



# THE TOURING NETWORK PROGRAMMING POLICY

REVIEWED FEBRUARY 2024



# PROGRAMMING POLICY

We believe live performance can transform people's lives by changing the way they see the world. It can tell stories that enact social change; tackle challenging subjects and open vital debate; it can spark joy; bring people together and immerse them in another world. It's also a brilliant night out!

## Introduction + Context

The Touring Network provides a unique model for touring support across rural and island communities in the Highlands & Islands. The network acts as a central point to help and encourage members, with professional and community promoters operating and programming independently. We offer this through:

- our expertise, be this via network peers or the team
- our funding pots
- our showcase events such as The Gathering
- digital tools & resources
- networking opportunities

## When we programme

All our network members programme independently the majority of the time and without the involvement or influence of The Touring Network. Crucially, we urge any artists looking to get their work seen by promoters in our network, to **make connections with promoters directly** to understand their individual programming cycles. Every promoter in our network operates under a different context - they all programme work according to available funds, community demand, volunteer or staff capacity or venue availability. Any artists looking to make connections are encouraged to:

- Register with [tourbook.live](https://tourbook.live) - the free online showcasing platform that we advocate for everyone involved in touring performance to use, to showcase their venue or show
- Join as a member of The Touring Network so they can access our services, including network events to better understand their promoter and performer peers.

There are two instances where The Touring Network do however have a hand in programming;

- Booking performers for The Gathering – our flagship event bringing together our

membership to network and showcase.

- Our Programming funds and initiatives - giving promoters in the region an opportunity to stage professional performances, and performers an opportunity to tour an opportunity to tour to new places sustainably.

Programming timelines from call out to tour can be anything from three months to two years in advance – we will always detail this in call outs.

## **How we programme**

When programming for any programming initiatives or The Gathering, detailed above, we will always consult with a portion of our membership via a promoters panel – drawing from on-the-ground experience and reflecting local audience needs.

Our promoters panel is a rotating selection of members who are selected based on their experience, operating context and region. All our members have an opportunity to be considered to take part in this panel and call outs are issued when needed, with remuneration offered to those taking part.

Conversely – when our promoters are programming independently but are accessing our programming funds to do so – we request that the artists they book align with the criteria outline below.

## **What we programme**

Any performances we support will align, where possible, with our organisational values, outcomes, policies or development targets and therefore funding and programming decisions will be made balancing the below criteria:

THE ARTIST/ MUSICIAN / SHOW WILL	Priority	Outcome	Policy
<p><b>Demonstrate quality or excellence</b></p> <p>We're keen to support artists with quality and excellence at heart – from the way they plan and market tours right through to the final performance. Rural audiences deserve the best and we want our communities to have a cultural experience that harnesses the power of a live experience regardless of the size of the stage or audiences.</p>	E	-	-
<p><b>Can evidence their experience of, or an understanding of, Rural Touring</b></p> <p>Presenting live performances in rural and island communities has different challenges to urban promoting; small audiences, geographic sparseness, reliance on volunteers and a fragile infrastructure. It's crucial performers we support have an understanding and willingness to adapt to promoters' contexts, nurture relationships and work to strengthen rural touring in the region.</p>	E	7	-
<p><b>Be paid fair fees</b></p> <p>A condition of our funding from Creative Scotland (and the Scottish Government) is that we employ a Fair Work policy. Within this policy we advocate for fair pay for artists; leaning on standard equity rates and sector best practice.</p>	E	9	FW
<p><b>Be one of our supported artforms: Dance, New Music, Theatre, Family, Comedy, Outdoor or Circus</b></p> <p>We like to see a balance of artforms supported and will consider this when programming / funding.</p>	E	-	-
<p><b>Be financially viable for promoters in the region and our funding budgets</b></p> <p>It's vital that any show we support is financially viable, with members reserves and our level of investment in balance with anticipated return.</p>	E	-	FW
<p><b>Be an artform which is less familiar to your audience.</b></p> <p>Some artforms are less affordable or accessible to audiences; we're keen to see our members try new things in order to offer cultural diversity, while potentially opening the door to new audience members.</p>	D	-	-

THE ARTIST/ MUSICIAN / SHOW WILL	Priority	Outcome	Policy
<p><b>Be part of a tour in our region</b></p> <p>We encourage members to work together to create more environmentally friendly tours, with joined up thinking and collaboration at its heart. We'd like to see that tours are better routed, leading to a reduction in emissions by touring performers and avoiding one-off tour dates.</p>	D	1, 2	ENV
<p><b>Show a commitment to, or highlight issues relating to the environment</b></p> <p>We acknowledge our role in advocating for a greener future. We support live performances that operate more environmentally sustainably or artists who highlight environmental issues.</p>	D	2	ENV
<p><b>Show a commitment to, or highlight issues relating to equalities, diversity or inclusion</b></p> <p>The Touring Network wants to ensure that more people, from all parts of society, are able to engage with live performance and we try to support our members to make their audiences more diverse. A more diverse audience might include children and young people, older people, people with disabilities, people from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds and native Gaelic or Scots speakers. We might consider a 'pay what you can' ticketing model or supporting a piece which represents more diversity on the stage.</p>	D	6	EDI
<p><b>Offer an opportunity for community engagement or development</b></p> <p>Putting place and communities at the heart of cultural activities has the potential to add value; by deepening the experience for an audience member and/or increasing the size of the audience. It also feeds into the cultural ecology of our region, creating a more vibrant local performing arts scene.</p>	O	5	EDI
<p><b>Be a local act</b></p> <p>Artistic excellence and ambition is right on our doorstep. We encourage our promoters to support local performers, who already understand their contexts. Booking local performers also supports our ambitions to reduce carbon emissions in the touring sector.</p>	O	4, 6	ENV

THE ARTIST/ MUSICIAN / SHOW WILL	Priority	Outcome	Policy
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**Be “tour-ready”**

O - -

In order for our members to programme ‘as a network’ and for us to allocate funding, its important timescales and the finished product is clearly articulated. By ‘tour-ready’ we mean work or shows that are fully developed and that any funding required for the tour, other than support from The Touring Network, is confirmed and that the tourbook.live profile is complete and available to share.

THE ARTIST/ MUSICIAN / SHOW WILL NOT			
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**Be one of the following artforms;** cover/tribute bands, amateur outfits, children’s entertainers, murder mysteries, hypnotists or mediums, or adaptations of classic texts, unless it is a radical retelling.

E - -

**Have toured to your community before**

D 1 -

The first time we issue support to a performer, we do so with the hope that they go on to develop relationships beyond the funded activity. Therefore, we tend to support work/artists which have yet to tour to a community.

**Be “work-in-progress”**

D 7 -

Occasionally, we may consider work that is still in development for showcasing events, like The Gathering

**KEY**

**PRIORITY**

E – Essential  
 D – Desirable  
 O - Optional

**OUTCOMES**

You can explore our outcomes and evaluations framework on our website

**POLICIES**

FW - Fair Work Policy – In development  
 ENV - [Environmental Policy](#)  
 EDI – [Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion Policy](#)