

DoorstepArts

WE ALL MAKE THE STORY HAPPEN

Payments Policy & Procedures

5 Golden Rules of Payments are grounded in:

1. Care for self - making your workload easeful as project manager
2. Care for finance team - that the ask & time frame of turnaround is reasonable
3. Care for the artist - that they are being valued, working to their strengths & properly/efficiently paid
4. Care for the participants/players - that they are being looked after and that the artistic experience is appropriate for them
4. Care for Doorstep - that our reputation is strong and our financial flow is smooth & easeful, with processes that look after everyone

The Flow:

Step 1: Cover the Basics First. Is this project a good idea? Is it right for me, for Doorstep, for the participants?

- So if someone approaches us and wants to do a partnership project, think about whether this is a partner we want to hook up with? Do they have a shared ethos? Do we trust that their working methods will jive well with ours?
- Is this project aligned to the central heartbeat of Doorstep? Does it fit with our sense of purpose/intention?
- Have we got an artist or a few artists who would be keen/skilled to do this work? If not, maybe we don't do it. Or maybe we recruit.
- Does it fit well for the participants/communities and is it wanted/asked for? Can we imagine it happening and being juicy & joyful?
- Does the time frame work? Is it caring? Is it reasonable? Can we make it so?
- Is the money adequate? Is it properly paid? Or can we go find the funding to supplement and make this happen?

Step 2: Is the Money Assured?

- Is the needed money definitely coming in? (grant, commission, earned income) When is it expected? How many payments? Timings?
- **Let Marie know this info.** She needs to schedule these payments into Xero. Without this step, the work CANNOT go ahead.
- Also cc Erin in (to be extra efficient) so she can pop it into the central cash flow so our overall yearly budgets include the work and she can help confirm fund & code for any payments.
- If you want to oversee and operate your own budget, now is the time to start to co-construct a shared cash flow with Erin in Google Drive. It can be skeletal at this stage - i.e. just the time frames of the income payments and likely expenditure code rows, but blank.
- Once you've got the M&E thumbs up, the project is confirmed and can go ahead. Now you can think about looking after the artist.

Step 3: Look After the Artist

- If desired, do have an informal chat with the artist, see if they're interested.
- Write a draft LoA. If you have questions about fund or code, ask Erin or Marie. (If Erin already has the project in the cash flow or a shared Google Drive cash flow has been started, then these questions are easier to answer.)
- In doing so, you'll need to make some decisions about payment timings. Follow these rules:
 1. **Fair & Timely Pay:** Ideally, an artist should always be paid within 1 month of completing the work, wherever possible.
 2. **Pay after Completion:** As a golden rule, an artist is not paid for work in advance of them actually doing it. We pay after they've delivered/completed the work. Our usual payment date each month is the 25th. An LoA/payment schedule may include work from the last week (i.e. after the 25th of the month) if it is regular termly work (i.e. Participation or Open Doors), as part of our standard practice.
 3. **Money in the System:** We can only pay an artist if we've received the funds in advance - i.e. if the money is in our bank account. So you need to think about when the funds are coming in when writing the LoA. Sometimes we can approve payment before funds are actually received if we are confident that the funds are assured and if the payment is approved/scheduled in our Xero system. This might happen because it's a regular transaction or a partner that is known to be slow in processing but always reliable to pay. This can only occur with direct & specific approval from M&E. Examples include: Devising Discovery Outreach/UoE, partner commissions from Torbay Council, or a second payment from a big grant instalment, etc.
- **LoA Agreement with Artist:**
 1. Now email the LoA to the Artist for approval, and/or to spark a bit of dialogue and co-drafting with them if needed. Make sure they're clear on how planning or R&D meeting time is costed – they need to know that our sessional artist rate includes plan time within its costings. They also need to know that we don't pay for travel, as a general house rule.
 2. Answer any questions and correct any necessary edits, and then get a confirmation from them that they are happy to take on the work. A signature is not necessary, but a clear confirmation/yes from them is, ideally over email.
 3. At this point, the artist has now committed to the work as listed in the LoA - and they have a copy of their LoA which includes the terms & conditions on the second page. This means they have agreed to do all dates, times and responsibilities - including sorting out travel to get there, timeliness, necessary prep/plan, resources, etc. Make sure this is clear to them - they are

committing to this work as described and cannot pull out of dates afterward. We expect a professional consistency and reliability from Doorstep Artists.

4. An artist should always receive their LoA and agree to it **before delivering the work**. So this needs to have happened prior to the first date of delivery. We are agile, lean and grassroots, so we don't set a minimum time frame on this - but do try to take care of artists and give them as much notice as you can.

- **LoA Saving to HR Folder:**

1. Now email the LoA to Erin/Marie for saving to the HR folder. At this point, we've completed the circle and the artist is free to invoice and get paid. Until the LoA is saved in this folder, the artist cannot invoice.
2. This is a private & confidential folder, which is why everyone doesn't have access to it.
3. Marie needs a minimum of 3 days grace between the LoA being saved to this folder and the invoice being processed.

Exceptions & Amendments:

That's the basic flow! Now here are a few quirky things to consider alongside.

- **Amendments/edits/changes:** So life happens sometimes, and things change. A partner site might request a different date last minute, or an artist might have an unexpected life circumstance happen and not be able to deliver a session. So a few golden rules re: edits, amendments and changes.
 - **Reasonable Boundaries & Approving Changes:** Firstly, is the change/edit okay and do you feel you can approve it as the Project Manager/Producer? For example, if an artist is starting to develop a pattern of committing to an LoA and then later saying that they can't do a date which was clearly listed in their LoA, this needs to be discussed with them as a significant problem. Ask for Co-Director help if you're concerned about a tricky conversation with someone. If a site partner is being really erratic or disorganised, we might decide we want to push back and refuse the change of date request. Think about reasonable boundaries and ask for advice if you're unsure.
 - **Reasonable Time Frames:** If a change does happen, think about where we are in the month. This matters.

- **Early in the Month:** If it's before the 15th (midpoint of the month), you can probably still amend the LoA for that current month's payment. Go ahead and do so, and correct the artist's LoA/payment schedule. You now need to re-send this doc to the artist and re-send this to M&E for HR folder updating. Remember the 3 days grace rule though - keep communicating with Marie if this happens.
- **Middle in the Month:** If it's after the 15th (midpoint of the month), you need to remember that the artist has probably already invoiced Marie for that month's payment and she's probably already entered it into Xero for payment. So this is messier and more complex. If it's a new/added date of delivery, that needs to be added to the next month's payment - i.e. bump it into the next month, rather than adding it to the current month. If it's a cancelled date, or work that didn't occur, then let Marie know ASAP so she can edit/remove the payment from the artist's scheduled invoice payment before it goes out.
- **After Payday on 25th of the Month:** If the change has happened after payday on 25th of the month, but impacts work that has already been invoiced and paid, then you need to pick the phone up and talk this through with Marie or Erin. This is the stickiest of all and usually requires an amendment to their next month's pay to adjust. It's doable, so don't panic. But do have a phone call about it to make sure that the change is workable.
- **'Descriptive Amendments':** Occasionally & rarely, we'll approve a 'descriptive amendment' rather than removing an item from an LoA, but that needs Erin (+ another Co-Director's) advance approval. An example of this might be an artist being unable to lead a workshop on a key date, but the payment still staying in their LoA, and the description changing to a different activity - i.e. a visit to DAS instead, or a CPD session, etc. This needs Co-Director-specific approval and is a rare occurrence.

Last but most important point:

The most important duty of care we have is to the children, young people and families that we work with. That means that what they experience at the point of delivery should be warm, professional, and creative/artistic in content only. If all our internal mechanics are working well (as above), then the work that happens in the creative room shouldn't have any idea about any of the above. So if we're in an artistic space - a workshop, a rehearsal, a studio, then we shouldn't need to be discussing or thinking about the above stuff, and they should be seeing the artist they expect, at the time they expect, and taking part in a rich artistic process. This internal mechanical work therefore is virtually invisible. If we're achieving that, then we're flying! :)