What do you want to work on through the task force and what can we achieve together?

An Open Space Online event hosted by the Freelancers Task Force and facilitated by Improbable

Held online 15th July 2020

Collected Reports

Overview

The Freelance Task Force (FTF) is a group of over 150 individuals. These individuals came together without a structure, agenda or unified purpose beyond the terms of the Open Letter which led to the FTF's establishment:

> *'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.'*

> *An Open Letter to Theatre and Performance Makers, 21 May 2020*

It was anarchy in that word's truest sense – a group without any controlling systems. The group may remain in that state or it may seek a system of organisation. That choice underpins the discussions that are collected in this report.

There is a strong sense within the group (though not uniformly held because…anarchy!) that if a system is to be accommodated, it cannot replicate the systems of control, organisation and hierarchy that have seen freelancers excluded from their industry, their sector, their livelihoods, their art, and their society thus far.

> *'For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house. They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change.'*

> *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches, Audre Lorde, 1984.*

There is an equally pervasive view that the fierce urgency of now demands immediate action – even if that means replicating systems of hierarchy to achieve our ends. History may not wait for us. Freelancers within the performing arts are suffering now and we have been given an opportunity to help them now.

> *'We are now faced with the fact that tomorrow is today. We are confronted with the fierce urgency of now. In this unfolding conundrum of life and history, there "is" such a thing as being too late. This is no time for apathy or complacency. This is a time for vigorous and positive action.'*

> *March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, Martin Luther King Jr., 28 August 1963*

We have not yet resolved this apparent disagreement within ourselves. We have started to have this conversation, however, from a revolutionary and radical position. If nothing else is achieved (but already so much has been achieved), we have shown that there is another way to do things.

The key is discourse – and I hope we can all agree we've had a lot of that (35 discussions were held across this event alone). We've learned that society is not set up to allow truly free discourse – historical systems of privilege have excluded far too many for far too long. We've taken great steps to rectify that – and I believe we'll continue to do so. Discourse loses its value when only some are allowed to take part.

These perspectives are perhaps shared by many but as they exist here, in this foreword, they represent me and me alone. However, these perspectives have been reached through conversations with many other individuals who have educated me, challenged me and changed me. Discourse is all – I hope we'll keep on talking.

The agenda was set by the Freelance Task Force as a group of individuals at the start of the conversation. Five main themes emerged across the sessions called:

The future of the Freelance Task Force
- Can we (the FTF) operate with a central purpose? If yes - what is our central purpose? If no what is the purpose of the taskforce? If our sector doesn't survive as a whole how do we fix everything else?
- Task Force Buddy System
- How can we represent freelancers not on the taskforce?
- I want to ACT but I don't know what to do!
- Communication with the wider Freelance community
- Hosting an online festival/mass lobby for the wider industry on the last day of the task force
- Making a zine to publish + celebrate our thoughts/work
- What's next after Open Space? Should we meet next week on 23rd July? Does anyone want to volunteer to organise/facilitate that meeting?
- How can we work with Freelancers make theatre work and their public facing platform to make all freelancers voices heard?
- What are the aims and objectives of the National Task Force?

The arts belong to us and the arts belong to all – representation and access
- Arts Council England - Institutional Racism + Discrimination + Those Left Out (Opportunities and Funding)
- What are we going to do about representation?
- Spilling the beans - telling the truth about inequaliteies and discrimination in organisations/freelance relationships
- Supporting young people in the current climate, combatting disillusion with pursuing creative industries?
- Scrutinising the casting process in theatre, with a specific focus on D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent actors
- Defeating classism in the arts

Systemic change:
- A new funding stream - NPI/NPA - what can they look like as well as relationship of freelancers with NPOs
- Campaigning for UBI & The Arts
- Restructuring Boards - who gets to influence the decision makers and decisions?
- The New Normal
- Making visible the invisible resources, knowledge and experience a freelancer brings with them?
- Transparency: How we create it, how we encourage it?
- How are we utilising the relationship(s) with sponsoring orgs to enact the changes we want to see
- Multi-disciplinary practices - performances making crossing different arts sectors
- How do we change the image of theatre so that more people identify with us as a sector?

New terms and conditions
- Backstage workers & sustainable practice
- Creating a book of recommendations (best practice) for venues and organisations
- Working before stages reopen: creating a support guide
- Freelancers Pay Rates (in general) and the relevance of experience

Current precarity
- How do you manage Lockdown Lethargy & what is your routine?
- Making Money
- Forgotten Freelancers and SEISS - who should we be working with?
- With the government announcement of £1.57b fo the Arts, what's next for freelancers?
- Lobbying for financial support for freelancers until theatres can reopen in earnest
- What if I've had enough and want to leave the industry? What support is there available?

This document contains the reports from this event as they were presented at midnight of Friday 17 July 2020. Edits were made on 22 July 2020 to remove personal contact details, editable internal documents and passwords only.

Leo Wan
22 July 2020

Contents

Arts Council England - Institutional Racism + Discrimination + Those left out (Opportunities and Funding)

Session Convener: Joyce O, Ash Bowmott and Laura Sweeney
Participant names: Joyce O, Ash Bowmott, Laura Sweeney, Valerie Isaiah Sadoh, Shannon Aisha, Simi, Nessah Muthy, Miss Jacqui, Amantha, Freya, Divya Satwani, Nadia Emam, Jane Crawshaw,

Watched this video: https://www.instagram.com/tv/CChAdV8ASgn/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link

Using as a stimulus to start the conversation. Other statistics are available.

Intersectional issues

- How do people get on the ACE board and how can we get better representation?
- how do other projects that are mostly Black get their funding? Case study sharing. And how is this reflected for other marginalised groups too.

What do they want to read?

Is there only a certain narrative they are willing to push forward? Trauma.

Box ticker - can something think that opportunities are being taken and not deserved - this has to change by giving proper space for this support.

Seem to have a better chance of getting funding when it's co-signed by another organisation or producers.

Needing to work in decolonised spaces
Language is inaccessible for most

Diversity Board like Equity - is this a good model for ACE?

I May Destroy You - turning down a Netflix deal - this happens at all level of experience/exposure
Would it be easier to be fair if we weren't open and transparent about who we were at application stage? Currently have to talk loudly about representation
>> access requirements need ot be included so it's hard to not say that. Can ACE just include access for everything?

Application support - who are the organisations offering support for those

Needing a 'white translator' for ACE. - What language is being used to get a sucessful application - Can this be universal information? A space for transparancy.

Barriers to entry - More dicussion needed around this. Why are people not applying in the first place.

Campaing - Those sucessful with funding can help others?

Wage transparency and experience - why do you think you were successful and what did you not say?

DIY fund - can the 14% go nto a self-managed fund in the meantime?

A group of people who keep insitutions accountable? Revisit thier statments and "hopes" to employ - Unionising?

Lets create a space for that transparency

Sense of competition stops people from sharing and supporting?

Live Arts Ally - privileged voices can lobby for change to help the marginalised

Ask organisation to back applications - don't just offer free space.
Hold organisations accountable.

Emerging talent? - How will they gain funding it will be a matter of 'those who are more likley to succeed based of thier track record of work' who get funding? Emerging talent will be left behind what can be done to prevent this?

Sign up to What Next meetings - DCMS and #CultureNeedsDiversity campaign.
Workforce and work you are outputting, make sure there is at least 15% representation or no funding.
>> 15% doesn't sound like enough - it should be at least 25%

"Give them an inch and they take a mile" - people in marginalised groups take this space, the response is give a little bit and now that's enough.

It's fine to employ Black and POC but if there is not space to allow them to thrive then you are failing them.

There should be a pledge to grow within 3-5 years. Start with 15-20% and then grow to 25-35% and then don't have those people on 0 hours or non permanent contracts
>> but stats can skew the information and might be people in non-creative or decision-making roles

Tech jobs - there is a lack of understanding from POC that these jobs exist, catch young people earlier so they know more about these roles. Take them backstage and into workshops - led by POC, this is the job, 3-5 year plan has more of an effect.
>> Assistant roles, training

"you can't be what you can't see" is the moto we are using at the migrants theatre makers movement to highlight this point
>> not learning about other techniques and practitioners who look like us

Emails & Socials media Handles of those present :
  - ███████████████   - @iAmMissJacqui (Instagram/twitter)
  - █████████████████   - @Lunarents + @joyce_omotola
  - ███████████████   - @divyadancer (instagram) @divyadancer_ (twitter)
  - ███████████████████ // @laurajsweeney

- ████████████████ @_theuncultured_
- ████████████████ - my producing company +: Twitter - @shesdiverse
- @ashbowmott (twitter)
- @lorakrasteva and @globalvoicesth
- ████████████████
- Amantha Edmead Kuumba Nia Arts ████████████████ or
████████████████
- @janecrawshaw - twitter, ████████████████
-: ████████████████ + @nadiapyramid

Can we (the FTF) operate with a central purpose? If yes - what is our central purpose? If no what is the purpose of the taskforce? If our sector doesn't survive as a whole how do we fix everything else?

Session Convener: Louie
Participant names: Leigh, Susie, Leo, Aaron, Ellie, bminto, June, ellie, Ailsa, Grania, Steve, Aaran, Sasha, Emma, Marius, Ibrahim, Sonny. citzdan, Bradley Travis, Matilda, Deeps, Xana

Why Are we Here? What is our purpose? How do we do this?

Feel responsible to the freelancers we communicate with. Want to use our

Leo - read the Open Letter - purpose of taskforce.

Susie - feels like time is running out. Do we have a final outcome - reccomendations? Freelancers Make Theatre Work - extremely successful as a smaller group prehaps with aims etc. How do we work with them?

Are we a think tank?

News letters - from SW Task Force and asking for information back via surveys

Positives and negatives to being such a big group.

South West Group have a claer connection with freelancers AND organisations. Surevying both freelancers and organsiations and how we can move forward.

How can Freelancers inform organisations moving forward.

Idea: Organisations - pay to keep freelancers in these positions in their organisations year round.
On rotaion, keeping positions open and active? Freelancers in these positions connected and working together through the sector representing the wider freelance community?
This is something we loosely touched on in the "communication with the wider freelance community" session, the question of FTF legagcy and whether it can be a passing over to other freelancers after the initial 13 weeks-Annie-Lunnette

Idea: How do we find funding for those that want to continuie forward.

Leo mentioned the RSC moving forward in engaging freelancers to advise and looking further forward to getting freelancers onto boards.

What are our key issues?: Representation of boards - seats at the table; representation and diversity; the precarious position of freelancers.

Visuals - currently it feels like we are treated as the flies around the cake rather than the filling and flavour which is what we really are. Freelance flys buzzing around the big cake never landing, whereas frelancers are in fact the, ingredients, core, juicy bits, decoration and adornment
"Let them eat cake!"

An option for those who would like a centralized process to try and move forward as a whole BUT members of the group have the option of opt out if they do not want to stand behind the FTF as an organisation / name.

Money most likely needs to have aims attached for people to fund us if we are to look for funding going forward.

How can we talk to other organisations with clear aims. It will be harder to be successful without clarity of our requests.

Offer of an army analogy rather than cake. We are the foot soldiers. Are we at war?

If we don't have clear objectives it is pointless.

So much is happening and yet nothing is happening - we need to prove we are effective

Mini think tanks that all feedback - How do we feedback. Slack does not help everyone.

Can those of us who want some coordination, start the work on that, and those that want to opt into that do so? But we don't impose that "structure" on anyone

Dropping in from the Best Practice session to say that we're creating a book of recommendations for venues for working with Freelancers, and that we will arrange a time to invite sponsor orgs/venues to read that with us in a drop-in zoom at the end of the TF. Might link in to what you've been discussing here? (Bethany)

Dropping in here from a session on "Communication with the wider freelance community!" to say that Xana has created a multi-author blog to allow us to publish & share actions and provocations that come out of the Task Force. Annie-Lunnette and I also created a Twitter account @FreelanceTaskForce today, which can help to spread information. Info on how to get involved with the website or Twitter account is in the session report. Thanks! - Amy Clare Tasker
Website name: www.freelancetaskforce.co.uk

███
███████████ this is where you can add in stuff for the site and also request a profile to post your content

As a group we have a lot in common. We could have a big voice looking at a handful (5/6) key things collectively as well as being able to continue work alongside these issues as individuals and smaller groups.

1. Working Fair Trade (Active?) Agreement - good working practice between freelancers and organisations and buildings - set of protocols or notes - what did work before? what didn't? then clearly and concisely present to organisations/buildings - including how we navigate COVID-19 as freelancers

2. Citizens Advice Bureau model for freelancers who have issues that need to be addressed, such as being bullied, fair pay, etc. - not Union based - Athena to lead

3. Equality and Inclusion - FTF taking up the matter as a whole - more focused on marginalised groups - representation matters - starting at the top. An active agreement between freelancers and organisations that feels legal/obligatory - anti racist and access practices - that organisations sign up to - this can be embedded even within our contracts - Would like everyone to input, I will start of the dialogue with inc arts/pullup (Xana)

4. Freelancers should always be included in industry meetings/representation on Boards

5. Pay Structures - Basic Income for Artists, sick pay, parents working conditions, self-employed status For time to write/make applications, meetings, transport, access. Retierment? Holiday pay?

6. National Portfolio Initiatives/Artists

7. FTF Creates a network of information that remains up and stays live providing a long lasting safe space for shared communictaion.

Thank you - I also joined a little late as I got into the backstage group - but im really really keen for us to actually do something and move forward - having some thing to show for the 13 weeks - great listening to June and Susie and Nathsha _ YES YES YES to all of it - happy to help if needed Katie Bosomworth

Hi all, Amy Clare Tasker chiming in after the fact, to say I'm up for being on a team of people who are "joining the dots" between what is happening in various working groups, and facilitating communications within and beyond the Task Force. I'm wary of setting these 7 "main" points in stone, as I am aware of some initiatives in the Task Force which don't seem to be represented here. Or perhaps they do fit under these headings, and just need to be explicitly included? It's possible that some members will feel that the work they've been doing is peripheral, or non-essential, if we frame the above as the "main" purpose of the Task Force. I'd like my work in "joining the dots" to be descriptive, rather than prescriptive - and I believe this was the intention of this session, too.

Dais Hale shared some models from their Clore leadership course, which could help us to think about how we identify and achieve objectives, and a model for team formation which seems to accurately describe what we've been going through as a Task Force. GROW model: https://medium.com/@yaztokdemir/using-grow-model-to-ask-productive-questions-1eed7e6d7a13

Team model: https://toggl.com/stages-of-team-development/

I've had a quick look at collaborative mind-map software, thinking about representing the Task Force's aims and activities in a more lateral way (vs a list). I've entered the points above, and we can add more points and more detail as we go. Anyone can add to this mind map: https://mm.tt/1565955192?t=YXGGCgDHVo

A new funding stream - NPI/NPA - what can they look like as well as relationship of freeancers with NPOs?

Session Convener: Assis Carreiro and Parbati Chaudhury
Participant names:

This topic has come up in other open spaces - How the funding bodies can administer funds to individuals. Question of the burden of tickboxing, applicaitons, filling in grants. The French system was mentioned. Parallels with universal income but for artists/producers/freelancers
The Belgium system was mentioned as well as challenges re: taxes

ACE Grants are Taxable income

where do we have a better chance to make an impact? ACE or Goverenement ?

NPA/NPI both as part of NPO and individually, directly sponsored from ACE /ACW

Backstage workers & sustainable practice

Session Convener: Sadeysa Bailey
Participant names: Naomi

Naomi here just adding some notes from memory!

What do we want to change?

Can we put together a better guide on rates of pay than those which are already out there (eg ITC) - clearer, not based on minimums, reflective of rates people actually charge. Should this include guidance on paying people with different levels of experience?

Putting together clear definitions of jobs in general, pushing back against job creep.

If we speak up against the expectation of excessively long working days or other poor conditions there's a risk we won't be asked back.

Whistleblowing generally - finding a way for people to report problems with working conditions or issues with buildings/organisations without putting their jobs at risk or losing clients. Should this be something outside of unions, eg a helpline?

Making sure that the responsibility for cleaning, disinfecting and making spaces safe as we go back to work doesn't end up falling on stage managers, needs to be done by professional cleaners.

Backstage jobs in general lack redundancy and people work when they're sick because there's nobody to take their place - this will have to change now. Possible options for this - 'understudies', job shares, swing technical workers.

Work will have to happen at a slower pace, and backstage workers should be included from the start of the process.

Providing proper workspace for backstage workers - not being shoved into corners, somewhere it's possible to take a real break without being asked questions.

Something I didn't think of in the meeting - the way that backstage jobs are given out (my knowledge is particularly of puppetry) can be exclusionary, mostly based on personal connections and recommendations, not publicly advertised or given a full recruitment process. Are there better models for how this could work which would make it easier to get into the sector?
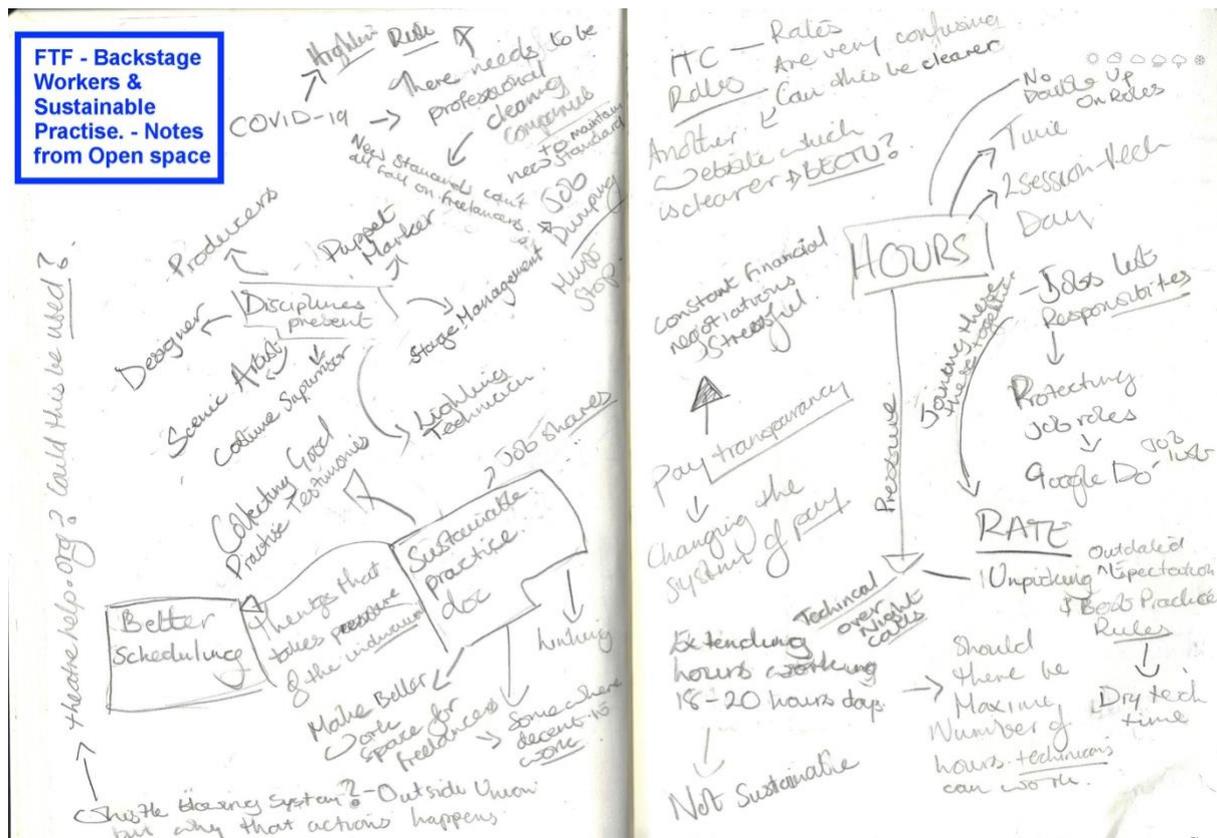
Campaigning for UBI & The Arts

Session Convener: Simeon Miller
Participant names:

Milton Notes - Please amend if necessary

UBI:
- o It might work - things might need to be dark before it gains support, politicians do what people want to do. so the government might support this. it is an idea that both right and left wing parties support.
- o Leeza ask if artist would be dependent of the state
- o Gillie said that all the arts are funded by the government and it would be great that people could access the arts.
- o Simeon says it is a good solution that can catch a lot of people that might fall in the gaps like zero hours contract. Could be the arts and more people.
- o Steve North - there were a much better system in the 80s that would give you £100 per week. That would give the money to create work. UBI will come. The city is discussing that for 3 years now. because machines will take over. there will not enough work for people. Actually it is a good opportunity for artists. It will challenge the perception of what work is.
- o Gille- What we can do?
- o Economic case - the government doesn't give a shit
- o Social Case - the government doesn't care.
- o The arts what can do - talking about the value of Arts. To shape the conversation.
- o Simeon - arguments against - the idea money for nothing is unfair.
- o UBI - good for people who labour but are not paid - has value but not get paid, i.e Childcare, domestic labour
- o Steve North - Marx says that society will be open automative. His drive was because he could see a society where work doesn't make people.
- o Gille- either i go into the career model into a capitalistic way, or we can completely liberated and do things because just I want to do them.
- o Simeon - I'd love to use the talent we have if we could do it (UBI) for all, not only for theatre. Support other people as well. Joining the national UBI Campaign
- o Steven - As artists we create work. its hard to create work if you are anxious. There is something about freeing your mind.
- o Gillie- There is a campaign is Sheffield in where they are trying to UBI in small part of Sheffield. If We organised a group - UBI Arts - we are adding in
- o Simeon would like to be more connected to other people from different regions as well.
- o Gillie will ask Toby ho to "create" a UBI artist "cell"
- o Sarah Argent - Zosia Jo
- o

Gillies BOOKs:

From Gillie (she/her) to Everyone: (11:32 am)
[P SEP] https://www.gilliekleiman.com/project/phd/ [P SEP]
From Gillie (she/her) to Everyone: (11:42 am)

⬚Tonight: https://actionnetwork.org/forms/basic-income-the-future-of-work-wed-15th-july⬚

From Gillie (she/her) to Everyone: (11:56 am)

⬚Srnicek, N. & Williams, A. (2015). 'Inventing the Future: Postcapitalism and a World Without Work'. London: Verso.⬚

Weeks, K. (2011). 'The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics, and Postwork Imaginaries'. Duke University Press.⬚

What are we going to do about representation?

Session Convener: Paula Varjack & Victor Esses
Participant names: Pauline Mayers, Lou Brodie, Hannah Quigley Jamie Fletcher, Emma Dawler, Lily Einhorn, Daisy Hale, Heather J, Paul Christian, Lora Kerasteva, Beccy D'Souza, Annie-Lunnette, Rinkoo Barpaga

Chatting about representation as a whole - an intersectional and broad understanding. How can we use our time in the task force to make a difference - how can we most pro-actively work together? How can we make work that other organisations / groups are not doing?

Why is this question alive for you?
- it's difficult to have fair representation in theatre. What does representation mean? Be careful about how we represent other groups. Make sure we do the right thing. Pressure of "Who am I representing?" and aware of constraints of that, what I'm trying to say and how I behave.
- For me I feel there is an importance to do a lot more focus on Black representation, though with an awareness of the 'open-ness' of the word representation. Being in zoom spaces etc, although it comes up as a thing to work on doesn't feel as though it is getting the attention and focus and drilling down it needs. Seeing the challenges and talking about them in the FTF and wider industry and in addition to that as FTF member looking at it through lens of Black people and d/Deaf and disabled people, to link up conversation and further the work the industry needs to do around that.
- Adding the same thing, a lot of us here are sick of seeing straight white men populate the industry and stories being told, issues with casting. I don't know what we can do in order to improve that diversity of people and how do we get that power to be making those decisions to be influencing those things on a bigger level?
- Representation is an intersectional issue - need to show up for other people's 'battles' - as white presenting working class mixed race woman need to be here for conversations about Black / disabled / D/deaf / LGBTQ+ as we are stronger looking at it universally? No answers. Just very frustrated.
- Talk about tokenism - prevent that
- What has come out of previous things - how do we hold bigger institutions accountable to make it more than a statement or token thing, an intention without results. How do we bring that information together and that learning that is being done etc.

- Question connected to that. What do we think venues could be doing to be better? It is not on us to come up with that because recognition that it is additional labour. But come

up with examples. Not enough to be better representation in marketing / audience facing etc. But also in leadership, producing, boards etc. What change do others want to see? This is so true, its not only repsentation on stage/creatives/backstage teams its also about audience and community impact for me. Its all good putting on a production that have a better representation in its creation and diversity, but if the ticket prices & the SPACE isn't accessible or inviting, it just wont sell and then wont be viable. I think its about "people" feeling like spaces and venues and the work that is being put on there is for them as well as with them somehow -Annie-Lunnette

-In relation to theatre - always thought theatre was for white people, not for me. Someone tried to persuade me to get involved. I found it really difficult to see myself within theatre, because of lack of representation. Even having the ability / skillset to do that. Denzel, who is black took me round and showed me the possibilities. It is really important that we have a diversity of people in theatre so that people can see themselves and think that they can be involved. Otherwise people really unsure about how they can work in that world. Next gen. being able to get involved. Comes down to self belief due to representation.

-Agreed. Change has to come from above Artistic Directors, Producers etc. Understanding of 'us' in the UK - we need to explain to venues who we are as a population. 40% none-white, London. Small majority straight, white etc. Narrative - how do you tell the different stories.

- We are a group of people that care so much about representation that we chose to have these conversations. So we have a responsibility to tell people we are here. Provocation - to share this. -Agreed, we have a chance to have an open dialogue with these people

- What orgs. do we come from - we've got Nottingham Playhouse, Leeds Playhouse, Improbable, Bham Rep, artadepot, and others - some of these orgs mentioned are Ramps on the Moon venues, regional, in relation to how we help make change specifically and have conversations with organisations - another meeting with us to move it forward? We will continue!

- This session is to start - it's an invitation to all, will create a group on slack, doing research on the subject, will be ongoing.

- Have wanted to remain quiet but have been in business for 35 years. Many different programs that Arts Council has put in place to increase representation. Arts Council held a session last year at Nottingham Playhouse and announced every programme they have done over last 35 years has failed. Problem isn't getting representation, but the environment that those people then need to endure. Bias and prejudice that people have to endure. Replicated on FTF - time has been disrespected. Ways freelancers set things up is replicating the same structures that marginalise voices. Not interested in FTF setting up as organisation. Immediately - inner audit needs to happen. How am I contributing to the ways in which voices are marginalised. We are brought up in a capitalist, patriarchal system, so none of us are immune. Coming from a time when slur words for black people on tv, mysoginistic views and disabled people butt of jokes. As individuals not advisable to present these problems as will be dismissed. So collectively - a statement of needs? How do we get to make NPOs orgs responsible? We can't. Not as we are right now. We've got a number of days, all we can do is scratch the surface. We can't make such a massive impact when it is 35 years of stuff. Not

possible. But we can come up with a list or manifesto, so when working with freelancers, they are working on this manifesto that they have signed up to, to try to make them responsible. Can't think of another way of doing it.

- Each of us are associated to a certain organisation, so we each have one venue's ear - not necessarily influence though. But could be something we can take to them.

- I understand where you're coming from, appreciate that experience you've had, important to open a dialogue with people that have similar experiences in other industries. Talk about language we use - people frightened to have these conversations. Key to get it out there. Started to have conversation about D/deaf people, door closed to having those conversations. Eventually made a video and put in online. Became viral within community and all of a sudden people were interested in having the conversations. People were embarrassed because they'd ignored me for 17 years, I'd been banging the same drum. At end of the day if you keep banging the drum, people will have to take notice. It took that long. In terms of social media can be a really powerful tool, because only through that that the door opened. About strategies.

- Social media and internet are two biggest shifts which means as individuals we can and do have ability to speak to many people on same subject. Often-time this happens virally, but we are dealing with people who are in institutions and venues who aren't looking like that. One of biggest reasons white supremacy in the arts is being looked at is because of Black Lives Matter. We are one of the last sectors to properly have this conversation. Things are bad in the arts, 5x worse in broadcasting and film. People are visibly hurt and upset because of ways they have been sidelined and silenced. We are not even talking about other characteristics, just ethnicity. It is important to keep going but don't want to spend a lifetime doing it. System needs to break down. Some freelance workers are well off.

Nice to meet you all. Feel free to contact me ███████████████ - Rinkoo

- General frustration with message of work hard, play along, change from the inside which it turns out is nonsense - great moment where we are connected to each other to share these stories and frustrations and awaken to each others' positions and battles. idea of manifesto of representation, lobby ACE etc to SANCTION those venues who do not meet the requirements.

Task Force Buddy System

Session Convener: Kate O'Connor
Participant names:

An email was sent out yesterday to the whole Task Force with a suggestion for a Buddy System within the group. People are paired up to offer a space to share and reflect on how they're feeling. Anyone can opt out of being buddied up.
This session was called for anyone to join to ask questions, raise concerns or chat more generally about emotional wellbeing for the group at the moment.

How do we change the image of theatre so that more people identify with us as a sector (Liv)

Session Convener: Liv
Participant names: Liv Hunt, Sam Dunston, Lily Einhorn, Jessica

Session notes written up by Liv Hunt - please add more if i have missed off!

Why does particpation and community engagement happen behind closed doors?

If more people knew how theatre enages with communities would they view it differently?

Who is responsible for changing the image of theatre? Is it on us? How do we do that?

Theatre snobbery - choosing what is 'real' theatre and what isn't, what is important theatre and what isn't/
Why is TIE and panto regarded as a lesser art form when they enage with more people
How proactive are we in including non-mainstream philosophies of life? E.g. other religions, non-western philosophies
are we ourselves part of the mainstream and not aware of it?
Changing peoples assosication with theatre - it's not all west end

Hearing people time and time again say 'Theatre isn't for me' whilst engaging with arts and theatre. Somehow there is a disconnect with the arts that they are engaging in and the arts sector

Can we run a campaign that shows how far theatre spreads?

Why don't the mainstream media pick up on the different strands of the arts?

Would it make a difference if news platforms had a community arts segment

THERE IS NO POINT MAKING THEATRE FOR A COMMUNITY IF YOU OUTPRICE THEM WITH TICKETS!!

Theatre NEEDS to be affordable - how can we do this?

Can we subsidise tickets through lowering the production costs?

How can we represent freelancers not on the taskforce?

Session Convener: Joana Nastari
Participant names: Sarah Argent, Emily Alden, Joana Nastari

Creating a space to collate all the amazing stories that have been collected by the FTF in thier local networks. How can we learn about what is happening outside of our networks?

When all this collected where does this go? how does this get fed back to a useful place?

Creating a digital 'mapping' of conversations and experiences from freelancers outside of the Taskforce. With 'tags' to search for groups eg. 'Regional' 'Universal' 'Persoanl' 'Rural' 'Inner City' 'Wales' 'Emerging' 'Dance' thatre' - these would be collected from out local and hyperlocal areas we as individual taskforce memebres belong to and engage with regularly. A place to make visible the work we are doing.

Create a collective 'Good Practice' collection of experiences between freelancers and orgs - staying positive and learning form good practice that already exists.

Sarah talked about the Venn diagramme of involvement in geographical and sector networks. Being based in Cardiff she's involved in the Wales Taskforce subgroup and a Theatre for Young Audiences subgroup. Wales is organising a series of Green Rooms - opportunities for freelancers to meet and share experiences, concerns, needs. This week these focus on Dance and Welsh-Language Performance. Future Green Rooms will focus on Theatre for Young Audiences. There is also a UK-wide discussion as part of the PYA England (Performance for Young Audiences) regular Zoom cafes on Tues 21st (10.30-12.00) - an opportunity for freelancers' voices to be heard by one another and by companies and venues ... hopefully as the start of a larger conversation ... a larger Zoom? Sarah's email is ███████████████.

Taskforce Guilt - are we achieving enough? am I achieving enough? - seems to be a common experience.

How can we share what we're gathering? Should we focus on telling more people's stories ... in addition to more traditional "data"? Films, accounts of how being a freelancer is affecting them at this time?

Outscouricing the goverment schemes to the arts sector!

- Grace talked about asking the goverement to employ artists to deliver projects which are happening anyway e.g. "dance for parkinsons" to the arts sector, so that freelancers can have more employment during this time and beyond and create less competition for the theatre jobs when they reopen.

- How can we help to advocate for this?

- How can we stay in touch about this?

- how can we ALL lobby our local council about this?

Outsourcing freelancers to the wider council sector, transition projects for schools using artists to create more people centred ad wellbeing approaches to governmental schemes. the responsibility to our freelance community who are expecting change and help and support

connecting as opposed to being in competition with other freelancers and trying to create platforms and projects and conversations to unite our specialisms as opposed to fighting for the work which will go to a sleect few once theatres reopen

trying to find a more centralised way to connect the areas of the TF and creating cross over conversations ███████████████████████

███████████████████

Transparency around how the governtment money is being divided up!

I want to ACT but I don't know what to do!

Session Convener: Jackie Clune
Participant names:

ACTION instead of Meetings

2/3 ideas for action Jackie - How much money you have lostn campaign?

Do we do that socially distant wearing masks and signs saying how much we have lost

Or online?

Nationally

Is there a website?

Social media presence? - Apparenlty there is twitter - Pasting in the info: Twitter account @FreelanceTForce ▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓▓ if you wish to say anything from the FTF point of view but just post your initials/twitter handle in also- which can help to spread information. Info on how to get involved with the website or Twitter account is in the session report. Thanks! - Amy Clare Tasker & Annie-Lunnette
There is also a shared blog set up too!

Is anyone looking into this?

ACTION POINTS:
   - email freelancers associated with you. What is specific to who I am representing? Start little & local.
   - Improve social media presence
   - Eye-catching action: 'poverty flashmob': How much are you living on? Hold up placards? On social media or a physical real-life (socially distanced event)?

Communication with the wider Freelance Community

Session Convener: Annie-Lunnette Deakin-Foster
Participant names: joined by Amy Clare Tasker

Wanted to discuss: FTFs
-Social Media prescence
-Fuel website - not just names but regions/venues/organsition
-What are the venues/organisations doing to champion the FTF?
-Engaging with local communities/artists or public
-Website/blog

The big question: HOW DO WE COMMUNICATE?
- - internally with task force members (central email to everyone, Slack, and peer-peer)
- - with freelancers who are not on the task force
- - with the wider public
- - with the organisations who are sponsoring us

It's all well and good us 150 people having new knowledge & connections, but how do we share it with fellow freelancers?

Xana has created a multi-blog website. What do we need to do to make this public and invite members of the Task Force to publish information? Articles can be written by individuals or small groups, and signed by those people.

Should we publish a list of sub-groups on the website? Who are the regional groups, groups by discipline?
Is a mind-map a good way to represent this? (Dais Hale made a mind map - not sure if it was about this - maybe they can recommend a programme)

Should we have a social media presence? Tweets signed with initials to make clear that we don't speak with a united voice.

Should we publish the reports from this Open Space?

Fuel is publishing a list of Task Force members. - will they publish contact details - maybe not emails but Twitter handles?

Is there a legacy of the Task Force? Can it continue after our 13 weeks? Can it be a rolling membership? Can we pass the baton/hand over, so that future members don't have to reinvent the wheel with admin, access support, culture of meetings, etc? Great idea!

Relationship building with the freelancers in the network of the venues we're sponsored by. Networks of freelancers we're already connected to.

How to get the word out about what we're doing? It's one thing to do the work, and an extra job to make the work visible. How to reach beyond our immediate networks?

Press - Lyn Gardner might be up for writing about this, if we can pitch it with clarity. Exeunt published Fuel's original open letter, so they could potentially publish a follow-up. Fuel could help us connect with press, when we have something solid to say.

ACTION:
   work with Xana to get the website info to those who want to publish blog posts.
- 	- there is a group on Slack for this. #**website**
   - 	-Website name: www.freelancetaskforce.co.uk
   - ██
      ██████████ this is where you can add in stuff for the site and also request a profile to post your content
   create a Twitter account and call out for people who want to maintain it (maybe 1 day a week each?).
- 	- Username: FreelanceTForce ████████████████████
   - Sign Tweets with your own personal Twitter handle.
   - retweet individuals using #FreelanceTaskForce
   need an image/logo for the Twitter account - is Bethany working on this?

   Anyone who wants to get involved with setting up the website/ social media, please contact Annie-Lunnette on Slack

Spilling the beans - telling the truth about inequalities and discrimination in organisation/freelance relationships

Session Convener: Viv Gordon
Participant names: Michelle Payne Xana Viv G. Rosie J. Joyce H. Rachel M. Polly J. Emma JP. Dais H.

How do we define best practice clearly so it can't be disputed? (EJP)
- Passive Agression/ Micro-Agressions
- Exploitation
- Discrimination
- Gaslighting practices

This is happening everyday/all the time

What is the process for challenging poor practice? - Could this process be sector wide instead of different in each venue so that freelancers don't have to 'learn the process' before challenging behaviour? (EJP)

League table of good/bad organisations in interactions with freelancers/diverse artists

How can information about best practice and poor practice be collated, visible and obvious? - Xana has an interesting model people can input into. (EJP)

How we hold organisations/buildings/artistic directors to account for inclusivity & diversity and ACTIVELY (MP)

https://www.byronvincent.com/journal/2020/7/6/fuck-the-arts?fbclid=IwAR0RW9lcn9m2bXOyq3hAuwuutFaNG20Wbulmk-JMrsrFB5-QjFwN_jsxvlE

The problem of operating in secrecy, freelancers being too afraid to voice concerns with fear of being "difficult" / blacklisted for questioning authority. (MP)

If we can post in secret but name the venues, something along the lines of - https://postsecret.com so that it's really creative. Protect anonymity. Postcards. People potentially choosing for themselves what level of detail they'd like to provide. A central group of people who can approach them and ask for their practice.

Safeguarding Perspective -- abusers could easily identify the person, how do we provide aftercare
Anonymity

A group of people who agree and an email can be sent "your behaviour is being discussed" / "your fee offer is being discussed" to the organisation.

For unpaid invoices - http://notpaid.me/

Google form that you fill in that gets sent to an email address or a visual representation / a website i.e. wordpress. What would that look like?

Questions: What happened to you? How did it play out? How did it affect you? Other impacts eg financial cost/leaving the profession/mental health

How do we be in the same spaces with these people and not feel so threatened? If we were to not use social media.

Can we create a resource for freelancers to refer to when challenging an organisation

Mediation unit - "we're discussing you but are actively working alongside a mediation unit, if you don't get involved, here is our next step" -- a professional mediator./Artist panel

Aware of other parts of taskforce challenging discrimination. Racism. Neorudivergence. And lobbying group We Shall Not Be Removed. How do we work together? Collective voice.

HR team for freelancers -- people discriminating are often higher up / more powerful so it becomes your word against theres, but if there was a larger group we could go to who could be interim. For freelancers to feel safer and more united. -- Can we get on to **EQUITY** for this??

Equity
Re-shaping Equity - what does Equity stand for? Does this need looking at again?
Ability for them to be in the position of the "awkward person"
Put those companies on blast - tie in with support of equity - we can get these things done quicker.
Build a repore with Equity over time
Organisations need to see it hitting their business/reputation - business case

How can Equity be the awkward person

Acknowledging different experiences of Equity (eg. disabled artists) - how do they reshape to properly represent workforce?

Dont underestimate to see organisation name on social media etc

Good practise models to share.

Dismantle "cliques" in buildings / organisations. They should be actively benefitting and representing their communities and audiences.

Xana offer to create website

Hosting an online festival/mass lobby for the wider industry on the last day of the task force (Jane Crawshaw)

Session Convener: Jane Crawshaw
Participant names: Jane Crawshaw, Sara Templeman, Rosie Jones, Rhys, Ellie Mason, Mimi Doulton

The Wildlife Trust recently hosted a Mass Lobby day in the style of a one-day online festival (more info on this at https://www.instagram.com/p/CCBe4GtILNB/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link). I wondered whether this could be a great way for us to end the freelance task force project in a creative way, and also succinctly convey the work we've been doing on the task force out to the wider industry, and even to the general public.

We could co-ordinate with the different sub-groups in the task force and give them a slot each in the festival

Members have been doing online gigs etc during lockdown, we come from different bases in the arts, can we showcase those different art forms that encompass freelancers at the end?

We're all doing different jobs, but come from the same situation at the moment.

Have it all in one day to unite everyone, during the day have a series of talks at different times, and in the evening have a performance to unite everyone together.

Performance in the evening could be live, or different people and groups could send in pre-recorded videos of their acts which we could cut together. We could make all the videos available for people to watch afterwards. Would be good to have a slightly live element, maybe pre-recorded videos but a live host holding it all together.

Notes from the chat:
- Online gigs & performance⸱showcase people⸱celebratory
- ⸱Different arts backgrounds - comedy / theatre / music / interactive / cabaret / any others?

Creating a book of recommendations (best practice) for venues and Organisations (Karen Traynor)

Session Convener: Karen Traynor
Participant names: Beth Sitek, Karen Traynor, Natasha Chivers, Jo Paul, Sian, Bethany Wells

A document has previously been started along these lines. Please add or contribute to this document:

████████████████████████   ██████████████████

A book of Recomendations is an acheivable outcome of FTF - A Freelance Charter.

Its an offering to our industry with a view to improve realtionships in both directions, that outlines practices and what we would like to see in the future.

Its about operating in a more mindful way and will contribute to best practices of how to support freelancers wellbeing and mental health so that we can contribute to the best of our ability.

We can include easy things to change that dont need extra money - as well as further reaching things.

What is it?

A document?
An open letter?
A booklet?

Do we sign it if we agree with it? or sign/ initial the pages and items we agree with. i.e we can opt in and out of areas and make our own adaptations for relavance of the organisations and situations we are in. Have a standardised 20 items that we all agree with (commonalities)
Do organisations sign it in agreement? A reverse recipricol commitment.

Include:
   Simple practical sugestions
   Simple page layout
   Examples of models
   Anecdotes
   Easy read and images included where possible

   Examples;
   Technical rehearsal timings and other rehearsals standardised, contracted and kept to.
   Breaks for back stage staff as well as actors.

   We could do a survey/ poll to back up our suggestions with statistics.

   Could be discussed with Freelancers make Theatre Work and other orgs (including our own sponsors).
   We could discuss it with ten venues/ organisations of varying types and sizes.

How do you manage Lockdown Lethargy & what is your routine?

Session Convener: Sara Templeman
Participant names:

After discussion with mt network there is a general feeling of lethargy & lack of motivation, how do you combat this?
What are your routines at the moment?

How have you adapted?
What is your advice?

Supporting young people in the current climate, combatting disillusion with pursuing creative industries?

No notes.

Forgotten Freelancers and SEISS - who should we be working with?

Session Convener: Mimi Doulton
Participant names: Mimi Doulton, Whiskey Chow, Shannon Aisha

Shannon: re-filed tax return and now eligible for second tranche. But can't be backdated for first. Took 7 weeks to make this process.
If ACE helps people who fell through the gaps, how do they decide who to help?

Whiskey: I know how WhatsNext have collected the info. They have invited DCMS people to join them for a roundtable meeting. People who fell through the gaps were at the round table.

Who is already working on SEISS? WhatsNext, Equity, Excluded, Freelancers Make,

There are meetings with Freelancers Make and Equity tomorrow. The Equity meeting is for non-UK born theatre workers. Not even eligible for Universal Credit.

Do we want the government to change the rules or do we want someone to fill the gap such Arts Council England?
Shannon: from my experience with HMRC I'd say ACE is the best option

Merged with Owl [Session title: With the government announcment of £1.57B for the Arts, what's next for freelancers]

Restructuring Boards - who gets to influence the decision makers and decisions?

Session Convener: Emma Jayne Park
Participant names: Emma Jayne Park, Leigh Toney, Leo Marcus Wan, Laura Sweeney, Ailsa Dalling, Joyce O, Zora, Jessica Wright, Gillie, Kate O'C

Next Steps:

When is the right time to have this conversation? (EJP)

Exit Strategies for Board Members.
- Standardise fixed terms on boards (3 years - building a culture of rotating power).

- Boards having to include freelancers and the broader picture as a fixed agenda point.

Board bank idea - be paid to be on a Board bank, NOT on the Board
- includes training and peer support
- 50% of Boards should be freelancers

If 50% freelancers left a skills deficit that is often needed from a board, how would this be covered?

CIOs or CICs

Training about how people can join boards, what the role is
Organisations need to rethink how people act on a Board - don't invite diverse people to join the Board but expect them to act in a particular way
>> informal ostracisation happens and needs to be looked at
What training do Boards need in order to function in a more fair and just way? (Anti-Racism training, disability awareness training....)

Training for Chairs/ AD in terms of how to make change.
- Skilling people up to be a chair.

Melting Pot - support org for third sector

Long-term aim - above
Now - pay for freelance taskforcers to inform the org how they can better talk to freelancers, with a longer-term view of how to get more freelancers on the Board.
Finding another organisation to share and swap freelancers
>> letting outside voices in

ACE board is one that needs reform

Peer to peer review of who gets funded (NPO and NPI/A) - right now, who actually decides who gets the money? Who are they? Making decisions together about how we're spending the money rather than being in competition

Reform of who commissions work - not just a single AD's test. Diversify the decision-making

How long should ADs be in their position - term limits

Orginisations/NPO's to employ freelancers on a 6month rolling basis - potentially freelancers who haven't been employed by that orginisation before & potentially someone who is within a different specialism.

Making Money

No notes.

Scrutinising the casting process in theatre, with a specific focus on D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent actors.

Session Convener: Caroline Parker & Polly Jerrold

What barriers do we face in the (theatre) casting process and what is preventing us from doing our best work?

From the perspective of actress (Caro) and casting director (Polly), we have both felt this process has needed reforming/adapting/scrutinising for a good while. Things we have discussed so far in the early stages of developing this idea/project together:

Time constraints: ACTORS: Actors are often having to prepare with very little time and their accessibility requirements are not fully met in the audition room.   CASTING DIR: the turnaround that casting directors are given to put together a company can be extremely tight. We often feel behind on time when implementing the provision that needs to be put in place where some actors' accessibility requirements are concerned. It is rarely a process that isn't fraught with stress & strain and can create tension within the creative team.

Communication: CASTING DIR: full and informed discussions are not taking place amongst the creatives on a show. Where casting is concerned inclusion and representation is assumed but not fully interrogated. A lack of communication within the creative team can also create tension and confusion i.e producers not talking to directors not talking to writers not talking to the artistic director of the building not talking to the movement director / choreographer / musical director etc etc - specifically regarding the specificity of a role in relation to the specificity of a disability.   ACTORS: Much can be assumed about an actor's accessibility requirements, instead of actually asking them themselves to tell us what they need.

Ignorance & Learning: We must find more effective ways to share our knowledge, experience and understanding. If you don't have contact with something, you fear it and/or you lack empathy. There are too many 'After-thoughts' throughout the casting process. We need discussions MUCH earlier on in the process - at the programming stage and when plays are being developed. Use the expertise of the theatre freelancers that you work with, and bring them into discussions in good time. PJ worked at the Royal Exchange for 5 years before going freelance and has noticed the marked difference between the information-sharing (in meetings / offices / day-to-day sharings) that occur in buildings in comparison to working 'outside' of an organisation as a freelancer.   This discrepancy needs to be significantly adjusted - bring us into conversations about season programming and regarding future plans for productions.

This bleeds into an idea/plan regarding Creative Associateships which Polly is also looking at.

Plans:

1. Workshops & Training: Create workshop opportunities for directors and creatives to learn more about the process of creating a show with disability in mind. Hear from D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent actors about their preparation process for auditions.

Organisations & buildings to fund training opportunities for the freelancers they work with. For example: BSL tuition, attend talks and learning days on disability...etc (training days are another thing freelancers miss out on because they are not permanent staff)

2. Examples / case studies: Collate examples and experiences from D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent actors as well as from casting directors, of situations in which the current casting process has failed to create an environment conducive to giving the best of yourself.

WE ARE KEEN TO HEAR FROM ANY D/deaf, DISABLED AND NEURODIVERGENT ACTORS ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCES / CONCERNS AS WE GATHER INFORMATION. PLEASE DO EMAIL / PHONE /AUDIO MSG TO LET US KNOW HOW YOU'D LIKE TO FEED INTO THIS DISCUSSION.

Rosie Jones told us about her experiences as an actress with cerebral palsy. Why am I always being thought of for roles with a disability and not those without? Again we agreed with earlier discussions about plays in development / season planning we could address this issue much more effectively.

Heather from Access all Areas introduced us to Paul Christian who told us how he often feels rushed in auditions. They both informed us about the requirements and support they needed for auditions. We all agreed again that TIME, and the lack of it, limits us all.

Matilda Ibini talked about Access to work funding and the idea of an Access Rider. We cannot do the work if we're not supported to do the work. Need more joined-up application support - Equity, ACE, Spotlight etc need to work as an alliance on behalf of the artist. The artist is otherwise completely left alone to apply for support, all the while not knowing if they will be granted it.

ACTIONS: CP & PJ will continue to talk to casting directors and actors from the D/deaf, disabled and neurodivergent community about their experiences and will continue to structure our thoughts/ideas/future plans in order to carry on sharing with the group and ultimately present to industry members / decision-makers from buildings and organisations whom we have ongoing relationships with.

Hi
Jo Paul here. I wasnt present in your discussion but my colleague Ellie was Im told. She has LD and she said afterwards she chose not abl to speak at the time but she wanted to let you know the things we had previously discussed

With the government announcement of £1.57B for the Arts, what's next for freelancers?

Session Convener: Pauline
Participant names: Kate O'C Rachel Mars Sarah Argent Hannah Quigley (HQ) Liv Hunt

Wales Culture taskforce set up to bring together FTF, FMTH and other interested parties
£59m for arts, culture and heritage in Wales (There was some shock news about this not being the case on the day of the Open Space. It turned out to have been an error made by a researcher on the First Minister's team) Jo Stevens - Labour MP for Cardiff said that the Shadow Culture team are still lobbying really hard for continuation of the SEISS scheme for freelancers in our sector (and for those who were ineligible) … apparently Oliver Dowden received more questions/submissions about freelancers than any other topic. Keep her and Tracy Brabin MP informed of circumstances

From Lora - I found this link about "what we know so far" re: the 1.57b very useful but/and also heart breaking and enraging. it is clear this money ain't got to go in any freelance pockets⸿https://culturallearningalliance.org.uk/emergency-response-packages-for-culture-what-we-know-so-far/

From HQ: Initial thoughts - My understanding is that Government are saying their 'systems' just don't work sector specfic e.g. SEISS - the technology of the 'systems' is my understanding. Unpicking what Government means when they say that I think would be helpful. So even if sectors aren't re-opening they can't make it work.
The government are more thinking about how to utilise non-Government support...more like the Netflix/SOLT/UK Theatre.
This I think is a huge concern because those things are not embedded and not a long term, fair and sustainable system. It's possible we need to think articulate both our thanks for these 'emergency offers of support' and that they need to be on-going if possible but need to really articulate
that the SOLT/UK Theatre; Arts Councils need to continue to push direct Governmental support and find systems that do work for all.
Freelancers on Boards/Advisory Boards - does it help in focussing on Freelancers concerns
There is to be a Spending review in 2020 - ACE in conversations with DCMS, FTF could shift focus to this?
Creation of a "Code of Conduct" -
From Liv:

   What are our next fights? Campaigning for bodies such as Arts Council England, Creative Scotland etc. to fill the gaps left by SEISS as it seems clear the Treasury isn't going to change the rules.
What else can I do, is there a mechanism to discuss what's next?

What would stop people considering leaving?
Mimi: I want to know when we are going to be able to start working again.
Pauline: venues aren't expecting to have audiences until February next year. I think people who have contracts in the autumn should assume that they aren't going to happen. We've had such mixed messages from the government.

Rachel: reopening of project grants ACE - are they going to be linked to projects that we can't do? Can we hack those grants so that people who have traditionally had power and experience to get those grants apply for the money, then give this out as emergency grants?

Anna: I'm Brighton based and we've had conversations with 21 venues, all of whom aren't considering opening until March/April next year. Just come out of a meeting with ACE. Project grants are going to have a 3 week turnaround. They're expecting a deluge of <£15k applications. It is safer to be going over £15k.

Gitika suggested a fee if organisations cancel after a certain date.

Leo: Equity started renegotiating contracts with bodies like UKTheatre. Sharing risk between freelancers and producers. We need to make a fuss about this.

Jenni: buildings who haven't behaved very honourably need to be held to account by ACE.

what are the five things orgs are doing that is helpful/what are the five things orgs are not doing well by freelancers - could this be a way forward?

Building support for all artists who are currently ina. situ of fighting for money they have been contracted for by big orgs who are not paying up because of covid19

Anonymous surveys around mistreatement in arts orgs

Making a zine to publish + celebrate our thoughts / work

Session Convener: Bethany Wells
Participant names: Joana Nastari / Bethany Wells / Miss Jacqui / Amy Clare Tasker / Matilda / Romy Foster / Kate OC / Coral Brookes

CALLING ALL MANIFESTO WRITERS / CAMPAIGN POSTER DESIGNERS / POETS / ESSAY WRITERS / SKETCHERS

We're creating a printed zine at the end of our time on the Taskforce, to celebrate + document our thoughts, giving everyone a chance to contribute to a published document. It's a chance for us to express + showcase the work we're all doing in different ways, words / pictures / diagrams / photography.

I (Bethany) thought a zine would be a great antidote to the feeling of endlessness / overwhelm and the digital world, and give us something tangible to feel a sense of achievement at the end of the project.

The zine is designed to be an accessible and equal platform for all members of the taskforce, aware that each person has a unique perspective to contribute + express their work + thoughts and that some larger working groups + meetings may not be the best way for everyone to be heard.

The zine is not an evaluation document, although it's ok to be personal/reflective. It's a way of creating a snapshot in time, amplifying our voices to communicate to sponsor orgs + other orgs of our time together. It's aim is to strengthen the communication of the work we're all already doing, and give us something we can all share with our networks to show the diversity of thought on the taskforce:

"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."

It's open to everyone on the Taskforce, but you don't have to contribute a page. Everyone will be included in the Directory at the end, so even if you don't want to have a printed page, you can still have your name / contact details in there.

HOW WILL IT WORK:

We will each have 1 x A5 single page in the zine. You can combine pages e.g. four people together can have x 4 pages for their text / work to be spread out on. As a guide, for plain text, there is space for approx 400 words per page. But you're welcome to just submit one great sentence and we'll make it look really bold!

Think about how you would like to use your page - it could be notes from a session, a summary of a really great whatsapp conversation, a screen grab of a tweet that you wrote, a picture or sketch, or a short reflective essay. Itwill be sent around sponsor orgs, and available for any other individuals/orgs to download, so it's a great chance to get a message out there that is important to you.

There will also be a directory of all Taskforce members, with whatever contact details you'd like to appear. It will be available publicly so think about what information you'd like to have in the directory e.g. website / email. I'll send out an email closer to the time to check your preferred way of being credited in the directory.

PRINTING

It will be designed as if it was going to be printed, but available free of charge for public download as a pdf. I've looked into printing costs, and it would be approx £7.50 to get a hard copy each. There might also be a few really great-looking pages that we could get printed as more like manifestos / posters? I'll see what comes in + keep you posted about print options.

PROCESS

Feel free to upload a text document and we will format it into the zine. But if the design / layout of the page is important to you, you are welcome to send a scanned sketch or pdf copy so we can stay true to your formatting. NB: we may alter colours to fit with the overall design but will send round a pdf proof to Taskforce members before launching it publicly in September. Think about the size of any text/handwriting to be legible at A5.

The deadline for uploading work to appear in the zine is **5pm on 21st August.**
I will send out a couple of reminders before this date!

I will be spending 3 Taskforce days w/c 31st August compiling and finishing the zine.
NB: Only small edits to content / formatting will be available after 21st August.

Here's the link to the Dropbox to upload your content:

Any questions please contact me:
Bethany Wells / ████████████ on whatsapp / ████████████
I'm not on slack much due to other work, so best to email / text.

- - -

PS:
Dropping in here from a session on "Communication with the wider freelance community!" to say that Xana has created a multi-author blog to allow us to publish & share actions and provocations that come out of the Task Force. Annie-Lunnette and Amy also created a Twitter account @FreelanceTaskForce which can help to spread information. Info on how to get involved with the website or Twitter account is in the session report. Thanks! - Amy Clare Tasker amazing!

What's the link to the blog
http://freelancetaskforce.co.uk/ - it's just a holding page at the moment. I'm not sure how Xana is arranging giving people access as authors. When I find out, I will add details to the "Communication with the wider freelance community!" session report.

The New Normal

Session Convener: Charlotte Kransmo

Discussion around thoughts on what changes freelancers would like to see and would like to push for in the new normal (ex. sick pay, paid time for work outside of the space, more mentoring support from organisations, better access for D/deaf and disabled artists.....etc.)

Shared thoughts around emerging artists and how much of the support available for supporting artists excludes those who are not financially stable enough to committ to spending every evening or every Saturday (or whatever) being there for free.
It's also an issue that venues are offering emerging artist schemes and then are expecting a show at the end, even though they are offered workshops and such, they aren't being paid to be artists.

Talked about feeling angry about NPO's getting lots of money when they're not supporting freelancers and that some of the organisations that are being given money are the ones that probably have rich patrons who would be willing to support them financially.

Those organisations that are given money from this next lot of funding from the government should be those with a clear and consistent track record of comunity engagement and of employing and treating freelancers well.
We can't save every organisation and some may not be worth saving if they plan to carry on as before.

It's unacceptable that NPO's that have had their funding extended for another year, and then given additional funding (more than what individuals got) are then charging freelancers for workshops!

Working before stages reopen: creating a support guide

Session Convener: Victor Esses
Participant names: Beth Sitek, Leeza Awojobi, Lora Krasteva, Maia,

creating online doc for online / outdoors/ workshops / residencies
go small, don;t try to change the world

orgs ot put artists first, not audiences right now
commissions

what orgs and venues feel like there are in a space to do so? Some will be "we want to support our staff etc" and that is fair.

Ask orgs: what would work for you?

Using COVID and the fact it is going to be around for a while to re-think how we "make" - questions about residency model. Can we use the quarentine in other countries (if travelling/working internationally) as residency time to think and create for instance?

re-visit the notion of time - take more time, fund thinking/creating time

do we work in the bubble?

it is way easier to think digitally

What are the venues' COVID plans are? What are their artistic vision for the COVID world?

Using the bricks and mortar to live in the theatre for X period of time. People quarentine individually and then meet in the theatre and live there to create together. The creative process can start during quarentining.

Socially distanced work - solo work

Orgs to invest in us. Not only in artistc way but also develop to diversify their practice. Buidling confidence. Can we hook up with different industries, used to deal with risk in their daily life (medecin sans frontier, people who work in war zones etc)

What do you need creatively? How to we shift the conversation away from money. but money is needed so people can go off an do, innovate.

almost like 2 strands: what can venues do AND financial support. Not a lot of venues are opening up for things unrelated to public performances. Some are going to do that from September onwards.

how do we use this time to reach online people who ordinarely come to theatre? -> look up the notes of the "how do we change the image of theatre..." group.

We are talking digitally and in person but/and there is a in-between that includes different methodologies (Lora spoke about sending letters, newlsetters, pictures, storytelling etc)

ACTIONS:

   talk to our sponsors - come up with questions to venues/orgs and to artists
   Ex: what are the sponsor's limitations in terms of supporting artists ?
Money/logistics/health and safety but/and what else?

Defeating classism in the arts

Session Convener: Nessah Muthy
Participant names: Emma Jayne Park, Michelle Payne,Jessica Thanki, Ailsa DallingKaren Traynor Liv Hunt, Sam Dunstan

Hi everyone here's my email if anyone would like to continue this discussion in any way - was really interesting! ████████████████████

Sour Lemons (Charity working with 18-25 young leaders to address the lack of diversityin the creative and cultural sector - focussed on the intersections of race + class)

Stigma of youth theatre / community theatre / "diverse" projects / Pantomime
Participation and engagement with local communities

It's not 'clear cut' difficult to work out what is and isn't classism
usually seeing it happening, rather than discussing it

Concern with ticket prices / theatres feeling like middle-upper class spaces

The fluidity of class. How do we change the culture so by working in theatre/ dance you don't suddenly 'assume' a middle class identity against your will? How do we perceive class in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?

Class and art form - Panto debate.... How do we change the narrative of high art?

Community art is perceived as second class to theatre - is this the route of some of the issue? Do we need to start again without status labels?

Barriers to education and wider systems of disadvantage.
Snobbery in terms of training establishments.

Links to Session 1: How to change the image of theatre,

Spilling the beans
https://qiqochat.com/breakout/12/BILBQDxIjqUtwmSVrXCXqKcrx

As theatre makers a responsibility for keeping our production budget / costs down

Clarity on what "experience" is needed for jobs.

A lot of us our BURNT OUT -- financial responsibilities, lack of access to things like therapy etc, isolating (families who aren't in this industry).

Q. Where does classism begin?
Image of theatre being essential. & how education plays into this conversation,

There maybe isn't an end goal as theatre / the arts are constantly evolving.

It's a UK thing that theatre is elitest. Most places in Europe have largly subsidised theatres.
We run our theatres as a capitalist industry, selling theatre as a luxury good.

We should be being funded more so the creative arts is not a luxury good and is more accessible

How do we define what 'CLASS' is?
Perceptions that now you work in theatre you 'must' be middle class
How can make society see that you can work in theatre and still be working class?

Community arts projects seem to be seen as second-class to other theatre

Start again and create a new name for theatre to try bring it out of classism ('live performance')?

EMA grant? Does this still exist - maybe in wales & scotland

We need to push the industry to value participatory theatre as much as main stage productions

-- Language that they use should shift and be celebratory, shout about in the same way you would a tv celebrity appearing in a show. In a really loving way. Unconcious bias,

As the Task Force, we need to ask our sponsor organisations to shout about their participatory/community theatre work and the importance of it.

Arts Orgs, companies and venues need working-class people, both working in the industry, and as audience members. There has to be meaningful representation at all levels of theatre for working-class people to feel valued and welcome in Arts institutions.

MIDDLE CLASS PEOPLE MAKING WORKING CLASS STORIES AND CHARGING £65 A TICKET!!!!

Making visible the invisible resources, knowledge and experience a freelancer brings with them

Session Convener: Emily Alden

No notes.

What's next after Open Space? Should we meet next week on 23rd July? Does anyone want to volunteer to organise/facilitate that meeting?

Session Convener: Amy Clare Tasker
Participant names:

I think we just need time to follow up on our groups that have started today.
Thanks! :)

We've got a couple more dates in the calendar from our doodle poll. It feels useful to keep those meetings as an opportunity for people to share what they're working on and call out for collaborators, ideas, and support.

Speaking for myself, I'm a little burned out on admin and logistics, so I'm hoping others will step forward to organise.

23rd July - maybe we should cancel this one? to give us time to follow up on groups & actions that have started today. I (Amy) will ask the admin team to send out a cancellation by email, and also announce this at the Closing Circle.

31st July - Leigh Toney has volunteered to organise this one. Thanks Leigh! There's definitely room for more people to get involved there, so please contact Leigh if you want to help.

August - we said we would do another doodle poll with more parent-friendly time options. Those meetings have not yet been set, but it would be good to get them in the calendar sooner rather than later.

There is a Slack channel about this which we can use to connect about this later. #facilitators

"When it's over, it's over" - I'm leaving the session now at 12:25 :)
- Amy

Lobbying for financial support for freelancers until theatres can reopen in earnest

Session Convener: Karen Traynor

No notes.

Transparency: How we create it, how we encourage it?

Session Convener: Beccy D'Souza
Participant names: 3 participants

Convened this but there's other sessions I want to attend. Interested in people's thoughts around how / what info to share from wider meetings. Eg. meetings such as What Next? where 'Chatham House rules' apply (I had to google it too). I'm hearing really depressing things and a lot of the time feel like I'm passing on a live grenade to friends and colleagues when I share the info, and they of course want to know where it's coming from. I also feel a responsibility to share information wider, but in many cases that's 'not allowed'. Why does so much of the industry function this way? How do we change that? It's really unhealthy for everyone working within it.

Also there are MANY orgs making redundancies who are not announcing them currently- ones who have announced have in some cases only done so because it has been 'leaked'. The reasons for not announcing may be varied - lack of capacity to deal with PR / fallout? Not wanting to spook investors / creditors? But if these conversations all stay behind closed doors it's really difficult to communicate to freelance workforce that actually, help is not forthcoming, and it's little to do with what's fair - nothing is fair at the moment - and very much to do with what the capacity of orgs and venues really is and how much of a knife edge the industry is precariously balanced on. Do we need to stop looking to venues as if they are going to rescue us? The whole ecology is so shrouded in secrecy and mystery we don't even know where we stand. Aware that there is much that venues orgs etc don't know too BUT IF THEY ARE OPEN and say that then we can have more of an idea of where we are at.

Useful outcome of this taskforce? Here's some information we've heard? Sharing it? Also there is no culture of transparency to begin with in the industry.

Connections with orgs we've got being to encourage transparency?

 Transparency and sharing information two separate things to an extent.

 Organisation people who have been on furlough saying organisations are "scared of freelancers" because of how much they can 'put themselves first' - what is it that gives the orgs. that impression? Job swap system?! Freelancers to be open about the precarity? Needs empathetic position from orgs over what it is like for freelancers.

 Suggestion of sharing 'freelance diary' / 'venue diary' for realistic sharing of pre and during COVID arts work. Creation of empathy and understanding between each.

People within buildings often have done the freelance thing - building people need to 'let go' of "I deserve this because I've done the struggle". Part of the challenge is about being honest about why you feel the way you feel.

Also It is really difficult for orgs to be transparent - because for a good period of time there were things that couldn't be announced because of people on furlough etc. and therefore not being aware of situation etc.

Spend so much time having to articulate why we are worth more.

Diary idea - practice of putting up timesheets on website? For artists to understand how long things take eg. writing funding bids which is unpaid. ONLY work hours paid for. No more working for free. If we can find access money then yes, if we can build into other projects yes. Working for free supports structures that perpetuates the broken systems. A series of documents and diaries that allow you to say this is what is happening, this is what it looks like in numbers.

Reason scared to do a diary - playing the system in that am on UC - will invoice right at the end to get benefit etc. Anonymised? Arts practitioners used to live on benefits and now many have doctorates living on university stipends. Level of anonymity - to avoid putting ourselves in vulnerable positions as individuals.

The system doesn't work for us - but fear of being judged and losing the loopholes etc. Even though the fuckers at the top have lots of loopholes they exploit and no guilt!

Get everyone to sign up to What Next so they have the agendas and know who is sharing info etc.

NEed to see where to join up.

Freelancers Pay Rates (in general) and the relevance of experience.

Session Convenor: Jo Paul
Participant names: Sarah Argent, Emma Jayne Park,Emily AldenNatasha PlayerEllen Yilma

What does the rate of pay dropping or remaining stagnant do to your self esteem?

What do we need in order to do our best work?
- Poor pay impacts self esteem and the quality of our work.
Its been historically difficult to advocate for ourselves.

How can an organisation show loyalty to their freelancers through decent rates of pay? Could fair pay level understanding and power imbalance?

Early career artists must be encouraged.
Maybe introducing a model with a basic starting point for income for all freelancers

Try to get some more data to see where freelancers need support most - Possibly setting up a survey/ pole?

How can we empower the Independant freelancer when focsuing on their pay?

Someone such as a film maker gets a fee for their work and a hore rate for their equipment. WE as theatre practitioners dont - our bodies, our ideas, our creativitiy are our tools apart from a designer/ scenic artist/ costume designer etc. (In their case who pays for their equipment)? In the main our currency is our time, our creativity and ideas. We bring our passion and creativity - no matter waht happens - we always do!

We need to make visible the relevance and interconnectivity of our experience and a different value needs to be palced on age and experience.
Suggestion of increment being introduced in pay structures, according to years of experience /and also personal situation

Since the 2008 financial crash, the pay rates have decreased as the expectations of us as freelancers increased. There was a huge swing in what the freelancers has to invest. One organisation I know pays £250 day rate as standard for artists, they input it as standard into every funding application and downsize the projects if the goal isnt reached but dont downsize the day rate.
The common day rate of £150 (sometimes more sometimes less) has been in place for around 20 years - its time to change.
If there is a fair rate of pay (that recognises experinece, and hidden costs and time, lack of sick pay etc), we as freelancers will be able to invest more into the work.
Where this cant happen because of budget restraints - then in kind payment can be negotiated eg. rehearsal soace, f

At the moment we have to fit into the organisational norm, we all understand budget restraints but it is us as freelancers that end up picking up the slack.
We have to advocate for ourselves but for that we need to feel empowered.
Empower ourselves as freelancers to negotiate contracts and fees, to believe in our value.
To have our own rate ideals (different rates for different things and then negotaite form there).
To lead from the front - from our own value.

Mutual contracting:
    Our own template and guidance as well as recievng theirs.

    This would gor towards equalising the top down approach of organisations.

How can we work with Freelancers make theatre work and their public facing platform to make all frelancers voices heard

Session Convenor: Susie McKenna

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How are we utilising the relationship(s) with sponsoring orgs to enact the changes we want to see

Session Convener: (Lora)
Participant names:

Lora really interested in the possibility of re-defining the relationship between orgs and freelancers on the micro level, wokring with the sponsoring orgs to test tools, including co-desing methodology; orgs pledging to manifestos/best-practice guides etc
What else?
How do we ensure their change happens beyond the 13 weeks? I have allocate a few days for evaluation/check-in/implementation but that might not be possible for everyone.

please fee free to add ideas of examples that might be good towards evaluating the FTF and how it works with sponsoring orgs. so if there is another "wave" of FTF then we can learn from our shared experiences with different orgs.

Gillie is working on developing a workshop for organisations who want to re-structure/re-distribute resources in a more equitable way (I'm paraphrasing, Gillie, forgive me if I've not got it quite right). Hopefully our sponsoring organisations will be open to hiring Gillie & her team to deliver that workshop. - Amy Clare Tasker

Multi-disciplinary practices - performance making crossing different arts sectors.

Session Convener: Alice Theobald
Participant names: Lou Brodie and Rinkoo

Feel free to take notes below.

Multi-disciplinary, intersectionality, the value of breaking down boxes and borders.

practices that crosses many disciplines and micro worlds within the creative industries; which I've increasingly noticed share many of the same problems, concerns and work with the same tools, however seem to be very segregated from one another.

How can DIY and grassroots priniciples and approaches be translated online? Should they be, what does it mean if you are a freelancer who doesn't need/work on a stage?
How can multi disiplinary approaches support what we are trying to achieve?
Celebrating all the facets of our practice - selling/souting about yourself - the discomfort of competitiveness/neo-liberal critique in friction with the need for some to be more competitive than others out of survival - then some don't feel able to pitch and sell (neuro-diverse linguistic boundries)

Making sure your network are your champions - people that will bring more support to your work.
Mentoring has been hugely useful.
Can we create a mentoring link up? Intergenerational...

In regards to the taskforce:

Is a united voice useful or does this just recreate a lot of the systems and struggles we are trying to question? Does one agenda or one aim mean that we can not celebrate and make space for a multitude of voices and needs.
Freelance covers a very wide spectrum

What is the language and strageteies that we have/use to sell ourselves as multidisiplinary artists.? How do we define and own our value - how does this relate to the task force.

How do we think about labels - are they useful, do they give us power or do they disempower? No matter where we come from our careers have been affected by our personal journeys. Having a space to share and understand this is a powerful tool.

We also discussed intersectionality in realtion to our own intersections and the challenge of lingustics.

What actions could be taken from this?
Skills to help take the task force or individuals in it to collaborate right now... that arent administrative...

What if I've had enough and want to leave the industry? What support is there available?

Session Convenor: Dan

No notes.

What are the aims and objectives of the National Task Force.

Session Convener: Catherine

   Caherine - just if you dodnt know the ANT group is covering what you said for your group - i came to see you but you werent in - come and say hello in ant group - if you want - katie B