
Action plan & meeting notes

6 messages

Amy Keogh <amy.keogh@brightonfringe.org>

9 April 2025 at 11:47

To: Ben Carter <benrobcarter@gmail.com>

Cc: Laura Aiton <laura.aiton@brightonfringe.org>, Duncan Lustig-Prean <chair@brightonfringe.org>

Hello Ben

As discussed, below is a summary of our meeting with a list of actions to help support you and your artists and venues across May.

Support network

Can you please share the email addresses or directly introduce us via email to James Onionz, Riggs and Emma.

As they'll be supporting you during Fringe, it would be helpful for us to email them and share information. We hope this will help take the pressure off you on a daily basis. **Please could you send these to us by the end of this week.**

Contact and response from the Fringe

To confirm, our venue and artists T&Cs state we aim to respond within two working days, but outside of the live Festival time we try to respond sooner than this. Our Artist Services Hub at the Theatre Royal will be open from 10am - 6pm 7 days a week for all queries to do with artists and venues. Visiting the Hub will be the quickest way of gaining a response.

As mentioned in my previous email on the 2 April 25, it might be a good idea to put an out of office on your email to notify your artists that you will take 24/48 hours to respond to them. This will help manage their expectations and take some of the pressure having to reply to them quickly.

Ticket sales

To help alleviate stress please forward artists' queries (particularly about ticket sales) to the Artists Services team, at takepart@brightonfringe.org. We can make recommendations to help, in addition to the support you have already offered them. This would include:

1. - Instagram collaboration - when posting and sharing stories
 - Flyering - printers that offer discounts on flyers, where and how to flyer in Brighton.
 - Promo codes - BF will check how this works and if it is possible to do this again. We note that more than half your shows are free shows. A discount code will obviously not have an impact here. Artists will need to confirm that they are happy to have their tickets discounted.

Venue Management and Artist Print Marketing

We discussed how you have a process in place to work with your venues;

- Puck Cafe

- Maris & Otter
- The Jollies
- The Joker
- The Caxton
- Presuming Ed's

You have a Whatsapp group set up with all these venues, as a means to communicate information about artists and shows. In addition to this you have produced spreadsheets for the venues with details about shows programmed in their venues.

There is a deadline of **15 April 2025** for Half a Camel artists to send their show posters to you. You will then arrange for these posters to be distributed to all the specific venues, to avoid them getting lost. If any artists miss this deadline then the posters will be sent directly to their venue. You will be placing a box there for posters and flyers that come in late to the venue, again to avoid them getting mislaid.

Timeline

You have moved your planning to a couple of weeks earlier, to enable you to have time to prepare for the Fringe in May and to take a break before Fringe starts. You did mention that you were already near burn out. We encouraged this forward planning and for you to take a break before May.

Knee injury

You mentioned that you have injured your ACL in your knee and were concerned about it being a problem over Fringe, particularly whilst walking to and from venues. We suggested asking James, Riggs or Emma to help with taking you to venues or visiting them on your behalf. Duncan also recommended purchasing a knee brace to help support your knee.

Puck Rock - sober comedy space

You are very keen to promote this comedy venue, and we said we would investigate how we may support you with this. One suggestion is to offer writing a press release for you to use.

Venue Bursary - Maris Otter

You have supplied us with the artwork for the lamppost board, these are in the process of being printed and will be distributed before Easter weekend. The other marketing assets including a solus email, and an Instagram post - the email has been scheduled for release over the coming weeks and the Instagram post will be posted after Easter.

We have not yet delivered on the programming support calls, and I'd like to thank you for bringing our attention to this. As Laura mentioned, we had a changeover of staff and a period where the Artist and Venues Services team were short-staffed over Christmas and the New Year. As such, we missed this and would like to apologise for the inconvenience. Instead, we will be offering all winning Venues a pre-Fringe call and will look to revisit the bursary prizes for next year. If you would like to have this call, then please let us know.

Relationship with Brighton Fringe

Whilst we are happy to support certain aspects as stated above, we do have to clarify that we do **not** have the capacity or staffing to manage your venues and artists fully throughout the

month of May. If you become unable to manage the venues and artists, you will have to seek an alternative promoter/manager to take over.

You need to understand that our very small team is offering you levels of support which exceed anything we do for other programmers/venue managers and will place Brighton Fringe under some strain. We expect you to treat the staff team with respect; remembering that they must look after all artists and venues.

Publication of emails between you and the Fringe in full or in part and/or inaccurate or untrue public statements online or in email will be considered an abuse of our good will and our extra labour and will result in withdrawal of that additional support.

Disclosure

At the beginning of our meeting you said that you tried to take your life last weekend and that you had been in hospital as a result. When people disclose this information to us, we take it very seriously and try to support where we can and with permissions. We would recommend that you contact the following services, should you feel this way again.

Call Samaritans on 116 123

Visit [Staying Well](#) at The Wellbeing Hub in Preston Park

Use the [Shout](#) texting service on 85258

If you need urgent assistance, call NHS 999.

We hope you find the above action plans useful and you have a successful Fringe. Please get in touch if you have any questions

With very best wishes,

Amy

Amy Keogh (She/Her)
Managing Director

T: 01273 764 900

A: Office 4, The Old Court House, 118 Church Road, BN1 1UD

W: www.brightonfringe.org

#BrightonFringe



Ben Carter <benrobcarter@gmail.com>
To: Amy Keogh <amy.keogh@brightonfringe.org>

9 April 2025 at 17:24

Dear Amy,

Thank you for your follow-up email.

I want to be clear that, despite the summary you've provided, a large part of my distress remains unacknowledged — and was actively shut down during the meeting itself.

Throughout the discussion, I attempted to raise the events of **last year**, which still affect my ability to work and trust this process. My emails at the time — particularly around the **7pm Bleach shows** — went unanswered, despite their urgency. The volume of those emails was later used as an excuse not to respond at all. This is not only unacceptable, but a breach of your own commitments to timely communication with venue managers.

In the meeting, I briefly had the chance to raise this when Duncan asked, “*What? About last year?*” — but I was immediately shut down with “*We’re talking about this year.*” That was a deliberate deflection. I wasn’t looking to argue, I was looking for clarity — especially around the fact that acts were refunded and received apologies involving me, while I was given no communication at all.

When I did finally receive an apology, it was only after I sent a video documenting the fallout. That apology in itself is an **acknowledgement that something went wrong**. But it was not followed by a meaningful conversation or repair.

I expect that, once again, the response will shift focus to “*how I spoke to the Fringe.*” That’s been used before to dismiss the substance of my concerns. The truth is, I sent an emotionally charged email at a point of extreme distress — after weeks of being ignored. If we only address the tone of that message, and not the **failures that led to it**, we’re back in textbook **institutional gaslighting**.

You mention that my suicide disclosure is being taken seriously. And yet, in the same email, I am warned that sharing communications publicly may result in support being withdrawn. That is not a trauma-informed safeguarding response — it’s damage control.

To clarify: I did not issue a cry for help. I overdosed. I snorted all of my ADHD medication, knowing full well that my stomach could not be pumped. This was not a cry for attention — it was the result of a year of harassment, stalking, gaslighting, and professional silencing. That context matters.

If the Brighton Fringe remains unwilling to acknowledge or discuss last year’s failures, then my only request is this:

- Treat me as you would any other venue manager.
- Respond to communications **without selectively ignoring or minimising them**.
- Stop reframing justified distress as unprofessional behaviour.

And please reconsider the language around “abuse”. The real abuse here was what I endured while working in good faith. Your team’s apology last year acknowledged a failure — referring to any mention of that failure as “abuse” now is not only inappropriate, given my current situation it is retraumatising.

As you can tell, I have now been assigned a solicitor to support me with the all events of last year, as the stalking pre-dates the fringe. They are fully informed and have reviewed all relevant communications. From this point forward, any correspondence will be handled and responded to in accordance with UK law.

Sincerely,
Ben

[Quoted text hidden]

Amy Keogh <amy.keogh@brightonfringe.org>
To: Ben Carter <benrobcarter@gmail.com>
Cc: Duncan Lustig-Prean <chair@brightonfringe.org>, Laura Aiton <laura.aiton@brightonfringe.org>

10 April 2025 at 17:04

Hello Ben,

To clarify - the purpose of our meeting on Tuesday was to understand your current situation and how we can best support you for the upcoming Fringe. I'm saddened that this has not been acknowledged in your response.

It's clear that we have very different views on Fringe 2024, although I do not think it is the time to discuss that at length. I will add though that during our meeting we did acknowledge that all venues registering to be part Brighton Fringe 2025 now had to go through a two step verification process. So we were/are able to confirm certain aspects of suitability including licensing rules and regulations.

We are keen to focus on building a positive relationship so that Fringe 2025 will be the best it can be for you, your venues and your artists.

As a first step, this means that you:

- Provide us with the contact details for James Onionz, Riggs and Emma by **the end of this week**
- Forward any emails you receive from artists regarding ticket sale concerns / marketing questions to our Take Part team on takepart@brightonfringe.org
- Confirm if you, or any of the team at Marris & Otter, would like a pre-Fringe call, as part of the Venue Bursary package, as mentioned in my previous email
- Will not publicise emails between you and Brighton Fringe team (in part or in full) and/or inaccurate public statements.

And we will:

- Strive to respond to all emails/enquiries within 48 hours of receiving them
- Look into how best to support Puck Rock as a sober venue, depending on capacity of our team
- Have our Artist Hub open 10-6 (Monday to Saturday) and 10-4 (Sunday) every day of the Fringe
- Continue to assess our processes and make changes when deemed appropriate; the change to our Venue registration procedure, as mentioned previously, evidences this.

We are confident that, if we are both able to meet these requirements we will have a very successful Fringe together.

I'd like to stress that our concern for your mental health is genuine. We want you to be well and we want to support you. We empathise with your legal issues and your poor mental health, and hope that the resources we provided may be useful should you ever need them.

All the very best,

Amy Keogh (She/Her)
Managing Director

T: 01273 764 900

A: Office 4, The Old Court House, 118 Church Road, BN1 1UD

W: www.brightonfringe.org

#BrightonFringe



Stay Connected: Facebook | Instagram | Twitter | Website | YouTube

Support Us: Donate | easyfundraising | Amazon Smile | Friends Scheme

From: Ben Carter <benrobcarter@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 9, 2025 5:24 PM
To: Amy Keogh <amy.keogh@brightonfringe.org>
Subject: Re: Action plan & meeting notes

[Quoted text hidden]

Ben Carter <benrobcarter@gmail.com>
To: Amy Keogh <amy.keogh@brightonfringe.org>
Cc: Duncan Lustig-Prean <chair@brightonfringe.org>, Laura Aiton <laura.aiton@brightonfringe.org>

10 April 2025 at 20:48

This has now been passed to my solicitor, who is dealing with a serious, ongoing matter involving coercive control over the past year — something that predates the Fringe entirely and still doesn't seem to have been acknowledged properly in your emails.

The message I sent wasn't intended to start a chain. If you're told you'll get a reply under UK law, you'll get a reply under UK law. But your timelines, and your bringing up my right to go public — which I never mentioned — aren't things I need to answer to. And if this is about safeguarding me, I don't understand how suddenly safeguarding *the Fringe* has entered the conversation. That wasn't mentioned, and frankly, bringing that up now shows a real lack of understanding of what I'm going through — and what you're expecting my solicitor to deal with.

If safeguarding is what you're after, he's said very clearly that I should be spoken to with respect and in a friendly, human tone — and that I will always respond the same way in return. I will be running the venues, I can communicate with my team myself, the Samaritans number, or a deadline for my team that's based on nothing and knee support, I opt out of fringe's offer of support.

As for me — this is now out of my hands. Any communication that retaliates under the guise of safeguarding the Fringe, or that puts me in the position of having to explain my own rights, may not get a reply at all. If you respond with law, he will respond with law — just not on your timeline.

Please, just treat me like the human being I somehow still am. I cannot have this back-and-forth going on — not right now. Given what happened on Saturday, I need space, a calm tone, and communication like the kind I sent Duncan in November. I'm still here, and I'm still trying to do the right thing, but this is really upsetting and exhausting for me.

Ben

[Quoted text hidden]

Ben Carter <benrobcarter@gmail.com>
To: zklt.artist@gmail.com

25 April 2025 at 23:13

This email was sent 3 days after a suicide attempt, this is the Brighton Fringe, text book idiots

[Quoted text hidden]

Ben Carter <benrobcarter@gmail.com>
To: alice@sparkampm.co.uk

5 May 2025 at 02:23

[Quoted text hidden]