

the creative consortium

The Wellbeing Charter 2016

culture change for the arts sector in Scotland

The Wellbeing Charter is an opportunity to demonstrate commitment to the health and wellbeing of individuals working in the arts. It sets out aspirations for excellence in managing health and wellbeing issues for the arts sector in Scotland.

The arts sector environment is often unpredictable, inconsistent, and requires high levels of unconditional commitment and hard work from its workers, many of whom work for themselves and/or without the consistent support of an employer.

Our sector is aware that it can do more: to support its workers, to strive for excellence in promoting wellbeing, to provide support and toolkits for minimising health risks, and to raise awareness of good working practices. We aspire to effect a change in the current working culture, resulting in a sector that can lead the way for excellence in health and wellbeing, which in turn will improve Scotland's overall cultural product.

by signing up to this charter we pledge to:

- adopt a method of working that takes into consideration the health and wellbeing of ourselves and those around us
- actively seek out ways to minimise risks to health and wellbeing at work
- work collaboratively with others in the sector to promote the importance of putting health and wellbeing at the core of our approach
- raise health and wellbeing as an issue with sector policy makers and colleagues, where it can be a useful aid to decision-making
- promote a culture of good working practices with regard to health and wellbeing, including (but not limited to):
 - **honesty and transparency**, including creating an environment where admitting mistakes and weaknesses is easy and supported
 - **flexible working arrangements**, allowing for optimum work-life balance for each individual's specific needs and abilities
 - **opportunities for self-development** and training, including time within the work context to meet with peers to share experiences and issues
 - **a safe working environment**, where all Health and Safety standards are maintained, and where there is a commitment to creating an environment free from aggressive and bullying behaviours, and that minimises risk of stress, anxiety, burn-out and exhaustion

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standards

- Our ambition is that all those working in the arts sector will feel included by this charter: employed and self-employed individuals; managers and those being managed; leaders and workers; artists and performers; administrators and technicians.
 - Issues this charter seeks to identify include: sickness, injury, mental health, stress, healthy eating, physical activity, alcohol and drug abuse, smoking, burn-out, exhaustion, disability, chronic ill health, maternity/paternity relief.
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background

In 2014, two freelance arts workers met to discuss work-based issues. Ruth Davie and Judith Walsh shared concerns about the detrimental effects on health and wellbeing caused by the industry-norm patterns of working. One major concern was that they were the sole administrators for the artists, bands, and small organisations they supported, and that there were very few safeguards in place to ensure the projects would be able to continue to run smoothly should anything happen to take them away from their desks.

Like all good administrators, they were keen to tackle the problem at hand and come up with some workable solutions. As well as protecting arts organisations and artists, they were keen to make sure they would also benefit from whatever the new system might be... that it would become allowable to take holidays, be sick for a day or a week, or take a period of leave for any other reason. What followed was a 4-month period of thinking, talking, research, and facilitation.

Fellow arts administrator Jenny Searle (nee Kempton) was brought in to provide external facilitation and pull together the information that would become the founding documents for the new group: *The Creative Consortium - supporting artists and arts organisations*. This was to be a new model of working, allowing freelancers to pool resources, skills, projects, and workloads, enabling them to enjoy working as part of a team and providing back-up for each project. Since October 2014, The Creative Consortium team has worked together to support over 15 arts projects (from independent artists and arts organisations) and has grown to become a pool of five freelancers. At the core of our work remains the Values that were present at the beginning of the journey: that the workplace should contribute to our health and wellbeing, and that we should be in a position to support each other, so that we can create work of the highest quality for the benefit of the sector as a whole.

Visit thecreativeconsortium.org for further details on our Work, our People and our Values.