer at showcases already supported by the International Showcase Fund or similar funding opportunities in the nations (SXSW, CMJ, A3C, Womex, Reeperbahn, Folk Alliance International, Canadian Music Week)
- Costs associated with entering competitions
- Although we won't exclude applications that are asking us to contribute to a wider project, this support shouldn't be seen as a top up fund for larger funding bids
- Please note you can only receive support for skills building opportunities once in a 12- month period.

Making an Application

To apply for this support, you can start your application [here](#).

We understand that musicians will have different preferences in how they communicate their ideas, so you can choose to answer some of the key questions either in writing or by video upload. [Check out our blog](#) to understand more about video applications.

What are we looking for in the application?

• Biography

We're looking to understand your career in performing or creating music so far. Show us your achievements and career highlights, share what you're proud of. Bear in mind that we won't know you or your music, so the clearer you can be and the more examples you can give us the better! This can include performances, collaborations, tours, festivals, showcases, commissions, recent releases, reviews (inc. press quotes & radio play), evidence of your growing fanbase (mailing list subscribers, social media followers) and prizes or awards. Remember to share links to any websites or socials you want us to see.

• Your Activity

The details of the development activity you're applying for financial support towards. Remember to include a timeline and double-check that it's achievable.

• Impact

Our support is here to help you make the next step, so we're looking to understand why this activity is crucial for your career at this point. Help us to understand what you are trying to achieve in the short and long-term through the activity and how it will benefit your progression as a music creator.

• Musical Submissions

You will be asked to provide examples of your music in the form of recordings, videos and weblinks. At least one must be from within the last 12 months and you should submit the music you feel best demonstrates your creative direction at this time. Does the musical quality of this recording best represent your creative potential?

• Budget

We know a budget can be tricky but it's also incredibly useful for focusing and understanding your plans. Try to think about the costs associated with each activity. Make it clear where you require financial assistance from Help Musicians, as well as elements that may be supported by other organisations or yourself.

Please note: If applying after a break or a change in circumstance we will take into consideration your past achievements, but you will also need to demonstrate that you are committed to reinvigorating and sustaining your career as a music creator.

After Applying

Applicants will be shortlisted internally and may be presented to a panel of industry experts. The final decisions will be based on the strength of your music and what you've told us in your application. Applicants will be notified of the outcome within 8-10 weeks.

You will receive a confirmation email once you submit your application. If you haven't received this then please get in touch with creative@helpmusicians.org.uk who can check for you.

Please also email the team if something has changed in your plans after having submitted your application.

If your application is not successful you are able to re-apply as soon as you are ready. We advise you to read the guidance notes and blogs and book a phone call with a member of our Creative team [here](#).