

## **An open letter to theatre and performance makers**

This is a letter to self-employed and freelance theatre and performance makers in the UK. To the actors, playwrights, directors, choreographers, stage managers, designers, stage crews and set-builders to name just a few.

We really miss being with you during this period of lockdown. Making theatre and performance is a collaborative endeavour, so we are particularly affected by having to be apart from one another right now. We're not able to come together, in the same space, to share the experience of a live performance. We're not able to practise and enjoy our artform in its most basic form.

It's now looking increasingly likely that won't be possible for months to come, and we recognise that many freelancers face real uncertainty about if and how they will be able to continue to work in theatre. 70% of people who work in theatre and performance in the UK are freelance or self-employed, and it's for this workforce, in all its diversity and complexity, that the impact of the current situation is most acute.

During these past weeks we have had conversations with many of you to understand your needs and the ways you have been affected. We are writing to express our support for you, and to lay out some practical steps we are taking to improve the situation based on these conversations.

As well as exploring ways of producing work with freelancers during lockdown, and using this time to develop new projects with freelancers for the future, we are also working together to coordinate our response to the government, to articulate clearly what we can offer and what we need.

Most urgently, we are calling for the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme to be extended in line with furloughing, for all self-employed workers, and in the specific case of theatre and performance workers, until theatres are able to safely reopen. We also want to see criteria removed from the scheme which are stopping legitimate and much-needed claims.

Some of you are already involved in these conversations. We welcome your voices and need to hear from more of you in the conversations to come.

Your unique networks, skillsets, perspectives, and ideas are vital to the entire sector, and we need to work with you in our response to this crisis.

Each of the organisations who've signed this letter are committed to reaching out to their family of self-employed and freelance theatre makers; listening to how this is affecting your work and lives, and to your needs and ideas for the future.

More than that, we want to facilitate the establishment of a national task force of self-employed theatre and performance makers. The purpose of the task force is to strengthen the influence of the self-employed theatre and performance community. It would create ongoing points of connection between freelancers and organisations, and amplify the voice of the self-employed in the conversations to come. To help establish the task force, each of the organisations signing this letter will support a freelancer to join the group, ensuring they are paid for their time.

We want to offer a message of hope and solidarity. Our well-practised ability to work together, to form connections, and build relationships will help us

through this. One day, hopefully soon, we will all be able to meet together, as people have done for centuries, in a shared space, for a shared experience. In the meantime, we remain committed to working for you and with you towards a sustainable future for theatre and performance.

Signed,

Access All Areas

Action For Children's Arts

Actors Touring Company

ArtsAdmin

Almeida Theatre

Battersea Arts Centre

Belarus Free Theatre

Birmingham Repertory Theatre

Boundless Theatre

The Bush Theatre

Brighton Festival

Bristol Old Vic

Brixton House

Chichester Festival Theatre

China Plate  
Contact  
Dance Base  
Dance Umbrella  
Derby Theatre  
Diverse City  
Donmar Warehouse  
Eden Court Highlands  
English Touring Theatre  
Everyman  
Fio  
Fuel  
Gate Theatre  
Graeae  
Headlong  
HOME  
Improbable  
Jermyn Street Theatre  
Kiln Theatre  
Leeds Playhouse  
Leicester Curve  
Mercury Theatre  
National Dance Company Wales  
National Theatre of Scotland

National Theatre Wales  
National Youth Theatre of Great Britain  
Northern Stage  
Nottingham Playhouse  
One Dance UK  
Paigns Plough  
Polka Theatre  
Regent's Park Open Air Theatre  
Rose Theatre Kingston  
Royal & Derngate  
Rubicon Dance  
Sadler's Wells  
Sheffield Theatres  
Soho Theatre  
Spare Tyre  
Talawa Theatre Company  
Tangled Feet  
The Cockpit  
The National Theatre  
The New Wolsey Theatre  
The Royal Court Theatre  
The Royal Shakespeare Company  
The Yard  
Theatre Peckham

Theatre Royal Plymouth

Theatre Royal Stratford East

Tiata Fahodzi

Unicorn theatre

Unlimited

Wise Children

Yellow Earth

1927