



Live Work Fund Interim Report

First written July 2021. Updated July 2022.

Origin of the Live Work Fund (LWF)

In the summer of 2020, live performance had been shut down for several months due to the pandemic. Some government support had started to trickle through for organisations and salaried workers. The Cultural Recovery Fund was on its way. Numerous hardship funds were set up for freelancers in the arts. However, it was clear that demand outstripped supply and the criteria for the government's support for the self-employed excluded many.

Jerwood Arts spent time during the early stages of the pandemic looking after current grant holders and assessing the impact on our own income. Following a period of stabilisation, we were keen to think about what the medium to long term recovery looked like for artists.

Lilli Geissendorfer (Director, Jerwood Arts) made a provocation at an independent arts funders meeting, suggesting that more could be done to support outstanding independent artists and creatives, particularly in artforms that rely on audiences for income, to sustain and adapt their practices. Wolfson Foundation agreed and in response, Jerwood Arts worked up a proposal that would support artists whose livelihoods had previously relied on live performance.

Drawing on experience of running awards and programmes that involved larger, high trust grants for individuals, and understanding the feedback and conversations around what sustainable support might look like including universal basic income and core support for artists, the Live Work Fund was developed.

The concept was to give £20k grants to artists, creatives and producers working as lead creatives across music and performing arts and provide a light touch framework of developmental support. This would help them rebuild their practices, consider what 'liveness' meant to them during and post-pandemic, and generate new ideas and opportunities. The aim was to make a significant impact for a few individuals, rather than to thinly spread funds across a larger group.

Jerwood Arts approached other independent funders interested in supporting a different model of substantial support for individuals. Following Wolfson Foundation's confirmation of funding, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the Linbury Trust also came on board as partners. The combined total for the fund was £710k, with £660k made available for 33 £20k grants. The balance of £50k covered Artist Adviser selection costs, mentoring and development fees, evaluation and administration.

Launch of the fund and applications

Development of guidance and application form

The supporting materials for the fund were created in October 2020. They included application guidance, an eligibility quiz, FAQ and application form. Key considerations were to: define the length of practice and experience needed to apply; define what the fund meant by 'live performance'; identify the fund as being for individuals and collectives (rather than established companies); outline what activity the fund could support.

Reflections:

- The concept of high trust funding with no expectation of production outcomes was valued, but people found it hard to articulate their ideas without this usual and expected structure.
- The criteria for applying as an individual/group/company could have been clearer.

Launch of LWF: press release, social media, blog and communications

The fund was launched on 22 October 2020 with a [blog](#), [press release](#) and social media campaign. Communications foregrounded the awards as a response to the challenges facing early-career artists whose livelihoods relied on audiences, and a chance of significant support for some individuals to adapt their practices for life post-pandemic. The online engagement was enormous with 2,839 visits to the LWF webpage on the first day and a total of 66,549 visits to the LWF application form page during Q4 of 2020. The initial call for entries on Twitter received 98,621 impressions. Three pieces of press were secured including Access All Areas and Arts Industry. An email promoting the fund was sent to 416 industry contacts.

Reflections:

- The PR response was muted, with feedback that the fund was announced at the same time as a lot of other funding news.

Support for applicants: advice sessions, panel event and access support

The guidance and FAQ were produced in accessible formats, including an [easy read](#) and [audio recording](#). "What is the Live Work Fund" was listened to 169 times on Soundcloud. 10 minute one to one advice sessions were offered by appointment and 31 applicants took up the offer. A [Q&A event](#) was watched by approximately 300 people live. We offered to pay for one day of access support workers' time for those who needed it (up to £200).

Reflections:

- The live Q&A session was valuable for applicants. The team learnt a lot technically by doing a live event.
- Easy read and audio versions of the guidance are now standard formats we offer for all our opportunities.

Assessment and selection process

Design of the process

We estimated that the fund would get around 1,000 applications, based on previous experience and a sense of the demand for such significant funding. In the end, we received 1,283 completed

applications. There was a desire to conclude the assessment, selection and notification before the end of the year to meet the needs of applicants. With a small staff team and understanding the benefits of peer review, we decided to use [Artist Advisers](#) to do the initial assessment. Two Artist Advisers, matched for art form specialism, read each application. Based on their recommended top 10% of applications, Jerwood Arts staff then created a longlist of 217 proposals. The longlist was then shared back with the panellists and key Jerwood Arts staff, who picked their top 10 applications to create a shortlist of 56 applications. A final panel of 7, chaired by Lilli, discussed the shortlist and selected the final 33 awardees in early December 2020.

Jerwood Arts staff were part of the selection and final panel, and structured discussions to include reflection on the balance of the final grantees across artforms (in line with the balance of funders), geography (to reflect national reach of applications and funders remit) and the breadth of protected characteristics represented in the original applicant pool (see below for data). Financial need was a key theme coming through proposals during such an unprecedented time of hardship across the sector. In line with Jerwood Arts' other funding opportunities however, the focus on identifying exceptional potential in early-career artists meant the process was ultimately led by an assessment of the ideas in the applications. The Artist Advisers' selection produced a diverse group of artists which matched the fund's desire to support outstanding practices at risk due to the pandemic restricting live performance.

Reflections:

- We received more applications than expected, which put pressure on the selection process.
- The question of how 'liveness' was being explored, challenged and reinvented by artists during the pandemic through tech and digital spaces was too big for the selection meetings to be able to fully explore.
- Sharing anonymised, aggregated demographic information with Artist Advisers at each stage of the process, prompted important and challenging conversations about positive action and representation.
- As Artist Advisers were assigned applications by art form, the invitation to recommend a percentage of their reading list meant that art form representation was maintained throughout the selection process.
- During selection, many wanted to know the level of 'need' of the applicants (i.e. how much support had applicants been able to access during the pandemic/what private means did they have to support themselves).

Recruitment and use of Artist Advisers

Anticipating around 1,000 applications and wanting at least two people with expertise to read each application in a nine-day period, we knew that we would need to engage some of Jerwood Arts' 80+ Artist Advisers to undertake this work. With Wolfson Foundation's funding earmarked for music makers and the corresponding effort we put into marketing the opportunity to the music sector, we knew that approximately 30-40% of applications would specify music as their primary art form. We anticipated that digital would be another key theme within the applications and carefully considered the role assessors would play in ensuring a balanced and equitable decision-making process. As with other Jerwood Arts funds, we kept the identities of the assessors confidential as in most cases they were practising freelance artists and producers without the resources to field enquiries about their role in the fund.

Initially 10 Artist Advisers were appointed, six of whom we worked with for the first time. We supported them with an induction, a Slack channel, a daily Zoom drop-in session and ad hoc support through the assessment period. At the shortlisting and selection stage of the process, we worked with five Artist Advisers alongside Lilli, Jon Opie (Deputy Director) and Sarah Gibbon (Project Manager) as assessors, and Lilli as Chair.

Reflections:

- Due to the increased focus on music, we invited a number of new artists to become Artist Advisers and be part of the Live Work Fund to ensure breadth of expertise and learned experience across a wider range of genres.
- The induction sessions were useful, alongside the written guidance, especially considering the fund's complexity and time pressure.
- The volume of applications meant that Artist Advisers provided the additional capacity needed to review all the applications.
- Jerwood Arts staff acted as back up assessors in the first round, where Artist Advisers had conflicts of interest and to help with the volume of applications.
- Artist Advisers appreciated knowing that their recommended applications would all get longlisted.
- Some commented that they would have liked to have known the demographics of the other Artist Advisers reading, as they felt the burden of representation for certain communities and identities.
- Some Artist Advisers felt the pressure of making career-changing decisions for peers incredibly difficult at a time when need was so high.
- Such a large and diverse group of assessors brought rigour, a wider range of perspectives, and new insights into the process.
- It was also challenging for the Jerwood Arts team to work with so many individuals. The quick turnaround and the time we had paid for with them did not leave much space to air deeper concerns about arts funding for individuals as embodied by LWF and may have resulted in an unsatisfactory experience for some.

Communications with applicants and feedback

During the process

Applicants were invited to contact us by email with any questions they had whilst the fund was open for applications. During the initial sifting process, Artist Advisers raised concerns about the health and wellbeing of the applicants, which prompted us to send an email to all applicants confirming receipt of the proposal and signposting additional support and services that may have been useful. This was well-received.

Rejections

Rejections were sent out by email on 10 December 2020. The email communicated the outcome, the process and gave the opportunity to applicants to request written feedback on their application and give us feedback on their experience of applying to the fund. The timing ensured that the outcome was received within a month of the deadline to apply, and before the Christmas period. We chose not to announce the awardees at the same time to give everyone the space to process their

outcomes. We hoped that the awardees would have time for the news to sink in and we wanted to organise everything to make the most of the announcement.

Reflections:

- Rejections were by and large received well considering the circumstances. However, at the end of a year where most artists had struggled, a small number of individuals were understandably extremely disappointed with the news.
- Our communications coincided with other funding decisions, feeding into an online debate about the sustainability of competitive funding opportunities for individuals.

Feedback

Out of 1,250 rejected applicants, 639 applicants requested written feedback, approximately 50% which was in line with previous Jerwood Arts funding opportunity feedback requests.

It had to be requested by 18 December 2020, and we promised to write back with the information by 23 February 2021. We knew from experience that it would take a team effort to compile the assessors' comments and produce meaningful commentary on the applications. Four staff members and three Artist Advisers worked on the feedback. Each person was given approximately 90 applications to review. A guide was written for the feedback writers and templates for common responses provided. The bespoke feedback was then mail-merged into an email with general information about the fund and staying in touch. The response to the feedback was almost universally positive, with only a few replying for further clarification.

Reflections:

- This was a time-consuming process, and all feedback writers underestimated the number of days it would require. This was felt to be partly because the proposal structure for applications was more open, and so left more room for subjective assessment than other funds. Most applications did not reach the shortlisting stage, which meant very few had full/complete notes on them.
- The feedback templates were a useful starting point, but for the most part meaningful feedback could only be given with unique and specific language. Feedback writers had to review applications afresh to provide constructive notes.
- Staff reflected that feedbacking is a useful communications tool and answers a need from artists but is resource-intensive to do to a high standard and risks creating unrealistic expectations for future support.

Over 135 rejected applicants responded to their feedback email with positive and grateful comments, and we compiled a document to reflect on these going forward and help assess the value of providing individual feedback for future opportunities.

Live Work Fund: Applications and Selection in Numbers

| | Total Applications: 1283 | | Final Selection: 33 | | | Total Applications: 1283 | | Final Selection: 33 | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|--|-----------------------------|-----|------------------------|-----|
| Type of applicant | | | | | How would you describe your ethnicity? | | | | |
| Individual | 1092 | 85% | 30 | 91% | Any other ethnic background | 19 | 1% | 0 | 0% |
| Collaboration | 191 | 15% | 3 | 9% | Arab | 5 | 0% | 1 | 3% |
| | | | | | Asian or British Asian - Bangladeshi | 2 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Primary art form | | | | | Asian or British Asian - Chinese | 15 | 1% | 0 | 0% |
| Circus | 35 | 3% | 1 | 3% | Asian or British Asian - Indian | 17 | 1% | 0 | 0% |
| Dance | 124 | 10% | 4 | 12% | Asian or British Asian - Other Asian background | 28 | 2% | 0 | 0% |
| Live Art | 167 | 13% | 4 | 12% | Asian or British Asian - Pakistani | 6 | 0% | 1 | 3% |
| Music | 455 | 35% | 12 | 36% | Black or Black British - African | 70 | 5% | 6 | 18% |
| Opera | 21 | 2% | 1 | 3% | Black or Black British - Caribbean | 58 | 5% | 3 | 9% |
| Other | 104 | 8% | 2 | 6% | Black or Black British - Other Black/African/Caribbean background | 13 | 1% | 1 | 3% |
| Theatre | 377 | 29% | 9 | 27% | Mixed – Asian and White | 21 | 2% | 1 | 3% |
| | | | | | Mixed - Black African and White | 19 | 1% | 3 | 9% |
| Where are you currently based? | | | | | Mixed - Black Caribbean and White | 23 | 2% | 2 | 6% |
| London | 594 | 46% | 16 | 48% | Mixed - Other mixed/multiple ethnic background | 42 | 3% | 0 | 0% |
| East Midlands | 33 | 3% | 1 | 3% | White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller | 2 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| East of England | 25 | 2% | 0 | 0% | White – British | 614 | 48% | 8 | 24% |
| Northeast | 34 | 3% | 2 | 6% | White – Irish | 41 | 3% | 0 | 0% |
| Northwest | 116 | 9% | 3 | 9% | White - Other White background | 189 | 15% | 4 | 12% |
| Northern Ireland | 32 | 2% | 0 | 0% | Prefer to self-identify | 37 | 3% | 3 | 9% |
| Scotland | 63 | 5% | 3 | 9% | Prefer not to say | 44 | 3% | 0 | 0% |
| Southeast | 102 | 8% | 1 | 3% | Latin X | 15 | 1% | 0 | 0% |
| Southwest | 107 | 8% | 3 | 9% | Not known | 3 | 0% | 0 | 0% |
| Wales | 39 | 3% | 2 | 6% | | | | | |
| West Midlands | 53 | 4% | 0 | 0% | Do you consider yourself to have a disability/disabilities? | | | | |
| Yorkshire & the Humber | 71 | 6% | 2 | 6% | No | 942 | 73% | 23 | 70% |
| Prefer not to say | 14 | 1% | 0 | 0% | Prefer not to say | 92 | 7% | 1 | 3% |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|---|-----|--|-----|-----|----|-----|
| | | | | | Yes | 249 | 19% | 9 | 27% |
| How would you describe your sexual orientation? | | | | | | | | | |
| Bi Man | 49 | 4% | 1 | 3% | How would you describe your gender? | | | | |
| Bi Woman | 159 | 12% | 8 | 24% | Female | 670 | 52% | 21 | 64% |
| Gay Man | 89 | 7% | 2 | 6% | Male | 451 | 35% | 8 | 24% |
| Gay Woman / Lesbian | 55 | 4% | 4 | 12% | Prefer to self-identify | 37 | 3% | 0 | 0% |
| Heterosexual / Straight | 567 | 44% | 7 | 21% | Prefer not to say | 53 | 4% | 1 | 3% |
| Prefer not to say | 221 | 17% | 7 | 21% | Non-binary | 72 | 6% | 3 | 9% |
| Prefer to self-identify | 143 | 11% | 4 | 12% | | | | | |

Reflections:

- Geographic and art form representation did not change much between the intake and selection. However, due to small application and shortlisted numbers, some key presences from under-represented art forms and locations were not preserved, for example representation of circus artists and representation from the East of England and Northern Ireland.
- Artist Advisers discussed at length positive action in relation to the final selection, channelling sector and society-wide conversations in light of the pandemic and the Black Lives Matter movement around recognising ongoing systemic and structural racism creating barriers for artists of colour, and under-representation of disabled artists and those facing barriers due to their gender, sexual orientation and class backgrounds as well as other minoritised identities.
- Global Majority representation increased from 34% to 64% between intake and selection. White representation decreased from 66% to 36%.
- Those that identified as disabled increased from 19% to 27% between intake and selection.
- LGBTQI+ representation increased substantially through the decision-making process.

Announcements

Communications with awardees

Successful applicants were contacted via phone on 10 December 2022 by the Jerwood Arts team. To avoid confusion and disbelief we decided it would be better to call the applicants with the outcome rather than email them. In each call we gave the awardees positive specific feedback from the Artists Advisers, detailed the basic next steps of invoicing and that they would receive their letter of agreement in the next 24 hours. This phone call enabled us to get to know the awardees briefly, allowed them to ask any questions that came to mind and let us know if they had any access requirements.

On 11 December, we sent out the confirmation email and letter of agreement. Within this email we gave the awardees details on the selection process, how the applications were assessed, payment and instalment processes, the potential announcement date, their Jerwood Arts contact and a list of dates from January onwards to book an initial conversation with Kaya La Bonté-Hurst (Project Manager) and Jon or Lilli. Many of the artists responded with statements of gratitude, shock, and excitement.

Announcement preparation

The awardees were asked to submit short statements about their practice and what they hoped to achieve with the support of the Live Work Fund. From this point forward we amended artist statements, images and created project webpages in preparation for the public announcement on 17 February 2021. FOUR Culture drafted a press release to share with relevant journalists; they noted that it was difficult to find a 'hook' in the story as it was "positive news at a very difficult time".

A week before the public announcement on 10 February 2021, we circulated a private document to all Live Work Fund awardees allowing artists to sign off or amend their final copy and read about their fellow awardees.

We were aware that some individuals might feel a sense of imposter syndrome and feel conflicted by their success as many of their peers had also applied to the fund but had not been successful. This, compounded by the known effects of COVID-19 on people's livelihoods and the artistic community, created a complex atmosphere in the run up to the announcement. In response to this, we decided to hold a Confessions event on 11 February. Hosted by Events and Engagement Manager Mirren Kessler with Artist Adviser (and LWF Selector) Daniel Kidane who in 2016 was awarded £50,000 by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. The aim of the Confessions event was to create a space for awardees to share any feelings of apprehension, pressure or excitement and discuss how they might like share news (or not) on their own platforms, with sensitivity and awareness. This conversation seemed helpful to many of the awardees and allowed there to be a moment to meet the faces and voices of other awardees and the team at Jerwood Arts.

The Live Work Fund announcement went public at 1pm, 17 February 2021 on the Jerwood Arts website, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. The announcement drove up engagement across our platforms and brought a lot of positive attention to the awardees.

Reflections:

- Some awardees felt conflicted by their success. This highlighted that although this may have been perpetuated by the pandemic, creating a moment for individuals to reflect would be useful regardless of the circumstances.
- Taking a slower approach to the public announcement seemed to work well, it gave time for our team to gather the relevant information and for the news to settle with successful and unsuccessful applicants.

Awardee Engagement

Initial Conversations

Kaya, Lilli and Jon spoke to all 33 awardees from 11 January – 1 March 2021. The aim of these conversations was to understand what their next steps might be and how we could support them through in-kind support e.g. introductions to artists or arts professionals, or application and funding guidance.

We discussed the mentoring budget of £600 each for four mentoring sessions and started to gain an understanding of what the awardees might like to learn over the year. We found that the broadness of the offer was welcomed but also made it difficult for some awardees to articulate what they wanted from us and how they might like to move forward with the in-kind support and mentoring. Throughout the conversations we found that many awardees wanted to split their mentoring sessions between artistic development and strategy e.g. how to talk to programmers/curators, how to navigate the music industry and how to use social media/PR to their advantage. With a freely given fund it felt important for us to be led by individual wishes and not to put pressure on the outcomes of the funding.

Ongoing support

We continued conversations with awardees over Zoom, phone call and email; supporting them with application feedback, signposting opportunities and introducing them to artists and arts professionals they would like to work with or learn from. We hoped to have at least two catch ups with each awardee throughout 2021. Some artists felt the pressure of not wanting to squander the opportunity or the mentoring budget.

We also programmed six free artist workshops on funding strategies, implementing self-care into artistic practice, starting conversations with programmers and curators, building partnerships and collaborations, promoting your work in the digital realm and how to write funding applications. Most of the workshops will be run by external facilitators and artists.

Reflections:

- The freedom of the fund was welcomed but for some it was more difficult to develop their vision for the year into practical next steps.
- The artists felt exhausted by the shifts that COVID-19 had brought, and there was a consensus that arts institutions needed to be transparent about what they can offer artists at this time.