

# NORTHERN MUSIC EXPORT OFFICE

## FAQs & APPLICATION GUIDANCE

[generator.org.uk/northernmusicexportoffice](http://generator.org.uk/northernmusicexportoffice)



Proudly based in the North of England

## UK Artist Touring Programme in Partnership with the FAC

### FAC FAQs below

**Application Guidance** – please read the application & budget guidance, which can be found at [www.thefac.org/ukatfund](http://www.thefac.org/ukatfund), carefully before applying.

**MAKE SURE YOU HAVE GONE THROUGH THE ‘PRE-APPLICATION GENERAL FAQs’ ON THE HOMEPAGE INFORMATION FIRST, AS THIS COVERS GUIDANCE AND ELIGIBILITY RELEVANT TO ALL PROGRAMMES.**

The Northern Music Export Office (NMEO) is working in partnership with the Featured Artists Coalition (FAC) to deliver the UK Artist Touring Programme (UKAT). Together we are working to increase the number of artists touring from the North across the United Kingdom.

When you apply, you will need to fill out some basic details, after which you will be redirected to the FAC portal to fill out an application form there. NMEO will work alongside the FAC to assess relevant northern artist applications and then fund successful tours together.

As the form will follow the FAC format, the guidance below reflects that of the FAC. You can also find further guidance in the [NMEO UKAT FAQs](#) as well as the FAC website.

Before you begin: Please ensure that you are only applying for the level of funding required. The maximum level of funding for the UK Touring Grant is £10k. However, the average grant awarded will be less than this maximum amount. Also note that you may not receive the entirety of your request depending on the decision of the panel.

### Key Facts About the UK Artist Touring Programme

- **Core Objectives:** The programme is designed to mitigate financial shortfalls on loss-making UK tours; support fair pay for artists, session musicians, managers, and crew; reduce unsustainable personal financial

risk; sustain small-to-mid level UK live touring; and guarantee safe working conditions.

- **Tour dates outside the UK are ineligible for grant funding;** although international and showcase dates may be referenced elsewhere within your application narrative for broader career context. If you want to access support for international touring, you should look at the [NMEO International Artist Programme](#).
- **Grant Thresholds:** The FAC guidance states that artists can apply for a minimum of £1,000 up to £8,000. **Note that, in certain circumstances and with a strong rationale, NMEO can step in to support up to and including £10,000 for northern artists.** The FAC guidance also states that artists can apply for a maximum of 40% of total tour expenditure. Again, **in certain circumstances and with a strong rationale, NMEO can step in to support the additional value over 40% of total tour costs for northern artists.**

## Suitability & Eligibility

### Demonstrating Suitability in Your Application:

- **Releasing Track Record:** You are a releasing artist (solo or group, including performing DJs) with a demonstrable track record of creating and releasing original music. You must have released original music under your artist name within the last 3 years on a chart-eligible streaming service.
- **Dates and Capacity:** Your tour includes a bare minimum of 3 UK headline shows in venues with capacities between 75 and 2,000. **Note that if you demonstrate a strong support slot, co-headline shows, or festival opportunity, then a capacity of over 2,000 is eligible.**
- **Promoter Deal Balance:** At least 75% of tour dates are promoter-booked with guaranteed fees, and no more than 25% are self-promoted or dry-hire shows.
- **Confirmed Dates:** You must have a minimum of 3 headline shows confirmed at the point of application. Pencilled (held) dates can be

included in your UKAT budget, but all dates must be confirmed before funding is released. Purely speculative dates will not fare well with decision panels.

- **Financial Deficit:** Your tour would be loss-making without grant support, and you can evidence the genuine shortfall based on realistic costs and confirmed income.
- **Fair Working Conditions:** You commit to fair pay, responsible routing, and safe working conditions for yourself and your touring personnel.
- **Duplicated Funding:** You do not have significant personal backing or substantial external financial subsidies specifically for touring activity **covering the same costs** (e.g., advances from record labels, commercial sponsors, Arts Council England, Local Authorities, PRS Foundation, or Help Musicians). UKAT can fund unfunded elements or gaps in your tour budget where support is non-duplicative. To be clear, you can demonstrate income from other sources, but UKAT cannot duplicate funding – UKAT is for the shortfall remaining in your budget.

## Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Access

As part of the application process, you must complete a Diversity Monitoring Form (each band member must complete one if applying as a group). Data is anonymised, held separately, and is not considered alongside applications during artistic assessment. It is used to ensure UKAT reaches a representative breadth of artists, regions, genres, and communities.

You will also be given the opportunity to highlight if and how your tour reaches under-served audiences, venues, or regions; share relevant lived experience or community context shaping the tour's impact; and outline any access, disability, caring, or childcare needs in the dedicated Access Fund tab.

## Understanding 'Top-Up' Funding & Deficit Calculations

UKAT is designed to bridge the shortfall in artists' touring budgets, not to cover total tour costs. The grant request must reflect the lowest value between: (1) Total Net Shortfall, (2) 40% of Total Tour Expenditure, or (3) The

£8,000 maximum grant cap.

| Scenario                                       | Total Costs | Tour Income | Shortfall | 40% Cap | Max Award      |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|---------|----------------|
| <b>Example 1<br/>(Capped by Shortfall)</b>     | £18,000     | £11,000     | £7,000    | £7,200  | <b>£7,000</b>  |
| <b>Example 3<br/>(Capped by 40% Threshold)</b> | £16,000     | £9,000      | £7,000    | £6,400  | <b>£6,400*</b> |

**Remember, these are the criteria for the overall national FAC UKAT programme. For eligible northern artists, NMEO can top-up your application to support more than 40% of the total cost and/or up to £10,000. It is essential that you highlight your postcode resides in one of the eligible Mayoral Strategic or Combined Authorities detailed in the FAQs i.e. West Yorkshire, Tees Valley or North East to be considered for this additional support.**

## **Section 1 of the Application Form**

Eligible applicants must answer 'Yes' to all gateway checks:

- Aged 18+
- UK right to live/work
- Primary UK residence
- UK bank account
- 3-year release track record on streaming DSPs
- No duplicative major funding
- Minimum of 3 confirmed headline dates in 75–2,000 cap venues
- 75%+ promoter-guaranteed dates
- Tour completed by 30 April 2027
- Request of £1k–£8k / max 40%. Remember that NMEO can potentially support applications above 40% and above £8k. Be clear in your application and contact the FAC if there are any issues.

## Section 2 of the Application Form

**Eligible Lead Applicants:** Applications can be submitted by the artist, manager/management company, or another authorised representative. Applications must be in the artist's name, and grant awards are paid directly to the artist or designated business entity.

## Section 3 of the Application Form

- **Career Stage:** Select the descriptor (Early career, Emerging, Mid-career, Established but financially constrained) that reflects the active releasing and/or touring duration, rather than age of the artist.
- **Artist Biography:** Provide a clear, structured biography covering:
  1. Project sound
  2. Key releases in the last 3 years
  3. Headline and touring milestones
  4. Current strategic focus.
- **Links:** Provide links to recent releases and key web/social channels. Make sure that music links reflect the current sound, rather than significantly older tracks that generated strong traction.

## Section 4 of the Application Form

**Tour Context:** Only eligible UK dates can feature in the budget. Where relevant, details of the wider tour (including international dates, mixed headline, and showcases) should be provided in the narrative to illustrate wider context. Ensure the tour dates, number of shows and budget are consistent across your application and the uploaded budget template.

## Section 5 of the Application Form

This section focuses on articulating why support is essential now, what risks the fund may help mitigate and how the tour contributes to longer-term development and sustainability.

- **Why Support is Essential Now (250 word limit):** Detail why the tour is not viable without UKAT (risk of cancellation, excessive personal debt, inability to pay fair rates) and why now is a pivotal career moment.
- **Investment in Wider Career (250 word limit):** Explain how grant support strengthens long-term career sustainability and enables reinvestment into recording, training, audience development, or team infrastructure.
- **Expected Strategic Outcomes (150 word limit):** Outline clear targets such as reaching new regions/venues, stepping up room capacities, keeping tickets accessible, or securing future festival bookings. Detail why specific underserved UK regions are strategically significant.

## Sections 6 and 7 of the Application Form

This section summarises your budget and shortfall. You must upload a detailed UKAT Touring Budget Template as evidence of your planned tour. You must complete this template first before filling in your answers in the application form. The budget template includes a summary page which will give you this information.

Budgets must be submitted in the official Excel (.xlsx) template. Files submitted as PDF, Google Sheets, Word, or Apple Numbers will be automatically rejected as ineligible. Only type in white input cells; never modify locked/grey formula cells.

### When Completing the Budget:

- Ensure all essential costs are included (rehearsals, travel days, per diems, safe transport, and reasonable accommodation).
- Avoid unrealistically low fees or expenses; budgets must reflect safe working practices and fair pay.
- Figures in your uploaded Excel budget must match the numbers entered in your application form.
- If any costs exceed typical benchmarks (e.g., specialist crew, extra production, non-standard travel), provide a clear, brief explanation in both the budget notes and form.
- Completely exclude all merchandise income and expenditure from the core tour budget and shortfall calculations.
- Do not include access, disability, or caring costs in the main budget; detail them exclusively in the separate **Access Fund Request** tab.
- Be prepared to explain why your tour costs exceed income.

## **Sections 8 and 9 of the Application Form**

### **Fair Pay & Good Practice:**

- All personnel – including artists, session musicians, managers, tour managers, and crew – must be fairly paid for rehearsal, travel, and show days without relying on unpaid labour, deferred pay, or profit-sharing.
- Rates should align with recognised standards: Musicians' Union (MU) for session players, BECTU for technical crew, and National Living Wage for artists and managers.
- Management time is a recognised direct expense if actively coordinating or delivering the tour.
- Additional funding is available to cover disability and access, e.g., support workers, step-free rooms, and BSL interpreters.

## **Section 10 of the Application Form**

### **Post-Award Terms & Payment Release:**

- 90% of awarded funds will be released upon receipt of the signed funding agreement, bank verification, and invoice. The 10% balance is released upon completion of post-tour evaluation.
- Recipients will be required to verify held tour dates, execute agreement
- Recipients will be required to acknowledge UKAT and NMEO support and utilise relevant logos across communications, marketing and press.
- Recipients will need to submit post-tour an 'actuals' budget comparing real to projected income and expenditure, as well as an end-point evaluation survey.
- All tour activity must conclude by 30th April 2027.

**You will find a Step-by-Step Guide to the Budget Template on the FAC UKAT portal.**