



ROYAL
OPERA
HOUSE

FREELANCE
COMMUNITY
CHARTER

ROH FREELANCE COMMUNITY CHARTER¹

Dear all,

Welcome to the Royal Opera House Freelance Community Charter. ROH is home to two of the world's great performing art companies: The Royal Ballet and The Royal Opera, supported by the Orchestra of the Royal Opera House, plus our outstanding Learning and Participation programme. We tell stories from the great works of the past to new commissions, which speak to universal themes while also reflecting contemporary culture and concerns. Our mission is to enrich the cultural life of the nation by growing the public enjoyment and appreciation of exceptional ballet and opera. In doing this we strive to become more inclusive, accountable and effective in our commitment to our social and environmental responsibilities. And, critically, we want to be a truly great place to work, where everyone can contribute and feel a sense of pride in the resulting art.

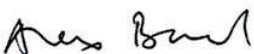
We believe that everyone working in ROH deserves decent working conditions, so we will work to create a culture that aligns to the key principles that make ROH a great place to work: we treat each other with **RESPECT**; we are **OPEN** with each other; and we value the **HIGHEST** standards.

This Charter sets out principles for how ROH and freelancers, casuals and others will work together going forward, so that everyone understands what can be expected of all parties. Day-to-day operational responsibility for delivering against the principles in the Charter will sit with the individual companies and departments within ROH, supported by HR. Progress made in implementing the principles in the Charter will be reviewed annually (including with the freelance community itself), facilitated by our Head of Policy and Strategic Funding and the HR department, and will involve the Ballet and Opera companies (including Jette Parker Artists), Technical, Production and Costume, the Orchestra, Chorus, Learning & Participation, and Audiences & Media.

The freelance community often works across more than one organisation in the sector, so we are working with peers with the intention of trying to ensure as much commonality as we can – initially, we have been working with Glyndebourne, National Theatre, Old Vic, RSC and Sadler's Wells, as well as Freelancers Make Theatre Work, but we will share more widely with the performing arts sector, and will publish the Charter on our website, so it is publicly available to all.

We won't get everything right straightaway, so this Charter is a living document, and we will ensure an on-going dialogue with freelancers, casuals and others and to being open and honest when things go wrong and to putting them right as quickly as possible. And we will review progress and the latest research and best practice, amending the Charter as necessary.

Best wishes,



Alex Beard,
Chief Executive

¹In this document, we use the words 'freelance community' as a shorthand for all those who work with ROH but not on a permanent or fixed term contract, so it applies to those on the freelance, casual weekly, schedule D and foreign guest payrolls, as well as those paid via the PRESTO system.



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INTRODUCTION TO THE CHARTER

ROH believes firmly in promoting equal opportunities for all. This Charter is born out of our commitment to create a transparent way of engaging and working with the freelance community with the intention of promoting a positive workplace culture in which everyone is treated fairly and with respect.

Nothing in this Charter confers any employment rights or employment status – it does not form part of any contractual agreement, or intent to enter into such agreement, between ROH and the freelance community, but rather it consists of important aims, ambitions, and commitments.

The appendix contains a list of key resources within the industry. This is not an exhaustive list, but a pointer to valued partners in this endeavour.



WORKPLACE CULTURE

As a matter of principle, ROH is committed to pursuing equity (recognising that each person has different circumstances and that we need to allocate the resources and opportunities needed to ensure everyone can do their best work) rather than equality (whereby each individual or group of people is given the same resources or opportunities).

We are committed to ensuring a positive workplace culture, in which we treat each other with trust and respect (this is mutual and the responsibility of us all); promoting positive mental and physical health and wellbeing and avoiding unnecessary distinctions between the freelance community and other employees.

An important part of workplace culture is all of us, including freelancers, working together to keep us all and the organisation safe. So we all need to commit to abide by security expectations, rules and guidance (physical and online) and to H&S arrangements and reporting anything of concern.

We recognise the importance of the freelance community to ROH and the sector more widely. We recognise that the industry is built on partnership and hold this a core principle in how we work together.

Also see our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion strategy. We are updating our casting policy and will include details of the next iteration of the Charter.

HIRING PRACTICE

ROH is committed to ensuring fair and inclusive representation of all groups within society at all levels, both on and off stage. We will continue to take positive action to improve diversity in our workforce whether by sex, gender, ethnic heritage, disability, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic group, parental status, or any other characteristic which is underrepresented in ROH and our industry.

Data helps drive change and we will continue to work to strengthen our data capture and analytical capability. We encourage everyone to engage with diversity questionnaires and we will continue to work with the freelance community to understand barriers to completion and to address them.

ROH commits to being as transparent as possible about our hiring practices.

We commit to:

- Hiring on the basis of skills, ability and experience against objective criteria.
- Understanding and encouraging best practice hiring practice.

The role of ROH hiring managers is important, and we commit to ensuring all of them undertake existing mandatory training in anti-racism and anti-ableism and a commitment to introduce unconscious bias training.

INDUCTION

ROH recognises the importance of having an effective induction process to make newcomers feel welcome and valued. To that end, we commit to developing:

- A Welcome Pack which will provide clear guidance and advice about access to health and other support from ROH; and information about other support available. Whilst we propose to develop a generic Welcome Pack, it might be tailored for specific teams.
- A downloadable map of the building. This is currently in development.
- A process by which everyone who works with us will have a key contact in the company / department they work for who they can go to for support if needed.
- A process to ensure everyone who is required to undertake mandatory training knows how to access it and, where appropriate, what optional training is available (and, again, how to access it).

PHYSICAL SPACE

ROH commits to enabling access to spaces to the best of our ability, allowing for constraints, and ensuring we communicate effectively with the freelance community about what spaces they can use and when. We also commit to using our best efforts to ensure our shared facilities, including dressing rooms and rest areas, are accessible and fit for purpose.

We are committed to ensuring the freelance community has adequate access to refreshments during the day and sufficient time to get food and drink during breaks, and we will do our best to make sure that is the case.

ACCESS

ROH follows the 'social model of disability': we believe that people are disabled by physical and attitudinal barriers in society, not by their impairment or medical conditions. We are working towards removing or mitigating these barriers to our work, wherever possible. We are a Disability Confident Employer.

ROH will ask new freelancers, casuals and others about any specific workplace needs which they might require to be met to enable them to undertake their engagement and we will make best endeavours to make reasonable adjustments to ensure everyone has the opportunity to do their job on an equal par. This could include changes to policies, working practices or physical layouts, or providing extra equipment or support etc. As individual needs and roles can change over time, this will be an on-going dialogue.

We also recognise that there are both visible and hidden disabilities and that adjustments might be required for those who do not identify as disabled. All requests are assessed on an individual basis.

We can assure everyone that all disclosures of disability are treated confidentially and will only be shared with the relevant parties to support

the experience of the individual in question and ensure we are fulfilling our duty of care.

LEARNING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT

We recognise that supporting the freelance community to learn and develop their careers is essential to the progression, well-being, and productivity of individuals, ROH and the sector as a whole. We will engage with freelancers, casuals and others in open, informal conversations about careers development, including signposting people to available support internally and externally.

We recognise the potential of how much our experienced freelance community who have worked with us a lot can offer to support newer/less established freelancers, casuals and others. We will explore how we can facilitate this and empower more experienced freelancers and casuals to offer support to less experienced colleagues on an informal basis that benefits all parties.

BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

ROH has zero tolerance for bullying and harassment, not only at ROH itself but also across the sector and in all of society. We will foster a healthy, fair and inclusive working environment free from harassment, bullying and unacceptable practices. It is the individual responsibility of each of us, but especially those in more senior positions, to model this behaviour and lead by example.

Everyone working at ROH is encouraged to 'speak up' where they experience or see unacceptable behaviour; ROH will communicate clearly that this is the case (explaining the process and personnel to contact during induction) and commits to dealing with any and all concerns raised in an active, resolution-seeking way.





Paul Foster in The Lighting Box working the auditorium lighting ©2016 ROH. Photographed by Sim Canetty-Clarke

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

We recognise the importance of being an environmentally sustainable workplace and the impact this can have on the health and well-being of our workforce. We will continue to work to reduce our carbon footprint across all our operations, with our public goal of being carbon net zero by 2035.

We welcome engagement from the freelance community as we find continually more sustainable ways to design, build, and make our productions. Using the Theatre Green Book as guidance, we will continue to engage with new initiatives and work with colleagues across the industry to share best practice for more sustainable production processes.

PAY AND CONTRACTS

Pay rates and terms and conditions of engagement are out of scope for this Charter. We remain fully committed to setting hourly rates at or above the Living Wage level. We will aim for clarity about when freelancers and casuals can expect to be paid and to ensure contracts are in plain English.

AFTER CARE, KEEPING IN TOUCH AND HARNESSING EXPERIENCE

Many projects worked on by the freelance community are intense, relatively short-term projects.

We will review:

- How we evaluate the experience - practical/learning/actions for next time.
- After-care - how we can ensure there is a suitable farewell and thank you for those who have worked on the project.
- How to maintain lines of communication when a person's contract expires, and they move on.

APPENDIX: KEY SERVICE PROVIDERS AND RESOURCES

RECRUITMENT

ARTS JOBS

<https://www.artsjobs.org.uk>

ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH THEATRE TECHNICIANS

www.abtt.org.uk

GET INTO THEATRE

<https://getintotheatre.org>

THE GUARDIAN

<https://jobs.theguardian.com/jobs/theatre>

MANDY.COM

<https://www.mandy.com/uk>

OPERA EUROPA

<https://opera-europa.org>

SPOTLIGHT

<https://www.spotlight.com>

THE STAGE

<https://www.thestage.co.uk/jobs/theatre-vacancies>

THE TALENT MANAGER

<https://www.thetalentmanager.com>

UK THEATRE JOBS

<https://uktheatre.org/theatre-industry/job-vacancies>

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

CLORE LEADERSHIP

<https://www.cloreleadership.org>

CREATIVE ACCESS

<https://creativeaccess.org.uk>

DANCERS' CAREER DEVELOPMENT

<https://thedcd.org.uk>

JERWOOD ARTS

<https://jerwoodarts.org>

SCREENSKILLS

[Mental health](#)

[Unconscious bias](#)

[Your portfolio career](#)

TONIC THEATRE

<https://www.tonictheatre.co.uk>

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

ACTING FOR OTHERS

<https://actingforothers.co.uk>

CARE FIRST

<https://www.care-first.co.uk>

MIND

<https://www.mind.org.uk>

MUSIC MINDS MATTER

<https://www.musicmindsmatter.org.uk>

SOLAS MIND MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING

<https://www.solasmind.com>

WELLBEING IN THE ARTS

<https://www.wellbeinginthearts.org.uk>

OTHERS

BECTU

<https://bectu.org.uk>

CREATIVE UK

<https://www.wearecreative.uk>

DANCE MAMA

<https://www.dancemama.org>

DANCE PROFESSIONALS FUND

<https://www.dancefund.org.uk>

EQUITY

<https://www.equity.org.uk>

FREELANCERS MAKE THEATRE WORK

<https://freelancersmaketheatrework.com>

GOVERNMENT (IR35 GUIDANCE)

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-off-payroll-working-ir35>

HELP MUSICIANS

<https://www.helpmusicians.org.uk>

MUSICIANS UNION

<https://musiciansunion.org.uk>

PARENTS IN THE PERFORMING ARTS (PIPA)

<https://pipacampaign.org>

STAGE DIRECTORS UK

<https://stagedirectorsuk.com>

UK THEATRE

<https://uktheatre.org>