



FAIR WORK STATEMENT

Referred to as Appendix D in the Fèis Rois Business Plan 2025 - 28

2025

2028



I have been working as a freelance musician and visual artist for the last 21 years and I am now based in the Highland village of Ullapool. I was lucky enough to be a participant for many years at Fèis Rois growing up and the experience from this has proved invaluable to my life as a self-employed musician now. In fact, I would go as far to say I would never even have considered the idea of doing music as a career or, realised it was possible before opportunities such as the Ceilidh Trail.

As a young musician on the Ceilidh Trail, I gained insight into what life as a self-employed musician would entail – the reality of touring and all the ‘behind the scenes’ work that goes alongside that. I developed my skills as a musician and performer, and I met and performed with other young musicians who became lifelong friends and a lot of them are now fellow freelance musicians.

I feel so privileged to still be a part of this extended Fèis Rois community and the Fèis continues to be my biggest employer. One of my roles for the Fèis has been to be a mentor for the Ceilidh Trail and it is so inspiring to see how the concept has evolved over the years. The Ceilidh Trail really ticks all the boxes for the needs of these young musicians setting out into the world. I am also currently a tutor for the weekly Fèis classes, I often teach at the adult and senior residential Fèisean and I am about to start hosting the 12-week Lullaby Project in Ullapool. These classes massively benefit this rural community as they provide inclusive access to music tuition and inspire and preserve our wonderful culture.

The regular income I earn from Fèis Rois really makes it possible to live and work as an artist in the Highlands. As a freelance employee, the rate of pay is extremely fair, and it is clear that the organisation really values and cares for their tutors and participants. I recently completed my Emergency First Aid at Work training, which was paid for by Fèis Rois and I am also about to do a training day learning a recorded music programme, as offered as personal development by Fèis Rois. These skills are really important as a freelance artist and often it is a struggle to afford the time and outlay to do them otherwise. The Highlands are very fortunate to have such an organisation on our doorstep and long may this amazing work continue.

Mairearad Green, Freelance Musician and Visual Artist



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INTRODUCTION

Fèis Rois is committed to the Scottish Government's Fair Work First policy. The Fair Work Convention has been in place since April 2015 and acts as an independent advisory body to Scottish Ministers. The Convention's vision is that, by 2025, people in Scotland will have a world-leading working life where fair work drives success, wellbeing and prosperity for individuals, businesses, organisations and society.

Fair work is work that offers effective voice, opportunity, security, fulfilment and respect; that balances the rights and responsibilities of employers and workers and that can generate benefits for individuals, organisations and society.

Fèis Rois is striving to be an organisation which sees employees, freelance musicians and creative practitioners fully engaged in what we do, supported through training and development opportunities, and given effective voice, security and fulfilment through their work. We promote a respectful working culture and have progressive workplace policies in place.

Fèis Rois is an accredited Living Wage Employer having been certified by the Living Wage Foundation. No employee is paid less than the Real Living Wage with freelance musicians and artists paid in line with industry standard rates set by the Musicians' Union and the Scottish Artists' Union.

Fèis Rois is proud to be included as a case study in the 'Fair work with freelance workers' chapter of The Illustrated Fair Work Guide for Employers. The Illustrated Fair Work Employer Guide provides practical information about how to put Fair Work into practice for employers in the creative and cultural sectors in Scotland and is published on Creative Scotland's website at www.creativescotland.com.

Fèis Rois has made a number of recent commitments to fair work that contribute to increased productivity and innovation, a greater ability to attract and retain employees, and reduced absenteeism. The most significant commitment Fèis Rois has made to Fair Work was in moving to a 4-day week with no loss of earnings for all staff in January 2022. This was a result of a period of dialogue and challenge where workers' views were sought out, listened to and, ultimately, led to this significant change in working practice for the organisation.

The organisation offers flexible working for all staff, as well as the option to work from home or from the office. This has a particularly positive impact for working parents, those with caring responsibilities and employees with disabilities. Employees taking up a post with Fèis Rois receive a copy of the company's staff handbook, which runs to 80 pages and includes policies such as flexible and hybrid working, harassment and bullying, health and safety, menopause, parental leave, sickness absence, whistleblowing and more.

Although the organisation has made much progress in the area of Fair Work to date, Fèis Rois recognises that there is always more to do and plans to use the Fair Work Tool at www.fairworktool.scot to track its Fair Work journey.

Fèis Rois communicates its commitments to Fair Work by publishing these commitments on its website at www.feisrois.org.

FAIR WORK DIMENSIONS

Effective Voice

Effective voice requires a safe environment where dialogue and challenge are dealt with constructively and where workers' views are sought out, listened to and can make a difference. Collective bargaining can provide the context for effective voice in unionised workplaces and sectors. Voice is effective where workers have scope to say what they feel, are listened to and where their voice can make a difference.

At Fèis Rois, we believe in empowering employees' voices and establishing this through many avenues of engagement including all staff meetings and, at a minimum, monthly opportunities for employees to chat with their line managers in one-to-one meetings. Fèis Rois is a small organisation with only 6 FTE employees and has not been asked to recognise any trade union, but we would respond appropriately should that be the case in future.

Opportunity

Opportunity allows people to access and progress in work and employment and is a crucial dimension of fair work. Meeting legal obligations by ensuring equal access to work and equal opportunities in work sets a minimum floor for fair work. This protects workers in those groups subject to specific legal protections on the grounds of sex, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, age and disability. Fair opportunity is, however, more than the chance to access work. Attitudes, behaviours, policies and practices within organisations – and, crucially, the outcomes these produce – signal and reflect the value placed on fair opportunity.

Fèis Rois sets out its commitments to equal opportunities in its Equalities, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy (Appendix A to the 2025 – 2028 Business Plan). We run a fair and transparent recruitment process with all job opportunities being advertised, and by having regular open calls for freelance artists to work on projects. We invite anyone applying for a job with Fèis Rois to do so in a format that best suits them, which might mean submitting a short video rather than a written application. We continue to invest in training for all staff, including freelance musicians, focusing on organisational priorities and individual personal development.

We regularly have opportunities for trainee musicians to work on our programmes. We reflect and support the principles of Fair Work by always offering paid work opportunities for artists at every stage of their career. We do not have unpaid internships, and trainees are paid at above the Real Living Wage. We have examples of musicians who were successful in applying for a traineeship several years ago who now work regularly across our programmes and mentor new trainees.

We support talent and leadership development in a range of different ways and have built a strong reputation for sector development within traditional music in Scotland. Examples include providing training for musicians working in participatory settings, development opportunities for aspiring performers through the Ceilidh Trail initiative, and providing work placements for students who might then go on to apply for trainee musician roles.



Security

Security of employment, work and income are important foundations of a successful life. Predictability of working time is often a component of secure working arrangements. While no one has complete security and stability of employment, income and work, security remains an important aspect of fair work. Context and competitive conditions impact significantly on prospects for security, but fair work is not work where the burden of insecurity and risk rests primarily on workers.

Security of work can be challenging in a sector where funding is so precarious. However, Fèis Rois offers security to its employees by having collective agreements for pay and conditions, a clear and transparent pay scale which pays above the Real Living Wage, and fair opportunities for sick pay, pension contributions and maternity / paternity / adoption leave. Fèis Rois offers meaningful work which provides a reliable income. We do not use or issue zero-hour contracts. Freelance contracts are based on hourly or daily rates as set out by the Musicians' Union or the Scottish Artists' Union.



Fulfilment

Workers benefit from engaging in fulfilling work in terms of using and developing their skills; having some control over their work and scope to make a difference; taking part in appropriately challenging work and taking up opportunities for personal growth and career advancement. Workers who are fulfilled in their jobs are more likely to be engaged, committed and healthy. Fulfilling work contributes to confidence and self-belief. Providing fulfilling work can also benefit employers. Work that is fulfilling allows workers to produce high quality goods and services and is more likely to unleash creativity that supports improvements.

Fèis Rois has an excellent reputation for providing opportunity and fulfilment for its workforce. There are clear opportunities for training, personal growth, and career development with an annual budget ringfenced for staff and tutor training. Individual members of the staff team have autonomy over their areas of the organisation and can use their skills to exercise some control and make a difference. This is clear in the structure of the company with the Education Manager leading on the creative development of all of the work with schools, the Community Engagement Officer forging new partnerships for creative projects in Ross-Shire and the Creative Producer shaping the main Fèisean and Ceilidh Trail tour each year. We promote fulfilment at work and a feeling of belonging by engaging our employees and freelance musicians in regular gatherings and training events.



Respect

Fair work is work in which people are respected and treated respectfully, whatever their role and status. Respect involves recognising others as dignified human beings and recognising their standing and personal worth. Respect at work is a two-way process between employers and workers and is valued for recognising the reciprocity of the employment relationship.

Fèis Rois fosters a culture of respect and dignity in the workplace. At its most basic, respect involves ensuring the health, safety and well-being of others. Fèis Rois supports respect in the workplace by having appropriate policies and procedures in place, e.g. policies on health and safety, harassment and bullying, time off for medical appointments, stress in the workplace, menopause, grievance procedures, etc. These are all published in the detailed staff handbook given to all staff when they commence their employment.

Staff are entitled to be treated with respect and dignity at work and have a personal responsibility for ensuring that they treat others with the way they would expect to be treated themselves. We consider dignity at work to mean being free to work without experiencing these four unacceptable behaviours: bullying, harassment, discrimination and victimisation. The Equalities Diversity and Inclusion Policy (Appendix A to the 2025 – 2028 Business Plan) gives further descriptions of these behaviours and outlines the policy for dealing with situations if these behaviours arise in the workplace.



As I was coming near to the end of my studies, I was becoming quite anxious and frankly terrified about what to do next. How do I earn a living doing music? How do I do this while staying in my hometown of Invergordon? How do I combine my passion for teaching while working in the community I am a part of? and how do I do this while continuing to improve as a tutor and musician?

Then in 2017, in my final week of studies, I came across a post advertising for a trainee position with the local organisation Fèis Rois. The post involved working, and learning alongside other tutors, on a YMI-funded project in the prison in Inverness. This was a golden opportunity, and it answered all my questions. It was a chance to be able to pass on the enthusiasm, passion, and love that I have for music to others. A chance to show people the joy that can be obtained from being creative and collaborating and connecting through music. While taking part in this project, I was also able to learn from the other more experienced tutors, ensuring I had lots of professional development.

Now, almost 8 years on, I haven't looked back. Since the HMP Inverness project, Fèis Rois has opened up opportunities for me to teach in a massive range of settings. These include primary schools and special needs schools, weekly guitar classes, working with amazing young people through an after-school project called Fèis Club, and helping adult residents with mental health issues every week - showing them the benefits and positivity that music can bring through learning, playing, and creating. I have also recently started working on a project with the staff in a local secondary school music department. All of this is done with the focus that music, particularly Scottish traditional music, can be fun, informative, and inspiring to individuals in all walks of life.

I also routinely get provided with ample professional development opportunities to allow me to improve as a tutor and musician. Fèis Rois is a fair employer that gives me a chance to give something back and to add to the community that has done a lot for me and provided me with so much inspiration.

Through the sheer breadth, depth, and versatile nature of the work, I can confidently say that Fèis Rois remains a hugely vital and significant employer that has enabled me to not only work in my community but to make a living, allowing me to stay in my hometown. I see the work that Fèis Rois allows musicians and artists to do as a way to nurture, add, and ultimately strengthen the sustainability of musical talent, creative individuals, and learners in the Highlands and Scotland as a whole.

Liam Ross, Freelance Musician

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