

Help Musicians Develop Fund

Welcome

Help Musicians UK (HMUK) is the leading independent charity providing help, support and opportunities to empower musicians at all stages of their lives. As well as playing a vital role supporting working musicians who are dealing with an illness, injury or accident, we also provide a range of opportunities to support learning and professional development. Through our new strategy, *Agenda 2021*, we have revised our approach to supporting musicians across the UK from any genre and from any background. Through our **Creative Programme**, we aim to help musicians during the course of their careers by investing in innovation across artistic practice, talent and professional development, removing barriers that exist for many to launch and sustain professional music careers across all genres.

Help Musicians Develop Fund

The fund provides financial support to enable professional musicians to access creative and professional development opportunities both in the UK and internationally. It is a chance for artists to take stock professionally and creatively through two distinct strands:

- **Transmission fund** which supports formal and time limited training and mentoring opportunities and,
- **Fusion fund** which supports periods of collaboration and research and development.

We understand that the music profession can be diverse and changeable over the course of a musician's career. This is why, within this fund, we can support those who need help to develop professionally or take their career in a different direction after a break or a change in circumstances.

What is the Fusion Fund?

The Fusion Fund offers **£2,000 – £5,000** for professional musicians to undertake **UK based** projects that develop and test new work, ideas or potential career directions through inspiring periods of collaborative research and development.

We are looking for exciting collaborations that create work across art forms, creative sectors and other disciplines. Applications must be music focused and projects should include contributions from at least one non-music discipline for example storytellers, lighting designers, choreographers, technologists, scientists, gaming designers, theatre directors, visual artists etc. We are also interested in seeing applications that consider unusual and extraordinary spaces to show work to new audiences.

There should be tangible results of the collaboration, such as a body of work created for an upcoming recording or a new performance. Overall the project should push the boundaries of what you do as a music creator or performer, exploring or testing something that you are not currently able to achieve without support.

Each funding round will focus on a UK nation and there will be a two stage application process. Deadlines and further details can be found within the how to apply section.

1. Who can apply?

The fund is open to professional and emerging professional musicians of all genres and disciplines. You can be a solo instrumentalist, conductor, composer, vocalist, singer songwriter or a multidisciplinary artist; we can also support bands or ensembles with 6 members or less. To apply you must be:

- Aged over 21
- Based primarily in the UK and be eligible to work here
- Have been resident in the UK for at least 3 consecutive years
- In financial need and without significant backing
- You must already have an **active career** to apply to this fund, we want to support those individuals or ensembles who can demonstrate **working excellence** fitting at least three if not all of the following criteria:
 - Exceptional ability within their discipline
 - High quality musical output
 - Regularly working (performances, commissions, releases) at a professional level (getting paid for your work)
 - Achievement or the potential to achieve a national or international impact
 - An impressive track record
 - Demonstrates an entrepreneurial spirit and dedication toward their career
 - Shows innovation or leadership within their sector

If applying as a group

- 50% must meet the criteria as above
- You must have been established and playing together regularly for at least 2 years
- You must nominate a lead applicant for the application process

2. What can we fund?

The Fusion Fund is designed to enable periods of collaboration and research and development within the UK. The budget should reflect the resources required to allow this collaboration to take place or covering the period of time needed to create new work and explore practice. Within your application you may include costs for the following:

- Venue and rehearsal space costs
- Recording costs (live or documentation)
- Travel costs
- Access costs
- Accommodation costs
- Subsistence
- Fees for musicians, artists or collaborators time to allow for your project to happen
- Any other reasonable costs associated with your project

3. What we are looking for from project proposals

We recognise that artists need time to develop new ways of working, explore existing practice and be able to test out new work through a period of research and development. We positively encourage collaboration and therefore projects should reflect a truly collaborative approach to the exploration of your practice.

Within your project proposal we are looking for the following:

- An understanding of the longevity of your collaborative project and how it might impact your future career
- Projects that work with at least one non music discipline
- Projects that are UK based and demonstrate an impact to your career in the UK (however this may include working with international artists)
- Projects that will lead to the creation of new work or the testing of new ideas
- Projects that are innovative and will contribute to knowledge in the sector(s) that you are working within
- Projects that lead to deeper understanding of your own artistic practice
- Interesting, exciting and well thought out confirmed collaborations
- Clear timescales, project plan, budget and breakdown of costs (required in the second stage of applications)

4. How to apply

The Fusion Fund is a two stage [online application](#) process. If you are applying as a group one person should be named as the lead applicant for the application process. The lead applicant has to be from a music discipline.

4.1 First stage application

You are required to tell us about your achievements so far and put forward a proposal for your project. You will be required to provide supporting evidence of your music in the form of recordings, videos and weblinks. We aim to make decisions in the first stage of applications within two weeks. If you are successful you will be invited to apply for the second stage.

4.2 Second stage application

If you successfully move to the second stage you will be notified by email and we will ask for further information about your project including a detailed budget, project plan and timescale. You will be invited to apply via email and the forms will be circulated to you following your acceptance confirmation. Should you want to plan ahead, you can find the budget template [here](#).

There will be 4 deadlines in total each with a geographical focus. Please find details below:

Region	Applications open	Round one deadline	Round two application deadline	Results
Northern Ireland	1 Aug 17	11 Sept	23 Oct	13 Nov
Scotland	1 Sept	13 Oct	1 Dec	19 Jan 18
England	2 Jan 18	23 Feb	2 April	11 May
Wales	4 June	22 July	1 Oct	19 Nov

If you are successful the project end date must be within 12 months of receiving your funding

4.3 Reference

You must also [supply a reference](#) from an eminent musician or music professional not connected with your project.

All materials including your reference must be received by the closing date otherwise your application will unfortunately be ineligible.

5. What we can't fund

Below is a list of what is ineligible for The Fusion Fund. Please read thoroughly, if you apply for any of the below your application will be **automatically rejected** and will not be invited to the stage 2 application.

- The fund is for individual musicians and ensembles and we are unable to fund organisations
- Activities that are not primarily music based
- Activities that do not involve collaborations with other art forms, disciplines or wider sectors
- An idea that has already been developed and is currently being used in any aspect of your practice –whether it's music that's already recorded or performances that have already taken place
- Projects that will act as a commission for an artist rather than making new work collaboratively
- Activity that is not primarily creative in nature (this includes PR, purchasing merchandise, creating music videos, promotional campaign)
- Formal courses of study, training or research (this includes undergraduate study, postgraduate study, year-long courses, costs associated with PhD study)
- Time limited training that would come under Transmission Fund
- Regular 1-1 lessons
- Purchase of equipment (including instruments, technical kit and vehicles)
- Studio recording costs
- Commissioning costs
- Attendance at showcases already supported by the International Showcase Fund or similar funding opportunities in the nations (SXSW CMJ, A3C, Womex, Reeperbahn, Folk Alliance International, MIDEM Canadian Music Week)
- Costs associated with entering into competitions
- Activities that have already happened (we can't fund retrospectively so please check the deadline dates)
- Opportunities already funded by Help Musicians UK through our network of partners (list here)
- Although we won't exclude applications that are asking us to contribute to a wider project, The Fusion Fund shouldn't be seen as a top up fund for larger funding bids

6. Guidance for applicants

When making your application it is important that you look carefully at the criteria to make sure that you are eligible. Through your application you need to tell us why we should support you, setting out clearly what you have achieved in the past, what the opportunity is that you want to undertake and why it is crucial for your career at this point. Keep in mind that it is unlikely that we will have any prior knowledge of you, your music and your project so the clearer you can be and the more examples you can give us the better!

Our funding is for those who already have an active career performing or creating great music; you need to make sure you give evidence of your key achievements.

This could include:

- prestigious performances, engagements or commissions
- your most recent releases
- examples of critical acclaim
- evidence of your growing fanbase
- notable collaborations
- qualifications, prizes or awards

If applying after a break or a change in circumstance we will take in to consideration your past achievements but you will also need to demonstrate that you are committed to reinvigorating and sustaining your career in making music.

If you would like any further advice you can visit the following page on the website www.helpmusicians.org.uk/creative-programme/advice-for-funding-applications-, book in a Skype or phone discussion details on the main [Fusion Fund page](#) on the website or contact us at creative@helpmusicians.org.uk / 020 239 9119