

Your Complete Guide to Do it Differently

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Who Are We?

Help Musicians is an independent charity with an extraordinary history. For 100 years, we've provided a broad spectrum of help, support and opportunities to empower musicians at any stage of their career, from times of great need to times of opportunity, providing a lifetime of support when it is needed most.

We're Here to Support You

If you've got any questions about Do it Differently, want to talk through your project, or are looking for advice about the application process, you can book some time to talk it through with one of the team. Book your session [here](#).

How Can Do it Differently Support You?

At Help Musicians, we believe that you, the music creators, really benefit from support which enables you to focus on three key areas of your career at the same time: making music, business development and health & wellbeing. And this is exactly what Do It Differently aims to do.

Support to Create Music

In order to help you create your music, you'll receive £3,000 in financial support to assist with the costs associated with creating a new body of work and getting it out to the world. This could cover your costs for:

- Time to create (writing, composition, rehearsal)
- Session musician fees
- Recording (studio hire, engineering, mixing, mastering)
- Content creation (video, audio, promotional photography, artwork and design etc)
- Manufacture and distribution
- Merchandise (design and production)
- PR & Marketing
- Musical equipment, production and composition software/hardware*
- New technology including enhanced digital or remote collaboration tools *
- Software to enable digital distribution and live streaming*

*Equipment costs should not make up any more than 50% of your budget. Please note we are unable to fund the purchase of musical instruments, including laptops.

Support to Build your Business

You'll receive six hours of dedicated one-to-one business advice from industry experts, who are there to help you to shape or rethink your business plans. You may be wondering how to promote your next release, be looking to find new ways to distribute your music or build an online fanbase.

Delivered in collaboration with ThinkMusic, we'll pair you with up to two expert business advisors who can help you with the following topics:

- Building for the future by making the most of your time
- Publishing & IP
- Business development/ Artist & label strategies
- Fan engagement strategy
- Legal advice
- Holistic short- and long-term artist development and business strategy
- Funding, financial planning, budgeting and business-planning
- Independent music business
- The bit between the Music + Business: YOU
- The Digital Era: Digital Content, Distribution and Digital Marketing
- Content Creation
- Strong Collaborations for Career Development, Resilience and Longevity
- Using Intuition to Manage Uncertainty and Stay Inspired

For a detailed breakdown of what these sessions will cover please read the topic descriptions [here](#).

Support to Manage your Health and Wellbeing

Through our partnership with the British Association for Performing Arts Medicine (BAPAM) and from our own Health and Welfare team, you'll be able to speak to someone if you need support with your health and wellbeing at any time during your project. Depending on your circumstances we may be able to help you with:

- A health assessment and short-term treatment for performance related conditions
- Specialist hearing assessment and bespoke hearing protection via the Musicians Hearing Health Scheme (delivered in conjunction with Musicians' Hearing Services and the Musicians' Union)
- Online CBT and wellbeing tools, debt and legal advice via Music Minds Matter.

Eligibility

Who Can Apply?

We support professional musicians of all genres and disciplines, with a focus on independent music creators who are controlling one or more aspects of their career (e.g. self-managing, self-releasing, self-producing). You can be a solo artist, composer, group member, songwriter, producer or a multidisciplinary artist. This is not a fund for organisations.

To apply you must:

- Deliver your supported projects within 12 months of accepting the grant
- Be aged over 18
- Be in financial need and without significant backing (by this we mean not receiving significant financial backing from a record label, publisher or private investor and not having over £16,000 in savings)
- Have control over one or more aspects of your career (e.g. self-managing, self-releasing or self-producing)
- 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 'who can apply' criteria
- 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

If you are receiving Health & Welfare support or hardship funding from Help Musicians then you are most welcome to apply.

If you have previously been unsuccessful applying for the Do It Differently Fund then you are welcome to re-apply, but we recommend you discuss your new project idea with us at creative@helpmusicians.org.uk.

If you already have a live grant with us with payments still outstanding then you will not be eligible.

Ineligible Activities

There are a number of activities we are unable to support through the Do It Differently Fund, listed below. Please read through this section thoroughly before applying.

If you have a received a Do It Differently or MOBO Help Musicians Fund grant in the last twelve months, you are not eligible to apply at this time

- Applications relating to loss of income as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak
- Applications relating to touring / live activity, irrespective of how far into the future these might be planned
- Applicants who are already receiving significant financial backing
- Activities that are not primarily music or career development focused
- Formal courses of study, training or research (for opportunities of this nature, please see our Transmission Fund)
- Attendance at any showcases already supported by the International Showcase Fund or (SXSW CMJ, A3C, WOMEX, Reeperbahn, Folk Alliance International, MIDEM Canadian Music Week)
- Ongoing overheads, for example rent, utilities and Insurance
- Buying or insuring vehicles
- Although we won't exclude applications that are asking us to contribute to a wider project, the Do It Differently Fund shouldn't be seen as a top-up fund for larger funding bids
- Costs associated with entering competitions
- Activities that have already occurred (we can't fund retrospectively so please check the deadline dates)
- Costs relating to the purchase of musical instruments (including laptops) and / or the upgrade/maintenance of existing instruments

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 see some examples of these.

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.

- **Project:** The details of the project or 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 your project 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 project and how it will benefit your progression as a music creator.
- **Business Advice:** When considering your business support options let us know why support in these areas will help your personal and professional growth.
- **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 in the project. Make it clear where you require financial assistance from Help Musicians, as well as elements that may be supported by other organisations or yourself.
- **Risk Assessment:** What are the risks associated with this project and how do you plan to tackle them? For instance, what's your Plan B if you're unable to go into the studio?

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.

Supplying Your Reference

You will be asked to give the name of a referee. This should be an established music professional that knows your work well and is not connected with your project.

Your referee must complete the separate [reference form](#) by the application deadline. If we do not receive this, we cannot proceed with your application.

It is your responsibility to prove this link to your referee and ensure this is submitted prior to the deadline.

After Applying

Once the application deadline has passed, applicants will be shortlisted by a panel of industry experts. The final decisions will be based on the strength of your music, applications and your supporting reference.

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 project plans or the reference details after having submitted your application.