

Even now, if I see opportunity that isn't, um, this is one of the secret little bit activism I do, I just email them and say, um, "I've seen your opportunity advertised. Really, you know, uh, sounds fantastic. Love, love the idea", do a little bit of fluffing. And then I'm like, "But I noticed that it doesn't adhere to the recommended rate of pay that is published by Arts Council, and/or the trade union rate of pay which is our statutory one. And, uh, you need to be aware that these are published rates of pay that artists should be earning."

And recently, you know, I had this sort of quite a lengthy email conversation with someone advertising a role within a hospital working with terminally ill children. An artist, right? And, um, they wanted an artist to do a two-hour workshop in the morning at one site, and then a two-hour workshop in the afternoon at another site. And they wanted to pay one flat day rate. And I was like, "Where is the allocation of money for, um, prep time?" And they were like, "Well, that's four hours of delivery so that you are left with three and a half hours for prep."

I was like, right. When you go to a workshop, you have to set it up beforehand, and you have to, like, have conversations with key staff, and you have to like make sure the room is, like, warm and welcoming and be there when people arrive. So, that's normally about 45 minutes beforehand. And then at the end, people quite often wanna kind of stay beyond the length of the session. You can't just sort of close the doors and chuck them out, particularly if they're ill. And you often need to maybe flag up causes for concern with staff or, like, have a debrief moment, pack everything down, make sure that it's put away, you know, make sure space is tidy. And that's, so that's 45 minutes at the end. So that's an hour and a half aside every workshop. So then by your reckoning, you're leaving half an hour of prep per two workshops a week.

I was like, that's, that doesn't, that is impossible. The amount of unpaid work you're asking someone to deliver, and they're also not trained. You know, no artist has got training to deal with terminally ill children. So, you're also asking for a major amount of emotional labour to be done, which none of the - and then they were saying, "Oh, well, we give, um, psychological support, you'd have free access to our counselling service." But you wouldn't pay the person to attend that, so...

You know, I just, so, you know, the whole thing, I just try, and I just try and come at people all the time with this stuff and be like, "No." Um, and I don't apply for things that I don't think are paid for properly, but I also kind of call people out because I'm just like, these budgets are set by people who are on a regular income and they don't understand what they're asking people to do. How difficult it is to run a two-hour workshop, full stop, um, that's engaging and different each week, um, is really, that's, that's actually quite a big ask. And then to do that in a context where you're dealing with people who are critically ill, and not providing any kind of pastoral support for the artists you're working with. I mean... [LAUGHS] Aaagh! Anyway, so I'm like, "I will not be replying for this opportunity cause because of this. But I thought you should know."