

Impact Report - PiPA Scotland Pilot

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Executive Summary

PiPA's work is founded on the key principle that a truly world class Performing Arts is inclusive of all talents and circumstances and that parents and carers are supported to reach their full potential at every stage of their career.

This report outlines the work of PiPA's inaugural pilot project in Scotland which took place between November 2019 to September 2020. It was delivered in partnership with Federation of Scottish Theatres (FST) and funded by the Workplace Equality Fund. The key aims were to:

1: Support parents and carers to have the knowledge and skills to progress in their careers whilst managing caring responsibilities

2: Enable performing arts organisations to have the skills, knowledge, policies and practices to support increased flexible working opportunities

3: Increase engagement with PiPA's work in Scotland and build new partnerships

Key outcomes:

- Effectiveness of working with both freelancers and a range of organisations across different scales to influence change- connecting strategy with responsiveness and perspectives on the ground.
- Positive impact of working with decentralised models and more bespoke, smaller scale interventions.
- Opportunity for PiPA to maximise its own and other organisations resources through collaborative, consultative and networked activity.
- Covid has revealed a lot of useful learning, both for PiPA and for organisations in the sector, which is outlined throughout the report.
- Opportunity to further develop profiling and working with carers, as well as increasing the geographic reach, diversity and intersectionality of the parents and carers that PiPA engages with.
- Need and appetite for PiPA's work to continue in Scotland has been strongly demonstrated through ongoing engagement and final evaluation.

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Introduction

Scotland is a country with a population of 5.5 million. 4.2 million of these live in the Central Belt geographic area which includes the larger cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh.

“The Creative Industries in Scotland contribute £4.6 billion to the economy” (Creative Scotland)

In their 10-year plan [Unlocking Potential, Embracing Ambition](#), one of Creative Scotland’s key ambitions is that: *“Ideas are brought to life by a diverse, skilled and connected leadership and workforce”*

There is a well-connected Performing Arts sector, made up of 70% freelancers and 121 Creative Scotland Regularly Funded Organisations (RFO’s) working across craft, dance, literature, music, screen, theatre and visual art, as well as a number of sector development and membership organisations.

[The Federation of Scottish Theatres](#) (FST) is the major membership body for Dance and Theatre. FST membership reaches 230 independent artists, producing companies, venues, education and umbrella bodies across Scotland. FST brings the sector together to speak with a collective voice, to share resources and expertise, and to promote collaborative working.

Not for profit organisation [Parents and Carers in Performing Arts](#) (PiPA) was established in England in 2016 to address the lack of provision and barriers that performing arts workers with caring responsibilities face. PiPA’s work includes research, advocacy and collaborative partnership development.

The campaign’s significant achievements include the development of the [Best Practice Charter](#) and supporting [Charter Programme](#). PiPA has a partnership network of over 50 leading Dance, Music and Theatre organisations across the UK.

FST have been championing PiPA’s work with Scottish Performing Arts organisations over the past three years. This has been through inviting PiPA to attend and speak at membership events and facilitating introductions with leaders in Scotland’s organisations. Meetings took place in Summer 2019 with key Scottish partners including *Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society, FST, National Theatre of Scotland, Dance Base, Scottish Opera, Scottish Ballet* and *Stellar Quines*, to discuss the creation of a Scotland wide

network. This led to FST and PiPA applying for funds to support organisations across Scotland to engage with PiPA's work, enabling the creation of regional networks. A project plan was designed in collaboration with FST, which was funded by the [Workplace Equality Fund](#).

Context

The project was delivered by recruiting a Coordinator based in Scotland to lead on the delivery of network development events, connect PiPA to the Scottish sector, and build awareness of PiPA's work through various communication channels.

PiPA Co-CEO Anna Ehnold-Danailov led the project, with support from PiPA Co-CEO Cassie Raine and Jude Henderson (Director of FST). PiPA Charter Programme Manager Matt Harper-Hardcastle led on the development of partnerships with organisations through the Charter Programme framework.

Covid-19

The project took place in a context of mass sectoral upheaval brought about by Covid-19, as well as highlighted wider socio-political concerns including the Black Lives Matter movement. Covid-19 and associated measures initiated by the government presented a significant disruption to PiPA's original project plan. The Performing Arts sector, and particularly its parent and carer workforce, were significantly impacted. Building closures, the sudden need to work from home, furloughing, unemployment, redundancy were compounded by the need to look after and educate children from home, additional care responsibilities for elderly or disabled relatives and rapid adjustments to working flexibly in a domestic environment. PiPA's [submission to DCMS](#) in June 2020 highlighted concern about the long-term impact on women, who are already more likely to be freelance and earning less. Moreover, they are now more likely to take on the majority of childcare and home-schooling. The DCMS submission identified that the pandemic disproportionately affects women, particularly single parents, with the increased risk of exacerbating existing gender inequalities. [Engender](#), Scotland's feminist policy and advocacy organisation, have published several research reports on the impact of Covid on women which can be seen [here](#).

Many freelance parents and carers were not eligible for HMRC's self-employment support if they had earned less in the past two years due to becoming a parent or increased caring responsibilities. [Pregnant than Screwed](#) took legal action against the UK government for indirect discrimination of women resulting from this. If a parent or carer faces any other intersectional disadvantages, the likelihood of entering or staying in the sector are reduced.

The PiPA [DCMS](#) submission also revealed that 75% of parents and carers surveyed were considering leaving the sector due to COVID. From the beginning of this project, but especially during this time, it has been critical to engage with, support, and learn from the experiences of freelance parents and carers (70% of the sector). PiPA needed to quickly re-prioritise and consider how to keep activity relevant for organisations as well as freelancers facing increasing insecurity.

Activity

This projects' overall aim was to introduce PiPA in Scotland, establish strong partnerships and a network through which to deliver and support this strategic work longer term. To meet this aim, the project included a range of activities aimed at organisations and freelancers. Participants were surveyed at regular points in order to monitor and evaluate the project.

Activities included:

- Stakeholder consultations between PiPA and Scotland based organisations, outlining the proposed Scotland project and gathering partnership support
- **PiPA Coffee Mornings:** Weekly open online meetings for any freelance parent or carer working in Scotland's Performing Arts. The aim of these meetings was to facilitate peer networking, introduce PiPA's work, and gather useful insight into the experience of parents and carers in Scotland's sector. These online events had a range of themes and invited speakers from open networking, to *Returning to Work and Celebrating Carers Week*, were the only offer specifically for parents and carers in Scotland's performing arts sector during Covid. PiPA was able to integrate learning from the needs of the group into the Charter Programme and the events for organisations.
- **Events for organisations:** These aimed to facilitate cross-sector learning and build the network for the support of parents and carers in Scotland. These were themed around key subjects such as professional development, gathering and sharing Covid-related data, and developing strategic action plans.
- **Charter Programme Consultations** and access to PiPA resources: Weekly sessions with Charter Programme Manager to discuss immediate issues, share tools and strategies to support parents and carers during Covid and beyond.

Impact

The project aimed to have impact in three main areas:

1. Support parents and carers to have the knowledge and skills to progress in their careers whilst managing caring responsibilities
2. Enable performing arts organisations to have the skills, knowledge, policies and practices to support increased flexible working opportunities
3. Increase engagement with PiPA's work in Scotland and build new partnerships

1: Support parents and carers to have the knowledge and skills to progress in their careers whilst managing caring responsibilities.

Parents and carers struggled to develop their careers in the context of extreme sectoral and personal upheaval due to Covid. Project outputs, outcomes and indicators had to be adjusted to allow for this reality:

- Smaller, more regular opportunities to engage became the most accessible approach.
- PiPA's online events welcomed children and relatives, allowing for breaks and accidental interruptions etc. PiPA also recorded some sessions for people to watch afterwards.
- Work focussed on themes rather than regions.
- Events were live-captioned and BSL interpreted in order to be accessible.

Main Outputs:

1. PiPA delivered 14 online events specifically for freelancers (12 Coffee Mornings, *Exploring Professional Development*, *A Family Friendly Fringe*)
2. A programme of 1-2-1 coaching sessions. Demand for the sessions outweighed the initial budgetary allocation so participating organisations made an additional financial contribution to ensure that 17 participants were able to benefit from the initiative.

Outcomes:

Career Coaching

As a result of the coaching session provided for 17 individuals:

- 79% of survey respondents agreed / strongly agreed that they had a clearer understanding of their challenges and next steps in their career
- 72% agreed / strongly agreed that they felt more confident in going forward with their practice and work
- 72% agreed / strongly agreed that they had new ideas about what they could do next for their development
- 64% agreed / strongly agreed they consequently felt more empowered as a parent/carer in the performing arts

This indicates that despite the challenging context, the activity:

1. impacted positive change in parents and carers perceptions of themselves and the sector
2. increased their ability and confidence to take positive action to re-engage with the sector
3. encouraged communication of barriers faced when taking up opportunities.

Coaching feedback from participants also demonstrated desire for more sessions to allow deeper exploration, and / or more bespoke support. It would be useful to consider offering a future mentoring programme, in addition to more coaching, which can offer more bespoke support over a longer period of time. This would also allow PiPA and the parent or carer to plan and monitor changes in their career and personal progression.

Confidence Building

PiPA's previous research has shown that parents and carers often self-select out of opportunities, potentially losing overview of offers available. They can find it hard to re-enter the industry, for example after becoming a parent. Therefore, raising confidence, and increasing awareness of opportunities is key.

In relation to this, Impact surveys from the coffee mornings identified that:

- 75% of respondents agreed/strongly agreed that they now had a clearer understanding of some of the work that organisations are doing to support parents and carers in Scotland
- 50% agreed / strongly agreed they felt more confident to approach organisations about their professional development and employment needs.
- 56% agreed/strongly agreed that they now had new advice and information relevant to their own situation
- 75% agreed/strongly agreed that the meetings boost their confidence about their future in the performing arts
- 75% agreed/strongly agreed that the meetings helped them reflect on their career possibilities.

Peer to Peer learning and support

PiPA has found through previous research that as well as raising confidence and awareness, social capital and combating isolation is also important to the wellbeing, support and success of working parents and carers. Particularly during Covid, it has been important to provide a space for parents and carers to connect with each other as well as the wider sector, as shown by the following feedback:

- 69% agreed/strongly agreed that the Coffee Morning meetings had supported them through challenges of Covid-19
- 100% agreed/strongly agreed they now felt more connected to other parents and carers in the sector
- 50% agreed/strongly agreed that it now felt more possible to continue working in the sector whilst supporting a family
- 50% agreed/strongly agreed that they now felt more valued by Scottish organisations.

Quotes from participants:

“Really useful to connect to other parents in a similar position and for your needs to be recognised. I also learned a lot about policy and parenting.”

“It is the first time in years I felt less alone in my circumstances, and that gives you strength and practical information.”

“It was my only opportunity to connect with others and to find out what support was available to me”

Exploring Professional Development

As part of the PiPA online event ‘*Exploring Professional Development*’ with over 20 participants, ten Scottish organisations presented their current offers, considerations and challenges in supporting parents and carers. The audience included freelancers as well as representatives from other organisations. The impact survey showed that:

- 77% of respondents agreed that the event had raised their awareness of opportunities available in Scotland
- 50% agreed that they now felt more confident to approach organisations in Scotland about their professional development needs, highlighting the need for more targeted confidence building support.

“As a parent-to-be this was useful for me to hear from Scotland based organisations on their policies, plans and ethics around supporting artists parents/carers, giving me an idea of what support is out there when it comes to returning to work and navigating what support is available.” Focus Group Participant

2: Enable performing arts organisations to have the skills, knowledge, policies and practices to support increased flexible working opportunities

Main Outputs:

- 13 organisations benefited from direct access to the nationwide Charter Programme offers, including access to regular consultations with PiPA Charter Programme Manager, PiPA toolkit resources, and the wider Charter Programme network.
- 2 performing arts organisations (*Birds of Paradise* and *Dance Base*) joined 5 Scottish Partners in committing to the full Charter Programme.

PIPA’s original plan to run a symposium tracking and sharing organisations’ progress with new initiatives, was not feasible due to Covid. Therefore, the project presented three themed online events, enabling organisations to share learning, progress and challenges including:

- ‘*Exploring Professional Development*’ (10 organisations presenting, 20 participating)
- Data sharing event ‘*Building Foundations*’ (30 participating)
- Action planning event ‘*Strengthening Foundations*’ (11 participating)

In addition:

- Scotland-based organisations attended PiPA’s UK wide [Flexible Working webinar](#) in partnership with UK Theatre (85 participants from across the UK). The recording is now available to watch online.

Outcomes:

- New partner *Birds of Paradise* are an influential leader in Scotland’s performing arts sector, advocating for inclusive practices and development of disabled artists. They have reviewed their existing family friendly policies and practices, are creating a family friendly welcome pack, and are exploring trialling a job share for their upcoming production.
- *Dance Base* is a dance development organisation with 28 employees and contracting approximately 100 freelancers per year. They are currently reviewing their existing family friendly policies and practices to develop an action plan.
- *National Theatre of Scotland* have created a ‘PiPA Considerations Document’ outlining their support available to parents and carers, and how it can be accessed. This example of good practice has been shared at PiPA events and across the network.
- *Royal Lyceum Edinburgh* are reviewing their ‘Children in the Workplace’ policy, staff handbook and links to childcare, also appointing and profiling a senior member of staff as their PiPA Champion.

- *Stellar Quines* have created a workplace policy which highlights the importance of taking sufficient breaks and being able to achieve a positive work-life balance, especially when working from home, and offers all staff to work 10% less of their usual hours during lockdown with no implication to salaries. If their hours are achieved, then the 10% is accrued as holiday, to be taken at their convenience. This policy has been shared with other organisations in the network.
- 14 participating organisations reported to have implemented steps to enhance flexible working, a key campaign throughout the project.
- Organisations are also exploring how to create job shares, artist attachments and longer commissions. PiPA are supporting organisations to review how they design, communicate, disseminate, and recruit for employment and development opportunities.

3: Increase engagement with PiPA's work in Scotland and build new partnerships

Interest and engagement in the Charter Programme has widened as outlined previously. The Scotland network is larger than originally anticipated and includes, as a result of the agile nature of the project, smaller, artist development-focused organisations who can often more quickly respond and implement change. Relations with original Scottish partners have significantly deepened and they have engaged in ways that have been manageable for them during Covid.

Outcomes brought about by partnership working and organisations' engaged responsiveness throughout the project include:

- Organisations pledging money to support PiPA to offer additional coaching sessions to support more parents and carers in the performing arts.
- *Magnetic North Theatre Company* and FST offering a bespoke, paid [artist residency](#) specifically for parents and carers.
- Cross-sector learning facilitated by PiPA's events became a key resource for organisations in the Scottish network, sharing practical examples of support strategies aimed at parents and carers, and particularly freelancers.

PiPA's relationship with Creative Scotland has strengthened, as representatives regularly attended PiPA events throughout the project, expressing desire to see PiPA's work continue in Scotland. Outcomes included Creative Scotland's commitment to clarify policies to enable inclusion of caring costs in funding applications.

As part of this project PiPA's has developed a working relationship grant managers *Impact Funding Partners* who twice approached PiPA with offers to extend their funding contribution to further develop the initiative.

Having built relationships and raised awareness of PiPA's offer, organisations wish to engage in future activity, evidenced by feedback gathered through PiPA's last event in which:

- 86% said the PiPA network was a valuable resource for their organisation
- 86% agreed that we helped them to clarify their next steps in supporting parents and carers
- 71 % would like to continue to be part of a network
- 60 % would like to collaborate on leading the PiPA Scotland network

- 40% would like to explore becoming a future Charter Partner.

This lays the ground for delivering a future collaborative strategy, with support from a strong network of Scotland's organisations and freelancers.

Key Learning

Key areas of learning relevant to both freelancers and PiPA's work with organisations within and outside of the Charter Programme include:

- **Recruitment and application practices-** Parents and carers feel they do not have equal chances. Longer timescales, more streamlined processes, support during application processes, and effort to specifically attract and retain parents and carers are needed.
- **Access and resources-** With the mass move to homeworking, home-schooling and heightened caring responsibilities during COVID, PiPA has been supporting organisations to reflect on their response to the requirement for flexibility and reflect on the learning and developed free resources to support organisations [here](#).
Exploring how to continue to remove practical barriers and embed supportive working practices is crucial for parents and carers in the long term. Examples include reviewing scheduling and core hours or moving to task-based working. Online programming has removed the barriers for freelancers of travel and care costs for example, whilst offering much needed peer support. However, the need for digital upskilling, access to family-friendly workspaces and accessible, bespoke artist retreats has been highlighted among freelance participants.
- **Representation -** It is critical that parents and carers are visible in working groups, boards, panels and senior leadership positions in the sector, with appropriate remuneration and support. Hand in hand with representation is the need for strong and transparent communication from organisations at all levels, demonstrating their commitment to parents and carers. PiPA has been working with organisations to support them in identifying
 - Ways to clearly communicate their family friendly ethos eg. reviewing language within recruitment materials and equal opportunities forms.
 - Channels to present the support available.
 - Ways of opening conversations with parents and carers about their needs.

Activities which enable parents and carers in the sector to network and see themselves reflected, are critical. A key example of this is the realisation Tara McGirr, a young carer and new performing arts graduate had, through attending PiPA's Coffee Mornings:

"I had never regarded myself as a carer because I thought that caring for your family was normal and that you just 'got on with it'.....When I heard other people's stories and struggles along with helpful tips, it made me realise how much pressure I have actually been under my whole life. "

- **Reach** - Many organisations who actively engaged with PiPA and promoted the events were based in the Central Belt. Whilst it is true that there is a concentration of arts organisations and workers in this part of Scotland, there is an opportunity for further development and growth to engage organisations in a wider geography as parents and carers living outside of the Central Belt generally experience less access to opportunities and employment. Some connection has been established with organisations such as *Eden Court*, *Dundee Rep* and *Aberdeen Performing Arts*. It would be beneficial to invest in developing relationships with these organisations and more, as regional advocates for PiPA's work.
- **Scotland co-ordinator** - A strong and effective working relationship has been developed with the coordinator Saffy Setohy. Investment in this role, which is central to increasing PiPA's reach and impact in Scotland, will ensure PiPA is able to meet demand for their work. There is great scope to develop and expand the Scotland coordinator role that could include partnership/network development, research, as well as event delivery and project management.

Conclusion

The Scotland pilot has shown PiPA the immense value of working with a more decentralised model, including having a local PiPA representative, who is already connected to, and brings knowledge of the sector, leading the work. Increasing connectivity between freelancers and organisations, has not only enabled deeper cross-organisational learning, it has also significantly informed PiPA's work and strategy across the wider UK Performing Arts landscape:

- Launching a [nationwide survey](#) investigating the effect of Covid-19 on performing arts practitioners with caring responsibilities.
- Developing a targeted project focussing on supportive initiatives for freelancers with caring responsibilities, to be trialled with Charter Partners, for those most impacted by the pandemic including those from a low socio economic background, D/deaf and disabled people, single parents and those from ethnically diverse backgrounds.
- Developing plans to engage regional network coordinators across the UK.
- Developing a scalable version of the Charter Programme including reduced cost options, whilst also seeking further funding and exploring new partnership models in collaboration with FST.
- Exploring co-investment opportunities for activity informed by the willingness of organisations to co-invest in the Scotland coaching programme.
- Embedding accessibility in all activity e.g. pledging to live caption all future online events. *Birds of Paradise* praised PiPA's work in this area, and thanks to PiPA's advocacy, Workplace Equality Fund live captioned their recent conference.
- Exploring further advocacy opportunities in Scotland.

Recommendations

FST and PiPA are committed to continuing supporting performing arts organisations to embed policies and practices which ensure that places of work, and access to work, become as accessible and inclusive as possible for parents and carers.

1. FST and PiPA to collaboratively lead on this work in Scotland, building on the partnership established. It is vital to continue the presence and support of a lead for PiPA based in Scotland. There is great scope for this role to be developed, working in collaboration with the Charter Programme Manager. This would allow PiPA to capitalise on the momentum already achieved through the pilot project and continue building and strengthening the relationships developed through the pilot project.
2. It would be important to consult with other strategic partner organisations in planning the next phase, as well as some of the smaller scale artist development organisations that PiPA has connected with. This would help to ensure that the diversity of the sectors' support mechanisms are involved in and supportive of PiPA's next activity in Scotland.
3. The development of a communications campaign for Scotland -would strengthen the advocacy element of the work. This could build on the ambassadors, case studies, and other opportunities to make visible the intersectional barriers and experiences of parents and carers in Scotland.
4. Some focused partnership building to connect with organisations, parents and carers outside of the central belt and in rural areas is important to maximise reach. Particular attention to connecting with ethnically diverse parents and carers, disabled parents and carers, single-parents, LGBTQI+ communities, would be beneficial in diversifying the perspectives informing PiPA's work and that of the network.
5. There is an opportunity to further develop support for carers (especially the work of young carers, as highlighted by the case study with Tara McGirr) in Scotland, partnering further with organisations such as [Carers Scotland](#) and [Luminate](#), and increasing the visibility of support for carers
6. A live and online blended approach, as well as increasing geographic spread of partners, would be valuable in future to maximise reach, access and engagement. Access should continue to be embedded in all of PiPA's future work in Scotland, e.g.:
 - BSL/ Live captioning for every event
 - Travel / care bursaries for live events
 - Paying freelancers for their time
 - Blended online and live delivery (where possible)
 - Recording and dissemination of activity through notes, video, audio files etc.
 - Allowing long lead in times to promote events, with family-friendly scheduling