

# HOW TO WORK WITH ARTISTS

## A GUIDE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES

## **/ INTRODUCTION**

This factsheet has been produced by Dover District Council (DDC) and Dover Arts Development (DAD). It came about after the two organisations worked together on an Arts Council England funded project, *Art in the Park – Kearsney Interpreted*.

While working together, it became apparent that artists and local authorities have different ways of working, different priorities and use different language.

DDC and DAD decided that it would be helpful to produce two factsheets:

- a guide for local authorities on how to work with artists and
- a guide for artists on how to work with local authorities.

We hope that local authorities and artists find these guides helpful. The following points are designed to help you find the process straightforward and enjoyable. If you consider the following points, you should find that both parties can work together happily and productively in order to produce the great art in the public realm that each party wants to achieve and that benefits everyone.

## **// WHY DO IT?**

Artworks made for the public realm offer social value, allowing members of the public to engage with artwork and with other members of the community in a public setting. Art can add to people's perceived value of a community space; it can challenge and open up thought and conversation, act as a cohesive force across communities and help with regeneration. You can help to encourage investment in the local economy by commissioning artists who live locally. In the longer term, you may wish to carry out research to look at how the project can impact residents' quality of life.



### **/// HOW DO ARTISTS WORK?**

Artists need time to do their research and talk to people.

It's important to allow time for artists to develop their ideas, so don't be set on having a definite 'outcome' for the end of a meeting. An important aspect of the way some artists work is that it can be seen as an opportunity-finding exercise, rather than a way to conform to tried-and-tested approaches. Try not to see this as wasted time but an essential part of the process of developing a work of art.

Try not to have too many preconceptions at the beginning of the project about what you want. The artist's proposal won't be the final design. As artists develop their ideas, they will pursue different lines of thought and ideas will develop and evolve right until the artwork is completed. This is all part of the creative process.

Because artists have many ideas, they can adapt if constraints arise, for example if there are environmental regulations or planning conditions to meet.

Artists will put a lot of emotion into their work so it's important to help artists build resilience and consider their wellbeing during the project.

Like other people, artists may not work best by being told what to do. If you have specific objectives to reach, make your objectives clear, but let the artist decide how to meet them. Give them time to deal with the facts and solve constraints with their own creative solution.

You may be used to drawing and making notes on colleagues' work when discussing options, but please avoid this for artists' work!



### **//// YOUR ROLE**

As in any project, communication, honesty and teamwork are essential.

It can be helpful to have a recognised arts organisation to act as a bridging organisation. This can help to avoid misunderstandings and to ‘translate’ the different ‘languages’ of the artists and the local authority.

Having a selection process to choose an artist is important for artistic quality and to make sure that the selected artist/s will be willing and able to meet your requirements, and work within the framework of a local authority-led project.

The project may take more of your time than expected. Make sure that project management timelines fully take into account the time needed to plan, curate, manage, deliver

and install the work. Allow time for creative thinking, development of ideas, making the artwork, events planning and management, risk assessments, health and safety issues, planning applications and any other logistical requirements.

Offer an extensive briefing for artists to make sure they know what will be expected throughout the project; what needs to be produced, timescales, limitations, restraints, structures and strategy of the council. It could be useful to have a meeting with the artist before finalising the brief.

If health and safety is likely to be an issue, make sure that relevant colleagues are involved in the process as soon as possible. This means that health and safety issues can be addressed early on and time frame and budget restrictions can

be taken into account before major installation and design decisions are taken.

Think about whether the artist's proposed work could need planning permission or have to meet other requirements, for example the Environment Agency has strict rules about what can be placed in or near a river. There could be restrictions such as working in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty or a Conservation Area. It is important to flag up these issues as early as possible in the development phase. If you're not sure, check with the relevant authorities at the outset.

If you expect the artist to apply for planning permission or any other consents, make this clear at the beginning of the project. This will be a new area for many artists so make sure that you are on hand to offer help and support.

If appropriate, ask the artist to build future maintenance costs and requirements into their proposals and budgets. Artists should create a budget framework to make sure they are paid fairly and their artworks are costed correctly to come within budget.

Be prepared to spend time helping with risk

assessments or other paperwork, especially if you are working with an early-career artist.

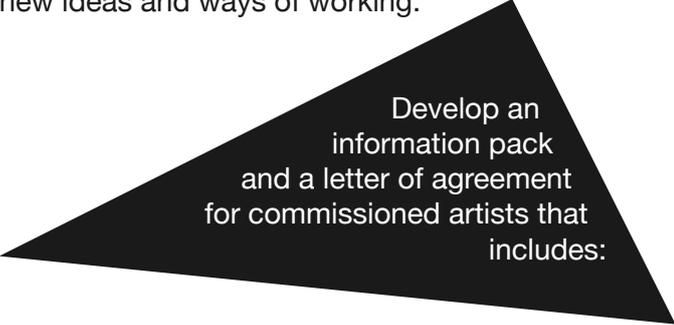
Like anyone, artists like to feel valued and that you're interested in their work. Take time to check in, to see how things are going and build a friendly working relationship. Face-to-face meetings can be really valuable and save time in the long run. Good communication can help both sides run through ideas. To help everyone prepare, send out agendas before progress reviews and meetings.

Bear in mind that some people you work with may suffer from health issues or disabilities that need additional support. Ask at the outset if the artist has any additional needs that you should be aware of.

Don't be afraid of a mixed reaction, especially on social media. A mix of positive and negative comments encourages debate about art, culture and public space. Build in media and public consultation strategies and ensure that artists' wellbeing is taken into consideration when dealing with public and local authority concerns.

Artists rarely do what they do in order to make a lot of money. Working on an arts project

may require you to think differently to how you normally do at work, and engage on an emotional as well as an intellectual level. Artists may seem to be inwardly focussed on issues that may not seem to make sense. You'll need to take time to engage with the arts and be open to new ideas and ways of working.



Develop an information pack and a letter of agreement for commissioned artists that includes:

- || A project timeline including progress meetings/milestone dates. It can be helpful to have regular check-in times
  - || Roles of the artist, commissioner and bridging organisation (if there is one)
  - || What events and procedures artists are responsible for managing
  - || Payment schedule
  - || An invoice template and an explanation of any financial terms you'll use, such as Purchase Order
- || An example of a risk assessment and any matrix used to calculate the scores (you may need to explain that a risk assessment is just that, a method for assessing risk and taking mitigating action, not a way of preventing a project being realised)
  - || Planning application guidelines, making clear who is responsible for doing what
  - || Information about what support will be available and from whom; curatorial support, help organising workshops, working outdoors, public engagement, publicity
  - || State if Public Liability Insurance or other insurance is needed, and if so, what level of cover it is reasonable to expect. A small art installation does not necessarily need £5m cover! However, £5m Public & Products Liability insurance and £5m Professional Indemnity insurance cover is included with a-n Artist membership
  - || Copyright always stays with the artist unless otherwise agreed. Contracts should specify that the local authority or commissioner has the right to use photographs and other material on its websites, in publications and other channels. The artist should always be credited (as well as the photographer, where appropriate)

# TEMPLATES FOR LOCAL AUTHORTIES

\* The following templates are best viewed by rotating the pages in Adobe Acrobat Reader. If necessary, please print the templates by scaling up to fit A4 size sheets.

# GENERAL RISK ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

Task / activity or premises assessed:

*Information about the event and location*

Location: *Address*

Name of assessor: *Name*  
 Review Date: *xx/xx/xx*

Date of assessment: *xx/xx/xx*

Hazards and Effects	Affecting Whom (staff / visitors / public / contractors)	Risk rating with no controls	Existing Controls (if any)	Residual risk rating (with existing controls)	Actions required where residual risk is still too high
<b>Outline of activity/task:</b>					
Slips, trips and falls caused by infrastructure at event, un-level ground, mole hills	Artist Participants Members of the public	24	The event routes will be checked beforehand to ensure there are no major hazards. Artist will take care not to leave equipment or luggage laying around where it may be a trip hazard.	12	
Risk of falling into water	Artist Participants Members of the public	32	Artist will take care not to run any activity so close to the water's edge that people are at risk of falling into the water. Parents/carers will be advised that they must supervise their children at all times.	12	

<p>Vehicle movement in an area used by pedestrians</p>	<p>Artist Participants Members of the public</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>The car park is open to the public as usual and cars will be travelling at low speed. The meeting point is away from the car park and no activities will take place in the car park itself.</p>	<p>6</p>	
<p>Medical emergency</p>	<p>Artist Participants</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>First aid provision will be on site to deal with any minor injuries or accidents and to assess any medical situation. There will be a fully qualified first aider on site. Treatment can be given in the van if needed. If the issue cannot be dealt with by first aider, 999 will be called. Any incidents will be reported to the Event Manager and logged on an accident/incident form</p>	<p>6</p>	

Signature of Assessor: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_XX/XX/XX\_\_

## RISK ASSESSMENT MATRIX

RISK RATING MATRIX						
LIKELIHOOD	SEVERITY					
	Multiple Death 10	Single Death 8	Major Injury 6	'3 Day' Injury 4	Minor Injury 2	None 1
Certain 10	100	80	60	40	20	10
Very Likely 8	80	64	48	32	16	8
Probable 6	60	48	36	24	12	6
Possible 4	40	32	24	16	8	4
Unlikely 2	20	16	12	8	4	2
V: Unlikely 1	10	8	6	4	2	1

The numerical scale used is to allow comparisons of the risk levels only. No literal meaning is implied by the scoring level.

'Major injury' shall be defined in the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations.

KEY TO SHADING	
48 – 100	High Level of risk is unacceptable
16 – 40	Medium Level of risk may be tolerable. Seek to reduce level of risk.
1 – 12	Low Level of risk is acceptable

DEFINITIONS FOR LIKELIHOOD	
Certain 10	Has happened before and is expected to happen on this occasion.
Very Likely 8	Has happened before and is very likely to happen on this occasion.
Probably 6	Has been known to occur before and is likely to happen on this occasion.
Possible 4	Has been known to occur and it may happen on this occasion.
Unlikely 2	Has been known to occur before but no reason to suggest that it will happen on this occasion.
V. Unlikely 1	Has never happened before and there are no reasons to suggest it will happen on this occasion.

# INVOICE TEMPLATE

**TO:** *Name of local authority contact*  
*Address*  
*Address*  
*Postcode*  
*Email*  
*Tel:*

**FROM:** *Name of artist*  
*Address*  
*Address*  
*Postcode*  
*Email*  
*Tel:*

<b>PURCHASE ORDER NO.</b> 123456
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## INVOICE NUMBER 123456

**Date**

<b>Item – what the invoice is for</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Work carried out	£
<b>TOTAL CLAIMED</b>	<b>£</b>

<b>Bank details for payment</b>
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<b>Name of bank:</b>	<i>Name</i>
<b>Branch sort code:</b>	<i>Number</i>
<b>Account number:</b>	<i>Number</i>
<b>Account holder:</b>	<i>Number</i>