

Gary - MMF Meeting

Sarah Woods: [00:00:00] This is to empower musicians basically, to be able to do things for themselves and give them free money.

It's not just free money. Come on. Gary, who are you? I'm Gary.

FAC: Good to meet you all. That's mine. Stealing my phone. I'm from the Featured Artists Coalition. So we are the sister org, to the MMF.

I'm out of here, man. 14, 15 years ago, and the purpose is to represent and fight for the rights of artists in the arts community. So three things we do is lobby, a lot of the work that is done lobbying government around, right now grassroots touring AI in music remuneration they're the three main bodies of work that are ongoing at the moment.

We also do programs. So I run the program side of the business for helping artists and getting support in, and financial support in that we can then distribute to [00:01:00] artists. We do research and education. So it's, the artist body, we've got four and a half thousand members made up of a board of sixteen artists, including the likes of Dave from Blur and Sloan from Rose Green and loads of artists that you won't have heard of as well and everything in between.

So

That's all we do. I reckon this room would have heard of those artists. Yeah, maybe. I reckon they would, I

HELP MUSIC: can't remember them all, that's a reality.

I think, if we work together, we could go through the list, I reckon. Go on then. Jock from Allfellas. No. We're not going to do it, Gary.

Gus from Allfellas. No, leave it.

PRS: I'm Wesley. I'm a grants and programs manager at the Paris Foundation. So I manage a bunch of our grant schemes, the Open Fund, our International Showcase Fund, some partnerships with the BBC, and a thing called the Aura Awards, which is about experimental music. So we have a whole bunch of different grant schemes.

And I guess the idea of it is to help push artists through to a level where they can launch a long term, sustainable [00:02:00] career in music, which I don't need to tell you is a very difficult thing to do. So lots of our support goes through organizations who support. It's all careers, but generally that's where our early career support starts.

Then we have a next level of grants, and then the top level of grants, and then international. I'll dig into that a little more later. But our website is very complicated and difficult to understand, so it would be really good to talk to you one to one about where you should start. Because, yeah, that's the best way to do it, I think.

Thank you for your honesty there. And this evening I do intend to make it really honest, and from your perspective. That's

ARTS COUNCIL: a team. Yeah, so my name is Teejan. I got into the music industry, as a hip hop artist. That's how my journey began. That's how I understand and I can relate to the experience that you or the artists you work with have gone through.

Fortunate enough to, travel around Europe and perform in different spaces. Which was brilliant, opened my eyes up, got me to see the world, got me to understand a little bit about the [00:03:00] intricacies of music business And then through that journey, I now found myself at the Arts Council So I find it weird to say this because I've always been so anti establishment and that's like the message that runs through my music.

I'm like, government,

man.

ARTS COUNCIL: And now I'm Babylon. Because I guess the slight difference between what I do and what's going on with this is like we are an arm's length, we say arm's length body with the government. So most of our money basically comes through government. So if you're complaining about not receiving funding.

Have a go at the government, tell us to give us more because we want to give, we, we want to deliver the chip. We want to see good projects get funded. So yeah, we get most of our money through the government or lottery tickets. Really, lottery tickets is another big one. If you're picking up a number 42 at the

off license with that kind of beer of yours, that's all good because it could go back into, funding some sort of music activity as well.

Thank

ARTS COUNCIL: you.

I [00:04:00] think everyone's really humanized. Yeah. The other side of that computer, that awful application form, are real people. And all of the funders, do employ people to help develop and give feedback and support people making applications. And I think it's really important to note that the MMF now is a regularly funded organization by Arts Council England.

And they see real value in music managers. So the Accelerators are a big part of the work we do with our put our regular funding from Arts Council, but also our sort of regional growth work and our engagement with managers. It, these people are here on a Tuesday evening because they care about the work that you're doing.

So let's use this time. My. My big sort of bugbear when we do these things is getting too granny yeah, because there are so many different opportunities and so many ifs and buts and different timelines. But, I am going to ask each of you to give a [00:05:00] little sort of description about the relationship that you can, you build with people.

Like how, do you have deadlines? How do people find information? Do you do appointments? How can people get to build a relationship with you as funders? Let's extend on what you were chatting.

ARTS COUNCIL: Yeah. A lot of the time I'll try and do capacity, basically depends on capacity, but I try my best to do what we call either advice giving or development conversations.

Advice giving can work in so many different ways. It's this, it can be going to so like recently I went to black Business Residency. In Somerset House, there's loads of young, emerging black entrepreneurs. I go into the space, hold that space, and explain to them about our different funding pots or whatever, and speak to them in a way that resonates, that communicates, that is clear and easy to get, humanizes it a bit, and makes it feel accessible.

So that can be one way I give advice, by turning up into spaces, but that often follows up [00:06:00] with a let me get your email, let me, and then the inbox is

popping, it's going wild after that, and then we're trying to log in dates, and I will take that time to, set up a little Teams call, chat about your project.

So that would be advice giving. Further to that would be what we call a development conversation. That's more about, you've had an application, it's gone in, it didn't get funded. And you've had a bit of feedback. And sometimes people just pissed off, just want to, No, I need to shout at someone about this, man.

And I'm that guy on the front line holding that energy. But also, we turn that into something constructive and go let me have a look at this application. Let me see what you could have potentially done to make it more competitive. And that would be a development conversation. So it's either advice giving, like from the scratch, Let me hear your project, let me give you some advice.

But people don't

necessarily have to talk to you.

ARTS COUNCIL: No, they can just look, they can look at the guidance. They can watch a video that we're trying to make it more accessible. So you can go online and find guidance or see a video and get that basics. But [00:07:00] sometimes people want to talk about the nuances of their project.

And I find what's complex about this particular sector because Arts Council is a little bit different for you. A lot of it is we've got public money, so we always thinking about the public benefit. What did the public get out of it? And let's say in a real simple terms, your artists might come to us and be like, and I was explaining this before, give me 30 grand to make an album.

That's the difficulty with this sector in the music industry. It's I can probably help you a little bit to frame that in a way where you can talk more about the public benefit, because if you're taking money from the public. It's not, it's hard to give a rationale to say, yeah, give me 30k so I can build an album and then eventually make loads of money off of that.

That's a hard narrative to spin and to rationalise. But, there are a whole load of complex factors which actually There is public benefit. There are people within the music ecosystem that will get paid as a result. Sound engineers, studio facilities that might be struggling to generate [00:08:00] business, music venues where you're going to be holding live events.

that, have struggled post pandemic. And they will be able to support and platform emerging artists. You're providing a platform to, for an artist to sustain a career within the music industry, building a pathway to a great career. There are a number of factors where there's public benefits, and it's beneficial to arts and culture.

But for someone that's not used to the language, and the way that Arts Council, and the way that these funding applications work, it might just be like, Yo, give me 30 grand to build an album. And that's a hard sale. So advice can help you understand the way it works and the way to best articulate that to give yourself that competitive edge.

That's the realism of it,

cool. Wesley, talk us through how ERS Foundation works. Yeah

FAC: cool. I think you just touched on something really important there as well. When we talk about funding. We tend to just say funding, as if it's all the same. We're all very different [00:09:00] organizations doing different things for different reasons, and we get money for different reasons.

You shouldn't approach every funder in the same way. So really make sure you're reading the guidance of the fund that you're applying for when you come to us. And all of that information is obviously on the site. And we have webinars before things are open. We talk through the pro we go through the application form generally.

Tell you how you should be answering the questions when it comes to budgets. There's a video of how to do the budget as well and lots of things about when we plan all of our deadlines for the year on our website. So you can see the whole plan of every fund opening and closing decision dates for the rest of this year.

Yeah. And then similar, if you put in an application that's unsuccessful, we can give feedback over the phone, talk about how you were, where you what the assessors said, cause there's an independent assessment process. We are. A UK wide funder, so all four nations of the UK, our grants team is six people, so it's very difficult for us to speak to every single person we receive a huge amount of applications.

If you email very far ahead of, in advance of a deadline, we can often get back and speak to you, but if you're [00:10:00] asking questions a week before, very

unlikely we're going to be able to answer those questions in time. So yeah, if you want to get in touch with someone, the earlier the better but lots of information on how to apply is on our website.

And the form itself.

We we share the year deadlines in the newsletter quite regularly. And it will also go in our toolkit that refresh from after this workshop tonight. But I also think that one of the things that POS POSF does really well is actually getting out to conferences and being part of.

The sort of talent development network.

FAC: Yeah, it's a really important part of it And I was actually stuck in Scotland this weekend for that very reason so I went to a very good event up there called Celtic connections And so we're always getting around the country and doing these sorts of things as it is the best way to speak one on one with people About artworks and as you say make it more human get to know the people behind the screen and then when you do apply I'm gonna recognize that name as I support that person at that event and that you can't help build a relationship with people that way

And you work quite closely with you call them [00:11:00] talent development partners?

Yeah,

FAC: we have a, I think 73 now, group of organisations all around the UK. Part of our talent development network, and they're organisations that help to elevate artists within their area, whether that's a genre specialism or a particular part of the country. They do incredible work and a lot of the work they do is also for industry professionals too, not just artists.

So yeah, very important part of what we do. And they all share information and work together to make a better ecosystem for development in the UK. And

I always think it's a good idea for an artist or a manager to find out, Who the relatable talent development partner might be for their artist to, maybe get someone to look over the application or contribute something, be a partner in the project because they are genre and geographically really diverse.

FAC: Exactly. Yeah, they are. And also As I mentioned, us having a very small team, they are de facto experts in what we do, because they know the organisation so well. So it's another person to bounce ideas off as well. And they're always happy to help and speak to people. The list is on [00:12:00] our website again, the Talent Development Network, and it shows you all of those organisations.

It will grow again this year, so there'll be a few more in a few months. And hopefully it will continue to grow.

Great. And then Gary. Yes. Yeah. Do you want to talk a little bit about the

HELP MUSIC: Step Up Fund and how that's worked? We're quite different. So we're not a funding organisation. We're an organisation that has developed a funding route for artists.

And it was pulled together in partnership, so it's commercial money as well. Unlike, unlike some of the others. I can trump you on the team. We've got a team. Our team is three of the whole company. But yeah, so we work with partnership with Amazon Music UK. And they generally give us circa 80 to 100 grand a year to distribute to artists.

The application process for us is because we haven't got a big team, it's very straightforward. It's, dare I say, simple compared to some of the other forms. Not that we don't do a lot of due [00:13:00] diligence, of course we do. But the important questions are there. But we try to make it as easy and straightforward as possible so that it can be accessible to everyone at a certain stage.

And we also have a little, the criteria about when you can when you're best to apply for it. And we find that helps sift out people that maybe aren't ready or people that are too far ahead in their careers. We've got a very specific area of funding. And we're three years in now.

It's worked really well. We've got some great success stories and yeah, long that continue. We do support. So we, I do meet with artists, especially afterwards. We do a lot of feedback. I think we had about 20 inquiries after we did 20 meetings with artists afterwards. So just give them feedback and then build that relationship with them.

Some of the artists have gone on without the funding and have had a great year. So it's nice to keep that community together. But also we offer some sort of

support on the application process, but it is quite straightforward if you're an artist and you know what you want in your [00:14:00] career, you

know what

HELP MUSIC: you want to fund for, you know what the costs are, it's, it really is as straightforward as that.

Yeah, it's a nice, and I think what's interesting about what the FAC does, is that there are other pots of funding out there that are relatively small and organizations that will pop up through local authorities or other charities like I Love Life, there's the Small Grants Program there's quite a few of these sort of more sim, smaller commercial,

HELP MUSIC: Sites.

And now there's once a year as well, so it is only, it's a window, it's May, we launch normally at the Great Escape, it's a two week window, so you have to be ready, you have to be on the ball. Interestingly, and it makes sense with the industry is that I think we look back, we get timestamped applications and some like 80 percent of the applications in the last hour are the ones that win it, so there's, we understand this disorganization.

That's always, that's true. That's always, when I worked at Arts [00:15:00] Council and we didn't talk about deadlines, the Arts Council's funding programs are open all the time. And when I would meet people from the sort of commercial music sector. I'd do great meetings and then I'd never get the application because the deadline's not there, the release date.

And I think that in music we're so used to having ah the deadlines are the driving force, yeah, they're the driving force of everything that the applications would slip away. Yeah. I remember going round Femi NTS and literally knocking on his door and I was like, You've got to close your grant.

And he was like, what? I was like, you've got to close your grant because it's just going on a little bit longer. And I was like, because I want to give you another 120k mate, but I can't do it until you close your application. And he was like, oh,

I thought, yeah.

ARTS COUNCIL: Can I just say something that's come into mind?

Sorry to, just a quick point that's come to my mind is a lot of people might think as well Specifically with the Arts Council, because I think a lot of more of these grants are aimed more at the commercial sector, but might think it's not really for [00:16:00] me, or it's kind of opera, or I'm thinking that realm oh, that's the realm they operate, or I don't really have any engagement with that.

But I think Paul mentioned the point here. There are residual effects of our investment. So you're here at MMF. MMF we invest in for a three year period, every three months. We're putting money in for them to deliver certain activity, and there's a by product. Believe it or not, whether you know it or not, you're benefiting through Arts Council investment.

And if we take an example of someone succeeding in the commercial industry, like Ezra Collective, for example, right? Mercury Award winners have never really, as far as I'm aware, never directly came to us and gone, Can we have funding? Their first platform performance at Royal Albert Hall, this is early days before they were doing what they're doing now, was with Music for Youth, right?

Which, was Arts Council funded, yeah? Then you look at, they had a talent development [00:17:00] program, which they did through Tomorrow's Warriors, which was Arts Council funded. They worked with Kinetico Blocco as well, where they got access to loads of resources and stuff like that, which was Arts Council funded.

Yeah, and now they're Mercury Award winning, killing it, selling out Wembley Arena, right? I directly support Little Sims. You directly. Yeah. You direct, there you go. No, sometimes it's very directed and that's an example that we're proud of when you look at how impacting the commercial industry.

But there are examples where it's direct like funding, but you never really know quite exactly the pathway and how that funding is actually making an impact on the system and where you fit in line with that. But that's an example of someone with commercial success and maybe never directly stepped to our doors or filled in an application form, but have been part of many organizations that have been supported.

by the Arts Council and then that's the legacy and the benefit and we love those stories of seeing people succeed through the activity that's being funded.

So [00:18:00] yeah, over at Jay, yes the relationship and engagement with Help Musicians I know is quite broad, but just focusing on the sort of funds, how do people know more or build that?

relationship with Help Musicians.

Sarah Woods: Yeah, absolutely. I just want to say too that I signpost to all of you guys. Because we all do, like you said, different things. Help Musicians is actually a charity and we're independently funded by donations, solely by donations. No, the government isn't funding us.

And therefore, the people that are applying to us, even when it's through development, they have to be in charitable need. So we, our eligibility, it just might be worth saying that our eligibility is not strict but yeah, there's a line in the sand with how much, you can only have 10, 000 in savings.

And it's also aimed at, for all the music managers in the room, it's for the artists to apply, but on the forms there is actually a space for a co applicant, [00:19:00] so if you want to guide your artist through the application form and you can always ring us as well. I have lots of managers ring, ring up and ask about it.

So you can ring us, if you can ring us, you can email us. And there, there is guidance on our website. I would say in all honesty that our website is getting better. I think it's a little bit of a rabbit warren to be very honest. So if you need guidance, have a go at looking at the website because it does have all the dates.

We used to have rolling funds, we don't anymore, they're now deadline based. And we do watch that when the manager puts the thing on and sees, ch, everything coming out of draft, 150 applications. Thank you very much. Our applications have a profile section which takes 20 minutes so We, we changed this in the last year and that's been a little bit challenging for some musicians.

And so we're always happy to help anyone who's having problems with managing that. And the profile section is basically like making a [00:20:00] profile of them as a musician before they actually start the applications. We have two main funds. We have Next Level which is three grand and we have Fast Track which is five hundred pounds.

We fund most things, not laptops. Just saying. Can we

unpack a little? Because I didn't know much about fast track. It's 500 pounds, but the turnover time is how long?

Sarah Woods: Six weeks. So it's not fast as in next day delivery. But it's not 12 weeks, which is about normal. So fast track you can get things which we've never had before, like musical instruments, or part thereof.

And you can get Tech short courses yeah, so FastTrack is used for things like, obviously, we don't like being used as a top up fund though, so I think the cut off is 10%, so we can't be less than 10 percent of a project or whatever it is, that you're asking for, like a tour or something like that.

Yeah,

it's quite a specific [00:21:00] thing, and I thought that was a nice addition to the Ufology recently.

Sarah Woods: Yeah,

I need 500 quid.

Sarah Woods: Yeah. Yeah,

Yeah, it's not over on you Over on us as a project. It's that's right specific.

Sarah Woods: Yeah, that's right So you've got and this and we've tried to keep it simple So if you do fast right, you've got six months to finish a project if you're doing next level, etc We also do one to ones, so if you want to book a one to one, we'll go through that.

But if you ring up and you've got a couple of questions, we're always happy to talk to you and go through anything that that, that needs explaining or you'd like further clarity on it. And our development funds are, they're all about the artist and how, whatever they're applying for.

is going to move the needle in their career. Even if it's only just a little bit by people. Yeah.

In general, I think that's a common thing with all applications, is that they are [00:22:00] a project going from A to B. Yeah. They're not necessarily about your great big grand scheme ambition at the end of the day.

It's actually what the fund is looking for is a timeline. Yes. It's often not, meet people that will, everyone wants everything all at once, but actually in an

application device, I think it's worth highlighting is write out the bit of time that you, your time period.

Write out what you're going to be doing and write out how much you're going to need it. That's pretty much your application. Yeah, keeping it really simple. And then, if it's. You've all got budgets, and you've all got biogs, and you've all got those types of things. It's then applying those skills that you've already got into the language of the funder.

My advice, which is, was a bit controversial when I said it last time at one of these, I was like, don't read the guidance. Read the question. Go into the [00:23:00] application form and read the question. Because the guidances can either be very generic or very general, like the Arts Council, or very specific.

And actually, if you go into the application form, you can use the tools as a manager that you've already got. The biog, the marketing plan, you've got these types of things. And try and pull them into the question on the application form. Then once you've done it, Go and check through the guidance that you've covered everything in your application form.

Yeah, so reverse. And yeah, that's all been my sort of greatest tip to people is don't get bogged down in all of the information, but don't be fearful of the application form and the questions. Because they're all asking for things that you have generally got when you're building your projects for your artists.

You all put timelines, EP releases, tours, all of those skills are all applicable to making really strong applications. I think to add on that, what we're [00:24:00] after is what difference

HELP MUSIC: is this going to make on this project? So directly, how is this funding going to make a difference? From A to B, as you said, it's not A to Z.

I'm not expecting to go out and conquer the world with an 8, 000 pound grant. But for this project. What are you trying to do? How is the planning going to work for you? And what does the outcome look like?

That's got to be really clear. So we are moving to some other sort of top tips and tricks and advice that you give people without getting bogged down by all of the specifics of the opportunities out there.

What general advice do you see or encourage?

Sarah Woods: Yeah, I find that some people that I end up having a conversation with and they're struggling with applications. I get them to tell me. What they want to do, whatever it is, or what they need. And then they tell me all this stuff. And I'm looking at their application and half of it's missing.

And I said you've just told me everything that you need to put in the [00:25:00] application, except it's all in your head. Quite often I think musicians, because being very creative people when they are, got the pen and paper in front of them. It's very difficult for them to suddenly think about them.

So a tip that I say is, what you just said, get a timeline and write out notes in a timeline, especially if it's like a tour or something, which it normally is, something like that. Unless it's just, tech year and that's just, that's really easy. But yeah, write a timeline of what you want to do with all of the stuff.

Then go back and then put all the costs in. And then then look at the application because there's normally like a summary. What do you need? There's a budget. How much does everything cost? And then you can get, like you say, in the weeds. And then get a friend to read it. If you get your friend who's not a musician, who's not in the industry to read your application and they can understand what it is that you want to do, winner. [00:26:00]

My top ten. Yeah, get your mum to read it. See if your mum understands what you're trying to do, because they really don't understand if you're a music manager. But if they can read the application. Yeah, top tips. Good. Anyone else got top tips? Go

FAC: for it. For us, I think the most important thing is who, what, where, why, when.

The detail of what you're doing. We really want to see a plan, not an idea. Sometimes you get an application and We just don't know what, where's this money going, who's getting this money, what's actually happening with this project. That's all we want to know. So that's really the most important thing and often you don't really need to oversell the idea, write it in a way that you might write a press release, but it can be really concise, even bullet points of just what is actually happening on this project.

That's all that's really, that's the most important thing for us, I think. And the other thing is we also, You can apply via video for a lot of our applications. You don't have to do an application form, you can just do a video. But you do need

to answer the same questions. So [00:27:00] sometimes someone will submit a video and it's just not asking, answering the questions that we need to know.

So that's a really important thing to remember as well.

HELP MUSIC: Can I just add, one thing we've not really touched on and that you can't get away from. The application and the planning and what you're going to do and the strategy is really important. And it might sound decent to say, but. The quality of the work.

And the art, and the musician, and what comes across. Even if you've seen the application, and you're like, It's not amazing, but if the work's amazing, you can't help but get bought into it. And, I know you would expect that. But, we do get some occasions, and it's just not ready, or the time's not right, or it's a bit early.

And that kind of taints it. Make sure you're on your game, and your artist is on their game. And they're doing what they set out to do. Without the money so they can demonstrate that they've got the appetite and the need for it. But it's gotta be as best as it can be, obviously, but worth mentioning.[00:28:00]

ARTS COUNCIL: Yeah maybe some, maybe in a way Arts Council's a little bit different on that regard. Like sometimes we fund people that are very early in their journey in music and aren't quite as polished as some of the people that you would have funded. So we're not always so concerned about. What they're doing streaming numbers wise and what their previous history of success is and I think that sometimes can be quite good for people because it's like this idea that we have to be killing it, they ain't gonna fund us because they got someone else that's killing it out there.

No, not necessarily the case. Not in terms of Arts Council anyway. Looking for a slightly different answer. But a point you made actually really resonated with me about the language thing. From an assessor's point of view this isn't a press release or a marketing document. I don't want to hear about the soundscape of your music and I

want

ARTS COUNCIL: to hear about the euphorial soundscape journey that I get that when you're pushing that agenda and you're trying to get some coverage in certain like media [00:29:00] platforms that's great but when I've got to sit down and assess whether I'm funding something on I'm trying to carve through all of

that BS to get to the bit where I'm like oh it's a hip hop album oh it's a do you know what I'm saying not a euphoric journey through the orchestrated sounds of the Ah, I'm confused.

I'm now I don't even remember what this project is about. And it goes back to the point of if you can't, if you can't send it to your Bridget and go, have a look at that. What am I doing? If they're coming back to you and going, I don't know what you're doing, man. We got a problem. Like it should be clear.

And Arts Council again, where it slightly different is we work across a lot of disciplines. So unless you're asking for more than 30, 000, the chance, if you're under 30, 000, it could be, people have different specialisms in the Arts Council, from visual arts, dance I'm forgetting all of them now, music, because I'm on the spot, but it works across different specialisms.

So if you're going in [00:30:00] with music, and you're going to someone that doesn't, that, they're from the libraries team, yeah? Yeah, it could. It could land on someone from libraries. They ain't gonna quite get all of that. You have to be able to explain it in a way that my specialism isn't music and I still get what you're doing.

Don't assume anything. Don't assume. So many people put Oh, this is gonna be on GRM, for example. We're gonna get platformed on GRM. Yeah, that's cool if I get it. I get what that is. Oh, mixtape madness. Oh, I get it. Oh, brilliant.

Sarah Woods: Don't use acronyms.

ARTS COUNCIL: Yeah, exactly. But but but Jenny in libraries is like, oh, it's going to be on something called GRM.

Tell me then, tell me GRM, a platform on YouTube, which has 10 million subscribers and typically gets that break, make it easy. Don't assume they have the knowledge. Don't assume they come from that sector. A lot of the time that expertise is there and that's why we get people across a lot of specialisms, or will tune in.

I will find, I will go [00:31:00] to someone from theatre, say have a look at this theatre project, it looks good to me, and get a bit of intel, and they'll give me the background, but the easier you make it, the more you spell it out, the clearer the

language, the better. I always think it's not just about the acronyms and stuff, or if you're, numbers putting numerics against facts.

All of the things. But also, Using the budget like I would always look at the budget. First to try and work out. How are they spending money? Where's partnership money coming from? Is there demand for this project yet? So are they going to be having other income? Are they paying people appropriately?

Is it well project managed? It might have been that they're putting all the money into marketing, but nothing can't you know? Project management, or, what, where's the money going? I think a budget can tell so much, and I think that a lot of applicants don't go into the detail on the budget.

It's like hotels, 5, 000. I'm like, that's a nice hotel you're [00:32:00] staying in. But, 12 people, 5 nights, or whatever, that, feels more appropriate. Actually it doesn't, it's not travel lodges in the 90s anymore is it? But yeah, using the budget to tell the story I found really useful.

Sarah Woods: Most budgets that we get, I would have to say half of them are abysmal. I'm just being honest. Or they're just, they just don't understand how to So we help part of actually next level now comes with we did have business advice before, but we're making that part of our remit to help educate musicians who, if that's not their strong suit, as part of, if they have a successful application, we will help give them business advice, which I think, is A really good thing.

And what someone said before about press releases, we get quite a lot of bios. If you are a manager and if you are doing the application don't write it in third person and don't just throw in a press release because we'll [00:33:00] just go, huh, I think it's supposed to be written in the first person.

And we don't really want a press release. We want an actual biography of that person's

Because you'd like to directly fund the musician.

Sarah Woods: Yeah, we're, because we're interested in the musician. So we don't fund bands, but we'll fund someone. A musician from the band but yeah, obviously you still put the career stuff in the bio but, do you know what I mean?

But not a press release

as such. Okay. Yeah. Um, I think we need to open for questions. I have one more important point. Because it is about budgets and it's about the role of managers the majority of funds now consider managers being involved in them

and them being recompensed for their time in, in the project that is being funded they might take on different roles they might, be tool managing, advancing, Project managing all sorts [00:34:00] of different things, but I know that we've really advocated for that from a MMF point of view so that hopefully there is, it is worth you developing these skills that I know you've already got and getting getting results because it can be there to strengthen your business as well.

One of the things that I lead on is the MMF Accelerator. And we have a video, or we have an application process attached to it. I've tried to design Accelerator, so it's very different to the rest of funding applications. It's a video and we open for the seventh round of Accelerator on Friday.

Yeah. Woo! Hey. Can

FAC: I have a look at that?

Can you have a look at it?

FAC: My

process. Yeah, I yeah. I made this as well. Yeah. Apparently Paul did as well. I wrote the momentum application form years back. Yeah, that was before your time. Can I just, I think it's improved. If you showed me yours

HELP MUSIC: [00:35:00] last year all 10, the step up awardees applications were done by their managers.

. So that was the first time that had happened.

And

HELP MUSIC: maybe that's

why they got awarded. Interesting that. Thank you for sharing. Yeah, Accelerator opens on Friday. Yeah, we intend, that's the same criteria. There's not many changes, so please do check that out. I'm not going to be around for meetings immediately.

I know everyone wants to have a Please, just make your videos. You're all welcome to. I'm actually away for two weeks and it's open for about five. So I won't be able to talk to everyone before they put their video in. You don't need

to put a video in. And no, you do need to put a video in. You don't need to talk to me first.

That's my advice. On yeah, like Marta, I didn't know you, did I, before? You're a successful accelerator. Did I know you before? Yeah, there we go. Look, Vanessa, did I know you before? No. Brilliant. [00:36:00]

ARTS COUNCIL: What is the Accelerator?

The Accelerator? Okay. Yeah, great question. So the Accelerator is the MMF's support program that we have been running for now in our seventh year.

We run it with YouTube Music and it's a grant program but also a year long professional development scheme that we run. Yeah. So I work with about 20 managers each year that are in a cohort and we work together throughout that year on them independently developing their businesses.

But we try to find the shared objectives and do sessions around that. It's training, education workshops, peer support, really Yeah, it gets emotional at some points.

ARTS COUNCIL: Yeah. Can I just say as well, because I try and jump, I try and go along to a lot of the activity, it's actually beautiful the camaraderie that's been developed between that cohort as well, and the way they're working.

Like the weird benefits of it, so I went to their residential. A couple of days ago, and it turns out that one [00:37:00] manager, two of the managers linked up and they ended up collaborating on a song or something. That's just like a weird by product of how the networking was beneficial. And I heard that song and I was like, that's a banger.

So it's just great to see people working in different ways together as well.

Thank you, and we've taken a lot of the learning from the Accelerator into the work we do. So last week I just did the advanced manager retreat, so that was a beautiful experience. There was twelve managers and we went away and worked together.

There's, it's all about how you support each other. Yeah everyone can be accelerated. Gary has just pointed out a really important factor that I didn't ask anyone to let them know the sort of scale of funding that was available from them, which means that in the little mix that you can go after the people with

the most money, we can go through them, right? The thing is the funding ecology is the funders do work together quite collaboratively, I think, to make sure that there is a sort of access point. Every every sort of [00:38:00] step on the ladder. Unfortunately youth music weren't able to be here tonight.

But I'm a trustee of that as a charity. And that works for under 25 year olds. And they've got some great programs. So if you do work with any young people I will put that information in the info sheet that we'll update. And I might be able to ask some questions about youth music. But Yeah, the website might be easier.

So yeah, a little sort of closing words and maybe a little bit about the funds that you've got currently open or expect to have open soon. Just on what scale it is. And then we're going to maybe some questions, quick questions. Yeah.

Sarah Woods: Yeah, sure. At the moment, Fast Track just opened, which is the 500 pound fund, it'll be open for two weeks, and I think next Monday, next level, which is three grand, will be open for four weeks, approximately.

I'll get Sharon out in the newsletter. Yeah,

Sarah Woods: and like I said, all managers welcome to ask questions and [00:39:00] give them whatever, whatever help you need, like that's what we're there for, and we just want to. We're pro musicians.

HELP MUSIC: Okay, Step Up Fund follow the socials, MMF will announce it as well.

It opens in May, about the 14th. 10, up to 10 grants of up to 8, 000. 12 month program, Amazon Music sponsor it. They also support some activity during it as well. You'll get introduced to their team, music team, their programming team, etc. And they support the artists through the program, which is great.

There's a mentorship piece that goes along with that the 12 months as well for the artists And yeah, there's like a two day photo shoot and social media shoot that hamilton do as well and we do some stuff with roland and bits and pieces like those other commercial partners that Give prizes as well.

So 10 artists were awarded last year 12th year before nine the year before so it's between nine and 12 artists It will be open for about two weeks to end of may. It'll be 2020 It'll be [00:40:00] the end of May, but yeah, follow our socials or on your newsletter as well. It'll be in my info.

Pretend to be a member

HELP MUSIC: of Dark Hill.

No, don't be a member at all.

FAC: We have about 17 schemes at the moment, I think, some of which are open. I think PPL Momentum is open at the moment. The International Showcase Fund is a rolling deadline, so whenever you're invited you can apply. Our grant schemes kind of range between 5, 000 and 15, 000 for artists and up to 25, 000 for organisations.

One thing I didn't really talk much about, which might be quickly to touch on, is that we do have some specific grants for managers, not for your artists, but for your management career. So we have a program called KeyChange, it's a gender equity program which runs every year and that's open to artists and professionals.

So if you're a woman or gender diverse person who wants to apply for that, you can. We also have a program called PowerUp. which is an anti black racism masterclass as well, and that runs all year round. I think applications open next week, so if you are a manager you can apply for that too. Through all of our funds, as Paul mentioned, there is a small fee, like an admin fee, [00:41:00] that you can use for your time.

But we also have a scheme called PPO Momentum Accelerator, which is opening up around the country in areas where there is less infrastructure. So we've got one in Yorkshire, one in Wales, maybe opening up in Teesside. And that is also open to industry professionals, so you can apply for that as well, and I would hope that they would be rolling out across the country as we get more money.

ARTS COUNCIL: Yeah, so we have two pots that are probably most relevant here, because we have a number of funding pots. Develop your creative practice, so that's probably more aimed towards an artist that wants to make a step change. We're looking from 1, 000 to 12, 000. And the turnover, that's There's a window of that.

I think it's open three times a year. Once that window's open, I think it's around 12 weeks for a decision. Then you have the project grants. And I swear over this, because Paul's been so involved with Arts Council. He knows that he probably knows this more than me is that actually it's a 13 week turnover if you

include that yeah, so [00:42:00] And then we've got project grants, which is funded mainly through like National Lottery tickets Bit government etc.

That is Up to about a hundred thousand pounds So one to a hundred thousand pounds different Levels of scrutiny under 30, 000. You're looking at about an eight week turnover over 30, 000 You're looking at about a 12 week turnover time and so that is Yeah, that's always open. It's always open if you get Told no you can look at the feedback and go again because it's like an open access fund and then over 100, 000 so we have touring stuff, which I think is relevant for music managers and you're dealing with artists We have our touring grant Longer, longer process, like three months upwards.

And we're going to do an online session specifically about drawing. Yeah, specifically because it's got its own nuances and details, but that's, we're talking a hundred thousand plus. And one about studios.

[00:43:00] Yes, studios, yeah, exactly, yeah. We're going to do a little series of very specific Arts Council projects online very soon.

ARTS COUNCIL: Yeah. So there you go. So you've got a lot, but the most relevant pots, are one to 12, 000 for developing your creative practice and up to 100, 000 for National Lottery project grants. I would always advocate people if they haven't got a relationship with Arts Council straight away, people hearing 100 grand, they're like, boom, let's go in 99.

99K right now, please. I would say build that relationship, come in at under 30K. Deliver successful show a couple of times like that and it just gives you much more credibility when you go in at over 30k. It's oh yeah, them. Two successful VIP projects. They delivered that successfully. Look at that track record.

Boom, we go again. And be resilient because there's people I've literally dragged off the street who've never heard of Arts Council funding but were doing good projects. Dragged them off the street. Had them in the office. Spoke to them. They made an application. They failed the first time. [00:44:00] Yeah, they failed.

They resubmitted a couple of, and a month later they got it. So it can happen, so you have to build that resilience because it does feel like a bit of a stab in the chest when you're told no. But it's not the be all and end all, it's an opportunity to have some feedback.

And look, there's a music industry, if you haven't heard the words no yet, you've had

ARTS COUNCIL: an abnormal run in this game, because no is a frequent, you have to build resilience to be in this game.

Cool. A little bit of time for questions, but I would encourage you to think about your question before you ask it is it a question that's going to be helpful to everyone in the room?

Because I know what happens with this, is that sometimes we go into like My project didn't

ARTS COUNCIL: get funded this day!

It can go a little bit too granular, and then we're in a, we're in a hole. And that's going to be much better addressed through conversation afterwards. Hands up for general questions that are going to be really helpful.

PJ? So what's the most unorthodox thing you guys have funded in the last few years? That's a fun one. [00:45:00] That's a fun question. Or, I can make it a bit more In terms of how things, like things that people usually are funding for, like historically, radio plugging, PR, tours, equipment, how has that changed in the last few years?

Do you see trends in things that weren't being applied for now?

Sarah Woods: Living costs. In applications, I have to say since COVID, I've seen people trying to put living costs in there under trying to pay themselves for creative time, which we don't always do, but it's actually just a veiled thing of living costs.

Because people are really struggling and we can understand why, but yeah, that's an unusual trend or not unusual, but yeah.

ARTS COUNCIL: Yeah, I've got a response to that one, though, actually, because we used to run a fund called Elevate, which [00:46:00] was to help organizations build capacity who wanted to become part of our portfolio. MMF are part of our portfolio, and there's some people that run organizations that aren't quite ready to make that step up.

So they get funding to help build a board of trustees, to help get that member of staff that might, and build the capacity. That's going and it's frustrating for me. Especially diverse led organizations. You want to help them build themselves into a position where they can go on and be successful.

For example, so you run a label, right? You've got seven people, so that's like an organization. That could be an NPO, potentially, yeah? But there might be some capacity building, something like that. Now, What we've been looking at is with that going, we're now starting to say, we want to see more applicants apply.

Maybe the way we can counter that is more applications putting in organizational development within their funding application. Hopefully we see, we try and change that trend where people are putting in their funding application. Yeah, we're going to [00:47:00] recruit this member of staff as well to be part of the project.

We're going to. Building something that develops the organization within the application. That would be cool to see that trend emerging. In this landscape where organizations are really struggling because of the economic climate.

Yeah, and I think they're both on the resilient side, which is a really important thing that funders can support, but also the experimentation I think is a safer place in funding applications that, I think all of them expect an artist's voice in there.

And they're not just looking for a commercial output. And so you might be going to those secondary towns on a tour. You might be collaborating, and rehearsing as an artist in a different way. Yeah, I think that, there is flex rupees. They're not just going to ask for tour support or a marketing campaign.

Momentum is probably more that, but a lot of these funds [00:48:00] have got, a richer, artist led objective. Lachan? Is there a limit on how many times you can apply? Let's say if you're successful when you're applying, is that it, or is it, Can you do another project, say, the following year?

That all depends on every fund. So I think that's a detail that you, I suggest you look at the website on each fund. Okay. Because I know that varies so much. So yeah, I think that's a bit granular. Vanessa?

ARTS COUNCIL: Do you have to be a CIC to

get funding? A lot of people say they're opening up CIC just to get funding.

Can you be a limited company?

FAC: Not for the PRS Foundation, you don't have to be anything, be a collective, it doesn't matter for our organisation funding. And they fund

individuals? Yeah,

FAC: But for our organisation's funding you don't have to be any kind of particular set up, but yeah, mostly individuals.

You also don't have to be limited or a sole trader. You can be whatever it is that you are, it's fine. Yeah, same.

Yeah,

Sarah Woods: you have to be a person.

You have to be a person. Yeah. , [00:49:00]

Sarah Woods: you can't be a company

which, a robot, which, yeah. You can't beat AI

Sarah Woods: and

Don't use AI to write an application. Seriously. It's not possible.

You, we've demoed it. I've seen, I'm hearing it from all these people, all these funders nah. Yeah, I may, I, um, Charlie and then. I don't know your name, hello. But we'll go to you next. After Charlie. Thank you all for your time this evening, it's really valuable. Insightful. Question I have, which is presumably it's different for all of you, but, what you mentioned like a successful application, i.

e. it's got funded, and it's executed its proposed thing. What defines success?

ARTS COUNCIL: You do as the applicant. You tell us. One of our questions in our application is, How are you gonna, What looks good to [00:50:00] you? What is success to you? And then you articulate that to us. Some people put targets in. Some people just go, This is how I'm going to evaluate what success is.

But as long as we have a clear idea of your ambition. We don't want to see people asking for 30 grand. But it's not really ambitious. We want you to have aspirations to succeed things. And if you can articulate that. In the instance that you've got an emerging artist, it might be that, they're going to do a sellout show, they're going to get increased metrics on their social media, they're going to get increased monthly listeners and this much streaming and generate this much income through.

You tell us, we're not here to dictate that to you, but you should have a clear idea of what would represent success and be able to articulate that and be able to tell us how you are going to be able to evaluate that as well. Because what we want to know going forward, if you're taking a project forward that you're going to learn from this or you're going to push the needle forward, you're going to have a marker to say, yes, I used that [00:51:00] money and I achieved what I set out to do.

So going forward, like you say, moving that needle a little bit and going forward, next time we see an application, we'd want to see building upon that, or sustainability beyond the fact where you're like, don't need funding, mate.

Sarah Woods: But are you asking if you don't meet your own goals from the application? No.

That answered my question really beautifully, but if you've got, another answer to it. No,

Sarah Woods: I just wondered because sometimes people do applications and they've set their things as what they would like to achieve, which is obviously not obviously, but it is one of our questions as well, is like what would, as a result of doing this activity or what you've done, what do you envisage happening, as a result of this, as getting the funding?

And And I guess that, that question Yeah, it's the same. If you did the project and you met all your metrics and amazing and you going forward. But there is cases where you do a project and it didn't meet the expectation of what you were going to do. And I think that is a really [00:52:00] interesting question.

We get people to do like a report. Like afterwards and they worked with the development officers and so I think if that did happen, that would be something that they could talk over with our development officers as a, do you know what I mean, as a, like a review of, what went well and a bit of a debrief.

Yeah.

HELP MUSIC: I think it's different for every artist who comes in and also what defines that success is, we've had commercial success. So Jayden and Condor was on our program 18 months ago and he's now, on Graham Norton and Stephen Colbert and the States and is flying. But that wasn't ours, that was just his career trajectory and we played a very small part at that time.

That funding helped him stay on the road and keep his band on the road. That's a huge commercial success but actually the success was him was just seeing through those three months of the funding that kept him on the tour. We've had maybe five or six artists in the last 12 months that have been signed to major deals.

That wasn't their objective, [00:53:00] but as a process, as going through the process of using the funding, there's been a different outcome. But then loads of arts that haven't had that commercial success, but the projects were delivered and they've achieved everything they set out to do with that money, and we are happy with what that went through, what they went through, and the outcomes that they got.

So it, it's really a bit of an intangible, but obviously we'd like to see artists' careers just move forward and take that step, whatever that might be.

Each funder will have it's super arch, it's overarching objectives and that's really what it's about when I ask managers and they do their monitoring stuff for the, on the accelerator program.

It's not so much about their personal metrics. It's about how I collectively evidence the impact of the work of people. And like I was looking today actually, because I was reporting back to YouTube and just going through, and I think about 90 percent of participants on the accelerator are still in management, and I'm like, that's what we set out to do, was build sustainable companies and sustainable [00:54:00] managers, and yeah, some of them are working part time, some of them are possibly not making it.

A full salary out of it at the moment, but they are still managing, so I saw their artist or they posted it or, I'm like, and that's what we were wanting to do. So every funder will have its definition of success and its purpose and objectives. So yeah, familiarizing yourself. Any other general questions?

Very general. We've got one here and then one here and then that's it for questions because then we can all have refreshments. My name's Fran. I'm actually an artist, but I've been a self manager for a long time. And I'm a wonderful manager as well. I wonder if I could ask an Arts Council question, actually, in terms of developing creative practice.

I know that you were talking about, so many of the funds are obviously very metric driven, you want to see data outcomes and things, but with DYCP is it, is that still the case as well, or is it more I had some sort of coaching about applying and was told that it's more aspirational, like dream, how do you [00:55:00] apply for something that would otherwise be outside of your reach, even if you're not necessarily Increasing your you're not making money out of the project or something, is that the case, or?

Here's

ARTS COUNCIL: what I find with applications, just, like, when you talk about coaching around applications, I find, it's a pattern I've noticed, people that are coaching artists around applications, sometimes they're like, the project grants application, it's a long thing. TYCP is easier. Let me convince someone that it's about DYCP.

And so by the time they come to me, I'm thinking, this is a project grant application. This isn't DYCP. It's more of a project. I think some people try and circumnavigate the challenging application that is the project grants form. And I think that's One of Arts Council's pitfalls is our application isn't the most accessible.

It's quite challenging, especially with project grants, right? So people do what they can to avoid it and sometimes try and put a square peg into a round hole. [00:56:00] Having said that, DYCP, I would always say it's a step change. It's a step change for a creative practice. The most successful applications are going to demonstrate somehow a step change and the most Clear example I can give is, bringing it back to my own experience, maybe it's I'm a rapper and I'm making an album, but all my hooks are really rappy.

There's no melodicalness to my hooks. I want to learn how to sing so that my choruses are a little bit more melodical and separate themselves from the verse. I will need. X amount of singing lessons with this mentor. I will need this software, recording software, Autotune, I'm going to say, to use, to, to and, X amount of sessions learning Autotune, and this amount of creative time to [00:57:00] learn that.

And I'm, can you see now I'm talking about a step change, and on the completion of that, you can clearly see I've gone from a rapper that raps, to now a rapper that can also, incorporate that melodic singing into my chorus. Those, to me, that's not the be all and end all, one size fits all, DYCP success application, but those are the kind of ones where you can really see the step change and are more likely to push it over the edge and make it competitive.

That's what, to me, a good example of a develop your creative practice application looks like. Represents the step change in what you're doing. What are you doing now, that is not just

what you've already been doing. It's a nice development fund, so it doesn't have an output for an audience. There's no expectation that the end result engages an audience.

That's the pure difference, I think, [00:58:00] really, that you're saying, isn't it? Can we do the last

FAC: Sorry, just quickly, because you mentioned about metrics, and I feel like People might think we focus on that more than we actually do. It's not actually that important for PRS Foundation. It's important if it's important to you.

If you use it as the main way of reaching an audience, then it's important. But if you don't, it doesn't matter. And if you're coming in for an early career level grant, then obviously that's relative to where you are in your career. So I wouldn't worry too much about that sort of stuff when you're applying to us.

And same

HELP MUSIC: for all of us, I think. Yeah.

It's not about metrics and numbers. And then we had a question here, didn't we? Adam, I'm tired. It's been a long day. I'm going to be honest.

ARTS COUNCIL: Paul wants a snack. I want to go to

bed. No problem. For those that are managing producers how do you all feel about music producers?

And, okay. Great question. Because obviously we hear about artists all the time. But music producers are now becoming artist [00:59:00] producers, or they

have projects of their own. What's your thoughts on that, and for applications and stuff? I'm gonna pass to Wesley, because he's got one of these. My time to

FAC: shine.

Yeah, we have a fund called Hitmaker Fund, which is specifically for producers, and producers only. So you can apply to that. But also, you can also apply to our open fund, Women Make Music, Momentum not Momentum, that's Hitmaker. Okay, bye then. I do think those early career schemes, the Open Fund of Women Make Music, doesn't really look like it's for producers, which is a problem, which we're trying to fix, but it is, you can totally apply to those as well.

And how musicians, you would consider a producer a musician, probably?

Sarah Woods: Yeah, we we do. We do. There's a little bit of yeah, no, producers are musicians, so they can apply. And yeah for everything, actually. Sorry,

FAC: I forgot to say something as well. It is a long day, I'm tired too. For our international showcase fund, called Showcase Fund, we can actually support songwriting camps.

So if a producer is working on an [01:00:00] international songwriting camp, they can apply to that as well.

What's that called, sorry?

FAC: International Showcase Fund.

My last question, I'm sorry. How about those that may be signed with a major publishing company? Do you still support them?

Sarah Woods: I think we,

We're slightly we have need to go on the website and have a look.

But there are barriers around that. Depends how big. If you have significant, we call it, if you have significant funding. But I think that just goes back to, we're a charity. So it has to be charitable need and that's around our, that's our remit as a charity. Rather than as a, an org.

I think it's about if you've had a massive investment, and I know a lot of people work with the major system now and I think there is a lot of confusion at the moment oh, I go through the Orchard it's part of Sony, so I can't apply for that, and it's actually, are you getting significant investment?

And, a lot of people admin their publishing through the majors and things, so I think it's probably best to have a little conversation about [01:01:00] what, where the talent is out at that moment in time. Even way back with the music export growth scheme, acts that were signed to major labels were able to apply for tour support specifically.

Which was a sort of, and that was about six years ago I think we had that discussion. So I think it's always best to ask about that. And you're not excluded entirely, I would say.

Sarah Woods: Yeah don't ever be scared to put in an app or ask a question. We always, we don't flunk them. Even if we do, you can always ring us up and say, Where did you book my application?

We usually give revisions. So we'll, and we'll tell you, this is missing or you've got a laptop in your budget or something like that. So you're always welcome to give us a call.

Great. Great questions. Really good stuff. We do have to clear here by half past eight, I believe. Laura, Kieran, yeah, so please do respect the place it's given to us.

I can't see [01:02:00] Valentina so I do normally let her, or they normally, sure, will give us the great little story, hey, they normally give us the great story about this place and if you want to engage with them and all of that, but I haven't, not