

# The Big Freelancer Survey 2024

*By freelancers for freelancers*

*This survey is the fourth in a series of five annual surveys designed to build a picture of freelancers' needs and priorities. Whether you have filled in the Big Freelancer Survey before or not, your responses are vital. Please be as honest as you feel comfortable with being.*

*We appreciate that there are a lot of surveys out there, so we will do our best to keep it simple. All answers are anonymous.*

**1 - Firstly, did you fill in the Big Freelancer Survey 2023?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Prefer not to say
- d. I don't know

**2 - Now, a couple of questions about your work**

**2a. What areas of Entertainment have you worked in over the past 12 months?**

- a. Film
- b. TV
- c. Theatre
- d. Live events/concerts
- e. Opera
- f. Dance
- g. Circus
- h. Recorded audio
- i. Video games

j. Other (Please state)

**2b. From your previous selection, which one area of Entertainment have you worked in most over the past 12 months?**

*Please select one.*

- k. Film
- l. TV
- m. Theatre
- n. Live events/concerts
- o. Opera
- p. Dance
- q. Circus
- r. Recorded audio
- s. Video games
- t. Other (Please state)

**2c - How many years' experience do you have working in the entertainment industry?**

Please enter a number (enter 1 for up to 1 year)

**2d - Which of these best describes the work you mainly do?**

Please pick the closest option(s), or submit your role in 'Other'.

- a. Performance (acting / dancing / singing)
- b. Music (instrumental)
- c. Music (composition)
- d. Directing / Assistant Directing
- e. Writing
- f. Dramaturgy
- g. Producing
- h. Production Management
- i. Stage Management
- j. Company Management

- k. Sound (Creative / Design)
- l. Sound / Audio (Technical)
- m. Lighting (Creative / Design)
- n. Lighting / LX (Technical)
- o. Set Design
- p. Carpentry / Set Building
- q. Movement / Choreography
- r. Camera / Photography
- s. Video Design / Projection
- t. Automation
- u. Rigging
- v. Costume Design
- w. Wardrobe (Technical)
- x. Hair / Wigs
- y. Make-Up
- z. Location Work
- aa. Front of House / Venue-based
- bb. Stage / Floor Crew
- cc. Graphics
- dd. SFX / VFX
- ee. Editing
- ff. Armoury
- gg. Fight / Stunt work
- hh. Puppetry (design / construction)
- ii. Props making / Supervising
- jj. Voice / Dialect / Language coaching
- kk. Support (incl. Chaperone)
- ll. Access Coordinator
- mm. Covid / Health & Safety
- nn. Office / Production
- oo. Marketing / PR

pp. Casting

qq. Education / Outreach

rr. Other (Please state)

**2e. Are you a member of a union?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I don't know
- d. Prefer not to say

**3 - Now, a few questions about you, and how you identify.**

**Just a reminder that all answers are anonymous.**

**The following section contains questions about your background and current circumstances.**

**It is important for us to know this to help advocate for support where it might be most needed.**

**3a. Where do you live?**

- a. England
- b. Northern Ireland
- c. Scotland
- d. Wales
- e. Other

**3b. Which county do you live in? (England)**

*Please choose based on your answer to 5a.*

- a. Avon

- b. Bedfordshire
- c. Berkshire
- d. Buckinghamshire
- e. Cambridgeshire
- f. Cheshire
- g. Cornwall
- h. Cumbria
- i. Derbyshire
- j. Devon
- k. Dorset
- l. Durham
- m. Essex
- n. Gloucestershire
- o. Greater London
- p. Hampshire
- q. Herefordshire
- r. Hertfordshire
- s. Isle of Wight
- t. Kent
- u. Lancashire
- v. Leicestershire
- w. Lincolnshire
- x. Merseyside
- y. Norfolk
- z. Northamptonshire
- aa. Northumberland
- bb. Nottinghamshire
- cc. Oxfordshire
- dd. Rutland
- ee. Shropshire
- ff. Somerset
- gg. Staffordshire
- hh. Suffolk

- ii. Surrey
- jj. Sussex
- kk. Tyne and Wear
- ll. Warwickshire
- mm. West Midlands
- nn. Wiltshire
- oo. Worcestershire
- pp. Yorkshire

**3c. Which county do you live in? (Northern Ireland)**

*Please choose based on your answer to 5a.*

- a. Antrim
- b. Armagh
- c. Derry/Londonderry
- d. Down
- e. Fermanagh
- f. Tyrone

**3d. Which county do you live in? (Scotland)**

*Please choose based on your answer to 5a.*

- a. Aberdeen City Council
- b. Aberdeenshire Council
- c. Angus Council
- d. Argyll and Bute Council
- e. City of Edinburgh Council
- f. Clackmannanshire Council
- g. Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
- h. Dumfries and Galloway Council
- i. Dundee City Council
- j. East Ayrshire Council
- k. East Dunbartonshire Council
- l. East Lothian Council
- m. East Renfrewshire Council

- n. Falkirk Council
- o. Fife Council
- p. Glasgow City Council
- q. Inverclyde Council
- r. Midlothian Council
- s. North Ayrshire Council
- t. North Lanarkshire Council
- u. Orkney Islands Council
- v. Perth and Kinross Council
- w. Renfrewshire Council
- x. Scottish Borders Council
- y. Shetland Islands Council
- z. South Ayrshire Council
- aa. South Lanarkshire Council
- bb. Stirling Council
- cc. The Highland Council
- dd. The Moray Council
- ee. West Dunbartonshire Council
- ff. West Lothian Council

**3e. Which county do you live in? (Wales)**

*Please choose based on your answer to 5a.*

- a. Blaenau Gwent
- b. Bridgend (Pen-y-bont ar Ogwr)
- c. Caerphilly (Caerffili)
- d. Cardiff (Caerdydd)
- e. Carmarthenshire (Sir Gaerfyrddin)
- f. Ceredigion
- g. Conwy
- h. Denbighshire (Sir Ddinbych)
- i. Flintshire (Sir y Fflint)
- j. Gwynedd

- k. Isle of Anglesey (Ynys Môn)
- l. Merthyr Tydfil (Merthyr Tudful)
- m. Monmouthshire (Sir Fynwy)
- n. Neath Port Talbot (Castell-nedd Port Talbot)
- o. Newport (Casnewydd)
- p. Pembrokeshire (Sir Benfro)
- q. Powys
- r. Rhondda Cynon Taff
- s. Swansea (Abertawe)
- t. Torfaen (Tor-faen)
- u. Vale of Glamorgan (Bro Morgannwg)
- v. Wrexham (Wrecsam)

**3f. What is your first language?**

If you select Other, please let us know the language.

- a. English
- b. Welsh
- c. Irish
- d. Scottish Gaelic
- e. Other

**3g. Which of the following best describes your current living situation?**

- a. Homeowner - owned outright
- b. Homeowner - with a mortgage
- c. Renting - a room (lodging in someone else's home)
- d. Renting - flat or house share
- e. Renting - with a partner/solo
- f. Living with parents/guardians
- g. Assisted living/sheltered accommodation/care home



- h. Prefer not to say
- i. Other (Please specify)

**3.1. We know that social and economic inequalities are widespread but poorly understood across the sector. To help us understand how these inequalities most directly affect freelancers we have followed guidance from the Jerwood Arts toolkit to develop the following questions. Please only answer if you feel comfortable doing so.**

**3h. Thinking about when you were growing up, which of the following applies best to the highest or main income earner in your household?**

- a. Modern professional occupations (such as: teacher, nurse, physiotherapist, social worker, musician, police officer (sergeant or above), software designer)
- b. Senior managers or administrators (usually responsible for planning, organising and co-ordinating work, and for finance, such as: finance manager, chief executive)
- c. Clerical and intermediate occupations (such as: secretary, personal assistant, clerical worker, call centre agent, nursery nurse)
- d. Technical and craft occupations (such as: motor mechanic, plumber, printer, electrician, gardener, train driver)
- e. Small business owner (employs less than 25 people eg. corner shop owner, single restaurant owner, garage owner)
- f. Semi-routine manual and service occupations (such as: postal worker, machine operative, security guard, caretaker, farm worker, catering assistant, sales assistant)
- g. Routine manual and service occupations (such as: HGV driver, cleaner, porter, packer, labourer, waiter/waitress, bar staff)
- h. Middle or junior managers (such as: office manager, retail manager, bank manager, restaurant manager, warehouse manager)
- i. Traditional professional occupations (such as: accountant, solicitor, medical practitioner, scientist, civil / mechanical engineer)

- j. Long term unemployed (claimed Jobseeker's Allowance or earlier unemployment benefit for more than a year)
- k. Retired
- l. This question does not apply to me
- m. Prefer not to say
- n. I don't know
- o. Other

**3i. When you were at secondary school (eg. age 11-16) were you at any point entitled to free school meals?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Don't know
- d. Not applicable
- e. Prefer not to say

**3j. Please select all that apply to you.**

For these purposes, school age is considered 4-18 inclusive.

- a. I am a co-parent/carer of pre-school age child/children
- b. I am a single parent/sole carer of pre-school age child/children
- c. I am a co-parent/carer of school age child/children
- d. I am a single parent/sole carer of school age child/children
- e. I am a co-carer of someone else (not a child)
- f. I am a sole carer of someone else (not a child)
- g. None of the above.
- h. Prefer not to say.

***3.2 Just a reminder that all your answers to every question are recorded anonymously. All the data collected will help to advocate for support where it is most needed now, and in the future. We are aware that the following questions are sensitive. While our intention is to be***

*as inclusive as possible, we recognise that the use of language differs from person to person. If you use different language from that used in the question, please feel free to select 'Other', and enter your preferred self description.*

**3k. Which of the following options would best describe your ethnicity?**

- a. Asian - Any Other/Mixed Asian Background
- b. Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi
- c. Asian or Asian British - Chinese
- d. Asian or Asian British - Indian
- e. Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
- f. Black - Any Other/Mixed Black Background
- g. Black or Black British - African
- h. Black or Black British - Caribbean
- i. Latinx
- j. Middle East & North African
- k. Middle East & North African - Any Other Mixed Background
- l. Mixed / Multiple - Any Other Backgrounds
- m. Mixed / Multiple - White and Asian
- n. Mixed / Multiple - White and Black African
- o. Mixed / Multiple - White and Black Caribbean
- p. White - Any Other/Mixed White Background
- q. White - British
- r. White - English
- s. White - Welsh
- t. White - Scottish
- u. White - Northern Irish
- v. White - Gypsy or Irish Traveller
- w. White - Irish
- x. Any other Ethnic Group
- y. Prefer Not To Say
- z. Other

**3l. Please state your ethnicity below.**

*Please answer if you selected 'Other' or 'Any other Ethnic Group' in 3k.*

**3m. Please indicate the wording below which you feel best represents you, and that you are comfortable with.**

If you use other language, please input in 'other'.

- a. Deaf, deaf or hard of hearing
- b. Blind or low vision
- c. Physical disability
- d. Mental health condition
- e. Pain condition
- f. Neurodivergent
- g. Other physical/access/mobility/dexterity needs
- h. Other long term health condition
- i. Prefer not to say
- j. None of the above apply to me
- k. Other

**3n. Do any of these physical or mental health conditions or illnesses have a substantial effect on your ability to carry out day-to-day activities?**

- a. Yes, a lot (e.g., in significant ways, or most of the time).
- b. Yes, a little (e.g., not too much, or only some of the time).
- c. Not at all.
- d. I prefer not to say.

**3o. How do you identify your sexual orientation?**

- a. Pan-sexual
- b. Bisexual
- c. Gay man

- d. Gay woman / lesbian
- e. Queer
- f. Asexual
- g. Heterosexual
- h. I use other language
- i. Prefer not to say

**3p. How would you describe your sexual orientation?**

*Using your own language. Please answer if you selected 'I use other language' in 3o*

**3q. What is your gender?**

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. Non binary
- d. Genderfluid / genderqueer
- e. I use other language
- f. Prefer not to say

**3r. How would you describe your gender?**

*Using other language. Please answer if you selected 'I use other language' in 3q*

**3s. Do you identify with the gender you were assigned at birth?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Prefer not to say

**3t. Last year's survey highlighted widespread age-based inequalities. To help us examine this data in greater detail this year, please tell us your current age in years.**

*This question is optional.*

**4 - Thank you. Now let's think about the last 12 months...**

***Don't worry—all answers will be anonymous.***

**4a. In the tax year 2022-23, which of the following most accurately reflects the proportion of your total annual income which came from your freelance artistic work?**

*By this, we mean the work that you told us about earlier.*

- a. 0% / Not applicable
- b. 10%
- c. 20%
- d. 30%
- e. 40%
- f. 50%
- g. 60%
- h. 70%
- i. 80%
- j. 90%
- k. 100%
- l. Prefer not to say

**4b. Thinking about your answer to the previous question, is the proportion of your total annual income from your freelance artistic work less than 100% because:**

*Please choose as many as you wish*

- a. My freelance work is not paid enough
- b. There aren't enough freelance opportunities

- c. This is my preferred way of working
- d. Other

**4c. Please use this space to expand on your previous answer if you wish.**

**4d - Thinking about your freelance work, which of these statements most accurately represents your main reason for working on a freelance basis? (As opposed to an employed, salaried role)**

*Please choose one of the following*

- a. I would prefer to have a salaried job/be employed but I haven't yet found one.
- b. I prefer the freelance model of working.
- c. I have no choice, in my discipline/role freelancing is the only way to work.
- d. I have no choice, my other commitments rely on the flexibility of freelance working.
- e. None of the above
- f. Prefer not to say

**4e. In the tax year 2022-23, which of the following best describes your net income before tax from your sector specific freelance work?**

*Please only answer this question if you feel comfortable to do so. If you made a loss please select £0.*

- a. £0
- b. £1 - £5,000
- c. £5,001 - £10,000
- d. £10,001 - £15,000
- e. £15,001 - £17,500
- f. £17,501 - £20,000
- g. £20,001 - £22,500
- h. £22,501 - £25,000
- i. £25,001 - £27,500
- j. £27,501 - £30,000
- k. £30,001 - £40,000

- l. £40,001 - £50,000
- m. £50,001 - £60,000
- n. £60,001 - £70,000
- o. £70,001 - £80,000
- p. £80,001 - £90,000
- q. £90,001 - £100,000
- r. £100,001 - £150,000
- s. £150,001 - £200,000
- t. £200,001+
- u. Prefer not to say

**4f. How many hours a week do you currently work as an artistic freelancer? (Please include unpaid hours and travel, but not regular commute time)**

We know that freelancers don't necessarily work an 'average' week, so could you please estimate your average over the year. There will be an opportunity to expand upon this later in the survey.

- a. 0 hours
- b. 1-10 hours
- c. 11-20 hours
- d. 21-30 hours
- e. 31-40 hours
- f. 41-50 hours
- g. 50+ hours
- h. Prefer not to say
- i. I am unable to calculate my average weekly working hours

**4g. In the tax year 2022-23, did you rely on additional work other than your freelance artistic work to supplement your income?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Prefer not to say

**4h. In the tax year 2022-23, did you receive any other type of financial support?**

- a. Arts Councils / Creative Scotland



- b. Charitable Grants
- c. Locally administered grants
- d. Direct government support (e.g. Universal Credit)
- e. Funding from professional bodies / unions
- f. Loan - from a commercial source (e.g. a bank or other lender)
- g. Loan - from family or friends
- h. Private support (e.g. family, friends)
- i. None
- j. Other

**4i. How does the amount of work you do within the industry compare to 12 months ago. Has it?**

- a. Gone up a lot
- b. Gone up a little
- c. Stayed the same
- d. Gone down a little
- e. Gone down a lot
- f. Not applicable / Unsure

**4j. How does your income from this work compare to 12 months ago. Has it?**

- a. Gone up a lot
- b. Gone up a little
- c. Stayed the same
- d. Gone down a little
- e. Gone down a lot
- f. Not applicable / Unsure

**4k. How have your work-related expenses changed in the past 12 months?**

- a. Gone up a lot
- b. Gone up a little
- c. Stayed the same
- d. Gone down a little
- e. Gone down a lot

f. Not applicable / Unsure

**4l. Do you currently have any financial debt? (Excluding mortgages)**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Prefer not to say

**4m. Has your debt level changed in the last 12 months?**

- a. My debt level has increased
- b. My debt level has stayed the same
- c. My debt level has decreased
- d. Prefer not to say

**4n. Do you currently have any savings?**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Prefer not to say

**4o. Have your savings changed in the last 12 months?**

- a. My level of savings have increased
- b. My level of savings have stayed the same
- c. My level of savings have decreased
- d. Prefer not to say

**4p. Have you made any financial provision or plan for your retirement? (For example a pension scheme or other investment)**

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Unable to say
- d. Prefer not to say

**4q. Have you paid money into this plan or investment in the last 12 months?**

*Please answer if you selected 'Yes' in 4p.*

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Unable to say
- d. Prefer not to say

**5 - We're nearly there, but before we finish let's dig a little deeper into your current situation, thinking about how secure you feel in your work, how safe you feel in your workplace(s) and how valued you feel in the industry.**

**5a. Which of the following options best applies to your current work situation?**

- a. I've left the sector in the past 12 months
- b. I still work in the sector
- c. I still work in the sector, but I am considering leaving / changing
- d. I've moved sub sector (eg. Theatre to TV) in the last 12 months
- e. I have only worked in the sector for 12 months or less

**5b. What are the main reasons for this change?**

*Please answer if you selected A, C or D in question 5a.*

- a. Not enough pay
- b. Not enough work
- c. Mental Health
- d. Job security
- e. Prefer not to say
- f. Other

**5c. Do you think you will still be working in the industry in 12 months' time?**

- a. Very likely
- b. Quite likely
- c. Quite unlikely
- d. Very unlikely

- e. I don't know
- f. Prefer not to say

**5d. Which of these best describes how secure you currently feel about your work?**

- a. Very secure
- b. Quite secure
- c. Quite insecure
- d. Very insecure
- e. I don't know
- f. Prefer not to say

**5e. Thinking of your work overall, which of these best describes how safe you currently feel in the places where you work?**

*Could be Covid related, or other risks, health & safety, bullying, harassment etc.*

- a. Very safe
- b. Quite safe
- c. Quite unsafe
- d. Very unsafe
- e. I don't know
- f. Prefer not to say

**5f. Aside from your income, how valued do you currently feel in the industry?**

- a. Very valued
- b. Quite valued
- c. Quite undervalued
- d. Very undervalued
- e. I don't know
- f. Prefer not to say

**5g. At any time in the last 12 months, have you experienced or witnessed any of the following forms of behaviour in relation to your work?**

*Please choose as many as apply.*

- a. Bullying
- b. Harassment
- c. Sexism
- d. Racism
- e. Ableism
- f. Ageism
- g. Transphobia
- h. Homophobia
- i. Unfair treatment
- j. Dangerous workplace
- k. Other discrimination
- l. None of the above
- m. Prefer not to say
- n. Other (Please state)

**5h. To your knowledge, was the incident reported?**

If you experienced or witnessed multiple incidents, thinking about the one that you consider to be the most significant/serious.

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I don't know
- d. There was no system in place to report it

**5i. To your knowledge, was the incident appropriately addressed?**

*Please answer if you selected 'Yes' in 5h. If you experienced or witnessed multiple incidents, thinking about the one that you consider to be the most significant/serious.*

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I don't know
- d. Not applicable

**5j. Please note, the next few questions are about mental health.**

*If you are happy to continue please answer 5k-5n, if you would like to skip these questions please go to question 6.*

If you are having difficulties with your mental health you can seek support from these mental health services:

[Samaritans](#) - mental health listening service and support

[Mind](#) - mental health support, treatment near you, advocacy

Crisis Text Line - text SHOUT to 85258 in the UK to text with a trained Crisis Volunteer

NHS111 - immediate medical support

**5k. The responses to the 2022 and 2023 Big Freelancer Surveys highlighted a widespread mental health crisis amongst freelancers across the sector.**

Comparing your mental health now to 2019, would you say it has:

- a. Got a lot worse
- b. Got slightly worse
- c. Stayed the same
- d. Got slightly better
- e. Got a lot better
- f. Prefer not to say
- g. Other

**5l. Comparing your mental health now to the first months of lockdown in 2020, would you say it has:**

- a. Got a lot worse
- b. Got slightly worse
- c. Stayed the same

- d. Got slightly better
- e. Got a lot better
- f. Prefer not to say
- g. Other

**5m. Comparing your mental health now to a year ago, would you say it has:**

- a. Got a lot worse
- b. Got slightly worse
- c. Stayed the same
- d. Got slightly better
- e. Got a lot better
- f. Prefer not to say
- g. Other

**5n. If you wish, please use this space to expand on your answers from the previous question.**

**6. Thank you, we're almost there.**

**These next questions are a bit more free-form, so please feel free to contribute as much or as little as you would like.**

**Any answers or quotes used in the survey reports will be fully anonymised.**

**6a. Using up to 3 key-words or phrases, please can you describe your experiences of working in the industry over the past 12 months from your own, personal perspective.**

*Feel free to write as much or as little as you would like.*

**6b. The responses to last year's survey highlighted the amount of unpaid work done by freelancers across the sector. Please use this space to tell us about the amount and type of any unpaid work that you do.**

*Feel free to write as much or as little as you would like.*

**6c. FMTW exists to listen to, support and advocate for freelancers. Are there any examples of good practice or positive change that you would like to share?**

*Feel free to write as much or as little as you would like.*

**6d. We'd like to end on a positive note... In your experience, what is the best thing about being a performing arts freelancer?**

*Feel free to write as much or as little as you would like.*

**6e. Is there anything else you would like to tell us or share?**

*Feel free to write as much or as little as you like.*

**Thank you.**

**Please email your filled out form to [hello@freelancersmaketheatrework.com](mailto:hello@freelancersmaketheatrework.com).**