Arts Council England
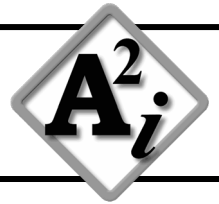# Access Support
Guidance for Support Workers

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Accessible PDF version
Transcribed by A2i Transcription Services

This is the **accessible PDF** version.

There are also
- a **plain text** version
- a **large print** version
- a **audio** version
- a video version **with BSL**
- a video version **with captions**
- a **Easy Read** version

Please contact us if you need **another format**.

1. Introduction

Hello and welcome to the Access Support - Guidance for Support Workers guidance page. You can find **alternative formats** of this guidance at the bottom of this page.

This guidance is for anyone providing access support (as part of the Arts Council England's Access Support provisions) to Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people and those experiencing poor health. Your support is focused on removing barriers to access our services. This guidance applies to individuals and organisations that provide support worker outside of our network of support workers.

You might have been in touch with us on a frequent basis or perhaps you're about to provide support for the first time. Whichever it is, we're providing this guidance to make sure you're clear on our process, requirements and expectations when taking on this work. Please read through it and refer to it when providing support.

Support workers do amazing work with wide range of artists and organisations. Sometimes providing access support can feel quite isolated. Please get in touch if ever it would be helpful for us to have a phone or video call to talk through any queries or feedback you have.

Arts Council's dedicated Access Support Team

We set up a dedicated Access Support Team in 2021 to improve access for Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent people and those experiencing poor health.

Through speaking to Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent artists, we were able to get a clear idea of what an equitable application process should look like.

We have an ongoing programme of new initiatives and developing resources designed to improve access for all. The work is ongoing and mostly through collaboration with the artists and organisations we provide support to, informed in part by the lived experience within the team and organisation as a whole.

Thanks for the tailored, person-led support you provide - Let's **All** Create!

Access Support team
Arts Council England

2. What is Access Support and who is it for?

Access support is available to help remove barriers. This helps to ensure that applying for funding is fair and equitable.

Access support is available for **Deaf, disabled and neurodivergent** people and those experiencing **poor health**.

We will never ask for proof of diagnosis. We consider **self-ID valid**. Any questions we ask are to understand **how the support is tailored** to the person being supported.

Pre-application access support refers to any **support provided when making an application for funding.**

We can **support applicants experiencing barriers** to access our services and information. Here are some examples of the support we can offer:

- providing information in **alternative formats**
- paying a **support worker** to help **make an application**
- supporting someone when they receive their **decision and feedback**
- **note-taking** during **development conversations**
- **explaining feedback** or help **make a complaint**
- **linking someone to a support worker** as part of our network of support workers (based on availability)

3. What is my role as a Support Worker?

A support worker's role is to **remove barriers** for someone applying to the Arts Council for **funding or using our services.** What this entails must be **tailored to the person you are supporting** – there is no one size fits all approach.

Providing **a high standard of access support** often requires a combination of a**daptability, focus, understanding, flexibility and empathy.** You should work in a person-led way that is informed by and **tailored to the needs and working style** of the person you are supporting.

When someone requests access support, we ask for a **breakdown of the work** so that we can see that the support has been **tailored to the individual.** We look at this alongside the barriers referred to in the access support request.

You can assist with providing this breakdown if it helps the person you are supporting.

Here are a few examples of what your support work can include:

- Note taking and interpreting ideas to write up answers
- Helping process the application questions and forms
- British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation
- Helping the applicant navigate Grantium (our application system)
- Signposting to other resources or asking us for additional support

We cannot pay for:

- Translation from other languages into English
- Costs related to caring responsibilities
- Costs covered by Access to Work or other sources
- Developing a project e.g. the services of a bid writer or development consultant

For the avoidance of doubt, support work is **not bid-writing** and should not be thought of as such. Your responsibility is to assist the person you are supporting to **articulate their idea and application form answers** in **their authentic voice.**

There may be times when you need to ask the person you are supporting to **provide more information.** You can support them to **find the information they need** (e.g. travel times, venue hire costs) but it is not within your remit to provide prescriptive answers or make decisions for the person applying.

Your support **must not work in a way that removes agency** from the person you are supporting. The work must be delivered in a **person-led** way.

4. How should I cost the work?

The **tailored nature of support work** and variety of people providing this means that **rates vary.** There are a number of factors for this, such as **qualifications, relationship to the person** being supported and the **nature of the work** itself.

Access Support is paid for from **public funds.** As such, we have a responsibility to ensure this money is spent in a **focused way** that delivers **value for money.**

Support workers should charge a rate that is proportionate to their level of expertise and experience. The maximum day rate we can pay is £300 (with 1 day being 8 hours of work including breaks).

Every individual is different and will need different levels of support. It is important that the support is tailored to the individual's access needs.

We will review all requests on a case-by-case basis, but we've included some guidelines around the maximum support below:
- **Developing Your Creative Practice (DYCP): up to £600**
- **National Lottery Project Grants (NLPG) – under £30k: up to £900**
- **National Lottery Project Grants (NLPG) – over £30k: up to £1200**
- **National Lottery Project Grants (NLPG) – resubmission: up to £600**
- **Applications requiring an Expression of Interest (EOI): up to £1,500**
  (split between the EOI and application)

All figures are **inclusive of VAT.**

For support with any other funds or services not listed above, please email **access@artscouncil.org.uk**

These guide figures are informed by the amount of time spent on each type of application by the support workers in our network. The maximum rates are reviewed periodically.

If a request exceeds the above guidelines:

- We will need some extra information about why additional time is needed. Please supply this in the original request.
- You will be required to send us a log of your work (see Appendix A) before we can issue payment.

You must wait until we approve the request by email before starting the support work. **Please note that we are unable to pay for support work that is carried out before we have approved the request in writing.** We will notify the applicant and the support worker by email when we have approved the request.

If the rate a support worker asks for is **higher than average** for the kind of tailored support being provided, we reserve the right to ask for **other quotes** and suggest an alternative. We will **contact you before** we do this.

When support work **ends early** (e.g. the initial breakdown included submitting an application and this did not happen) we can **revise the payment** to reflect work carried out so that you are paid fairly for your time. We will ask for documentation for audit purposes.

If it becomes apparent that **additional time** will be required, **please contact us with more information** so that we can review the request for extra time before you carry out the additional work.

5. Details of the process

More details on the process from request to payment can be found below.

1. An applicant requests support to apply for funding or access our services.

Access support can be requested via our **online form.**

Our **Customer Services team** can provide assistance to submit a request via a phone call, email or Live Chat.
We process requests as quickly as we can when they come in. This can take up to 5 working days.

2. We review the request and approve it or request information to help do this.

We try to approve requests as quickly as possible to minimise delays to people that have requested access support. If we require any additional information, we will contact the person applying. Sometimes it's helpful for us to contact you if you are best placed to provide this (e.g. the breakdown plan of support work).

Once approved, we email the person that requested support and copy you in to confirm that the work can start straight away. If email presents a barrier, we do this by phone or other alternative.

3. You carry out the support work and we send you a Purchase Order number

You can start working with the person you are supporting as soon as we have confirmed in writing that we have approved the request. Keep a log of the support work that you do (see Appendix A).

We send you a **purchase order within 10 working days of approving the request.** If this is the first time you are providing support work for us, we will need to send you a new supplier form first.

If plans change (e.g. change of fund), please get in touch straight away so that we can review the amendments.

4. When the support work is complete, you invoice us and we issue payment

When you have finished your work, send your invoice to **purchase.ledger@artscouncil.org.uk**.

You must include:

- Invoice date
- Purchase order number
- Name of the person you supported
- Project number for the application
- Your full name and address
- Your Unique Taxpayer Reference number (where applicable)
- Arts Council England name and address
- **If request is above guideline figures,** a completed copy of the support worker log (see attachment section below, appendix A)

Our **Finance Guidance** that includes an **invoice template** can be found in the attachment section below.

Providing you have included the correct information and the agreed support work has been completed, payment will be processed within **20 working days** from the date you submit your invoice. Payment will be delayed if we're missing any information.

Please note it is your responsibility to contact us with any payment-related queries. Please **do not** ask applicants to chase up payments. Please **do not include artists you support in any correspondence with us about payment.**

6. How support workers should use Grantium

Support workers should not use the log in details of the applicant.

Access support workers should support applicants to create a user account and applicant profile on our online portal Grantium. See our **Grantium guidance** for guidance on how to do this, and the difference between user account and applicant profile.

You should also set up your own user account. You can find instructions on how to set up a user account on our website. Make sure you have a user account before attempting to link up profiles. It is then possible to link a support worker's user account to an applicant profile.

Make sure that you have **consent from the applicant** to do this and follow the steps below:

1. Ask the applicant to **log in to Grantium** with their user account

2. Select **Applicants** from the menu on the left-hand side of the page

3. On the right-hand side of the page, click the icon under **Registrants**

4. Click on the **small chain icon** just to top of the table, on the left, to link a new user account to the profile.

5. Enter **the username and email address** of the other user account (the support worker's)

Both user accounts can then work on any applications made. Notifications will be sent to both accounts, too.

If you would like to unlink profiles, you can do so through the settings in your Grantium account.

7. Frequently asked questions

Please familiarise yourself with this information. If you have a question that isn't covered here please get in touch so that we can provide guidance.

Should I check to ensure the idea is eligible before I provide support?

We recommend that the first thing you do when supporting an applicant is to check they're eligible. It is especially important to check for DYCP applicants.

We recommend asking the person you are supporting about their idea at the start. You can also support them to complete the Eligibility Questionnaire on Grantium.

Most support workers are familiar with the eligibility criteria, art forms and activities we can fund but please contact us if you are unsure. We may withhold payment if the application falls outside of eligibility criteria.

Why do you request a breakdown of the support work?

The breakdown helps us to review and approve the support request. We understand that things may change. It also provides information that informs our approach to improving access more widely. We also require this breakdown as it serves as a quote for audit purposes.

When will I get paid?

Support work is paid for after its completion. Once a request is approved, we'll send you a Purchase Order number within **10 working days.** If you're a new supplier, we will first ask you to return a new supplier form so it may take a bit longer.

Providing you have included the correct information and the agreed support work has been completed, payment will be processed within **20 working days** from the date you submit your invoice. Payment will be delayed if we're missing any information.

What boundaries should I set when I am providing support work?

Clear boundaries are important. These should be tailored to the person you are supporting (e.g. avoid being late to a session if this creates anxiety). Be clear about how much notice you expect to rearrange a session. You should also be clear about your preferred contact and response times. It may also be helpful to start and end each session with a check-in. Remember to consider your own wellbeing, too.

How do I proceed if someone wants to apply for a different fund?

Our funding guidance includes information to help people decide which funding programme aligns with their idea. We understand there are occasions when – for example – a Developing Your Creative Practice application might start to evolve into a National Lottery Project Grant. If this happens, contact us with details of the support provided and an updated breakdown so that we can review this.

How should I support someone with a comparatively weak project idea?

Your role as a support worker is to support someone in making an application for their idea. We are not able to pay you to advise on or further develop a project. You can however contact us to request a development conversation with one of our Relationship Managers.

Can I support someone then go on to work on their project or activity?

We understand that freelance practitioners in the arts and culture sector are often multiskilled with portfolio careers. We have been made aware that there have been a small but significant number of instances where artists have been actively encouraged to add their support worker into their project as a partner as a producer, lead artist or similar. This arrangement can create a conflict of interest and potentially lead to a situation where a vulnerable adult feels obliged to continue working with someone they would not have chosen to. As such we strongly advise support workers set a clear boundary and are not included in any funded activities (with the exception of

any support you have agreed to provide to assist with administering the grant). We understand there may be a small number of instances where – due to a previous working relationship – not being included would create an additional barrier. If you do stand to make a financial gain beyond providing access support, please supply a Conflict of Interest form with your invoice (see appendix 2).

What are my safeguarding responsibilities to the person I support?

Please raise any safeguarding concerns with us in the first instance. We recommend that all sole traders have their own written safeguarding policy proportional to the work they engage in. Any support workers working through a limited company, community interest company or other legally incorporated entity should familiarise themselves with the organisation's safeguarding policy.

Should I advise on what personal access costs to include in the project?

Please ensure that the person you are supporting is aware that they can include personal access costs within their application. You can ask appropriate questions relating to this in order to assist with devising a budget and including supporting information in the application itself.

Can I pass on feedback about other aspects of the Arts Council to you?

Yes, absolutely. We work closely with colleagues from across the organisation. Our team have started to lend our expertise to make our funding programmes, services and resources more accessible for all.

What happens if there is a discrepancy when you spot check my work?

We will contact you for some additional information. We may also contact the person that you have supported and cross-reference your support work log. If further action is required e.g. funds have been paid for work that has been invoiced for in error, we will refer this to the relevant colleagues to contact you.

Are there any factors that could prevent me from providing support?

All support requests are reviewed and approved at our discretion as the end client. We have a responsibility to protect public funds. As such, we reserve the right to refuse to engage you and source an alternative if we have reasonable grounds to believe that public funds have been misappropriated, false records provided or any other unethical or unlawful activity has occurred. Where funds have been misappropriated, we reserve the right to require funds to be paid back. These instances are extremely rare and far-removed from the exemplary work we know is carried out to a very high standard by the vast majority of support workers.

How can I be added to your referred network of support workers?

We have a network of support workers, which we are able to link applicants to if they don't have a support worker. We're not looking for any more support workers to join the network at the moment. If you're interested in being notified when an opportunity arises, please email us on **access@artscouncil.org.uk**

The applicant I'm supporting needs to do an Expression of Interest (EOI) before making a full application. How does the process work for applications that require an EOI?

The applicant will first need to request access support for the EOI stage only. If invited to make a full applicant, they'll then need to request access support again for the application stage. You'll need to claim payment separately for both stages.

What do I do if the person I am supporting no longer wants to apply? Can I claim payment for the work provided so far?

To make partial payments we need some extra documentation to be able to evidence that the work has been carried out – this is to make sure we have an audit trail.

Please see below the process:

1. Send us a detailed log of the work carried out (see Appendix A in attachment section) and inform us of the reason why you're claiming partial payment. This needs to be sent to **access@artscouncil.org.uk**
2. If the work took place offline (not on Grantium), we will need evidence of the work carried out – please send the documents you've been working on, or a Grantium project number.
3. Send your invoice to **purchase.ledger@artscouncil**.org.uk , quoting the PO number provided and explaining that you're not invoicing for the full amount.
4. We reserve the right to get in touch with the applicant to check in.
5. We'll reconcile all of this before issuing payment.

The declaration section of the application forms includes this: "Tick the relevant box if any person involved in the project or writing the application works for the Arts Council". As a support worker paid by Arts Council England was involved, should we be ticking this box?

No, this only applies to people employed by Arts Council England on a PAYE basis.

Can a support worker invoice through a limited company, or can payment only be made to an individual or sole trader?

We're only able to pay a limited company for access support if the trading activities and nature of the business directly relate to work involved with supporting artists.

Appendix 1

Support work log - to be submitted with your invoice

For any work that exceeds the guidelines we've set out (see section 4 "How should I cost the work?" of the guidance for support workers), you will be required to submit a log alongside your invoice.

If you don't send us this document, we will be unable to issue payment.

Support worker name:	
Applicant name:	
Project number:	

Declaration:
I declare this to be an accurate record of the support work I provided. I understand that you may contact the individual or organisation I have supported for quality assurance purposes.

Digital signature (type your name below):

Date	Time from/to	Support work activity	Notes (if different from breakdown)

Appendix 2

Support worker – conflict of interest form

Please complete this form and email to
access@artscouncil.org.uk if:

you provide access support to an individual or organisation to apply for funding from Arts Council England

- **and should the funding be successful -**

stand to make a financial gain as a partner, subcontracted worker, or other capacity, including but not limited to providing support to administer the grant.

A:

"I declare that I have been included within the application in the capacity of	
[Insert Role Here].	
I have not in any way influenced the individual or organisation I have supported in any way that could be viewed as creating a conflict of interest."	

Or (delete as appropriate)

B:

"I declare that I have been included within the application solely in the capacity of providing support to administer the grant on Grantium. I will provide support with	
[Insert Support Here].	
I have not in any way influenced the individual or organisation I have supported in any way that could be viewed as creating a conflict of interest."	

I understand that you may contact the person or organisation I have provided access support to in order to verify this. I understand that this is to help to protect vulnerable adults from exploitation.

Support worker name:	
Applicant name:	
Project number:	
Digital signature (type your name below):	