

NEUK (/nju:k/):
noun, Scots.

1) A nook; corner

2) A Collective carving
out a place for
Neurodivergent artists
in a Neurotypical
world

NEUK MANIFESTO



A career in the arts is made up of countless different social, administrative, and organisational tasks in addition to creating 'Art'.

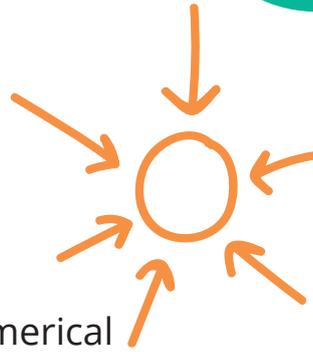
For many people, a lot of these tasks come easily. But for many neurodivergent (ND) people, the invisible anxiety, time and labour required can be debilitating, and paperwork demands overwhelming.

Some tasks take longer to complete and require more recovery time afterwards, eating into the time left to create work.

This hidden labour adds up.

ND artists end up applying for fewer opportunities, because each costs us more - in stress, time, energy and sometimes money. We cannot afford to make speculative applications or take a chance, because we have to budget our energy and resources.





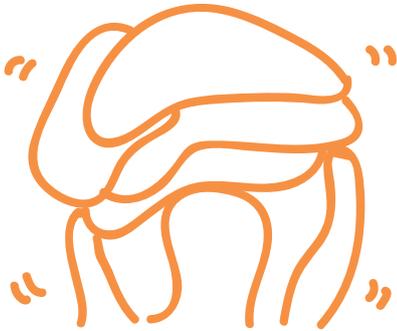
Application processes don't support our varied communication skills and needs and written/numerical administrative tasks are a greater burden. We pass up on residencies, development schemes, and jobs because we know they will be too intense and overwhelming.

We already have high cognitive load from constantly filtering information and overwhelming sensory stimuli, leading to fatigue and burnout and need periods of recovery built into our working schedule.

We struggle to make the personal connections that help other artists move forward in their career and find it harder to travel for opportunities that would widen our network.

Our career progress slows, our artistic practices suffer and we are excluded from current systems and structures by which the art world is organised. ND artists are unfairly disadvantaged and our unique perspectives on the world are lost.

WHAT WE ARE ASKING

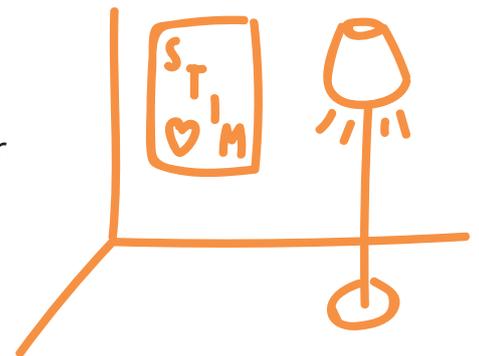


1. Acknowledge and care about the additional burden that current systems place on ND people and commit to changing them

Recognise the ways that your own organisation's processes are experienced differently by ND artists versus NT (neurotypical) artists, and consider how these can be adapted.

2. Create better environments for ND artists

Adapt working environments and processes to make them more accessible. For example, acknowledge your power as managers to set the tone; train staff on ND accessibility; allow people extra time for processing and decision making, and reduce excess sensory stimuli in working environments.



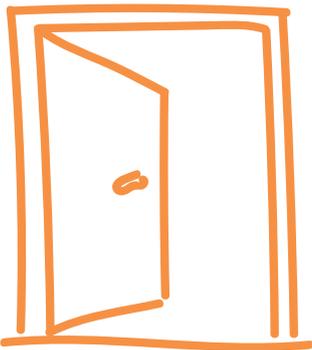
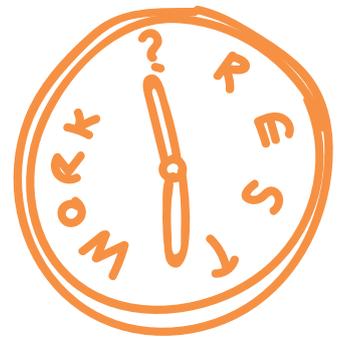
3. Where systems can't be changed, offer additional support to mitigate the effects of processes that disadvantage ND artists

Have access budgets as a standard part of projects and provide support to complete applications, funding for admin support, clear resources to help with applications, realistic work plans and named contact(s) who can help.



4. Acknowledge the importance of fatigue in holding us back

Acknowledge that fatigue is an issue and commit to making adaptations to accommodate it, for instance reconsidering minimum volume requirements, allowing job sharing/flexible working or extending timescales.

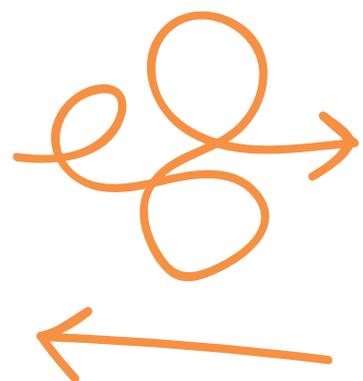


5. Design opportunities with us in mind

More flexible opportunities would not only benefit ND artists, but open doors for so many others – working class artists, parents, carers, and other disabled and chronically ill artists. Simplify application forms and make them available in accessible formats.

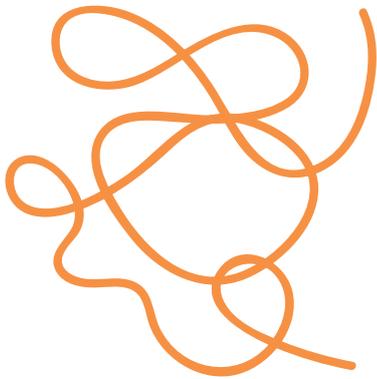
6. Remember that communication is a two-way street

Lots of misunderstandings are due to mismatched communication styles. Respect people's communication preferences, make sure information is available in accessible formats, and that instructions are clear and agreed. Be aware of specific communication needs associated with some conditions (e.g. selective mutism, AAC users).



7. De-emphasise social performance as a selection criterion

Opportunities often go to the best networkers. Reconsider whether prioritising the best communicators in fact leads you to the best artists. Where networking or intense social interactions are essential, think about how to reduce the sensory load and consider alternative ways of facilitating artists, funders, and audiences to connect.



8. Be more open to artists who have developed their careers through less established paths

Examine your selection criteria and give less weight to degree status, previous awards, exhibition history or what you think an artist "should have" achieved by a certain age. An ND career often looks different and that's ok.

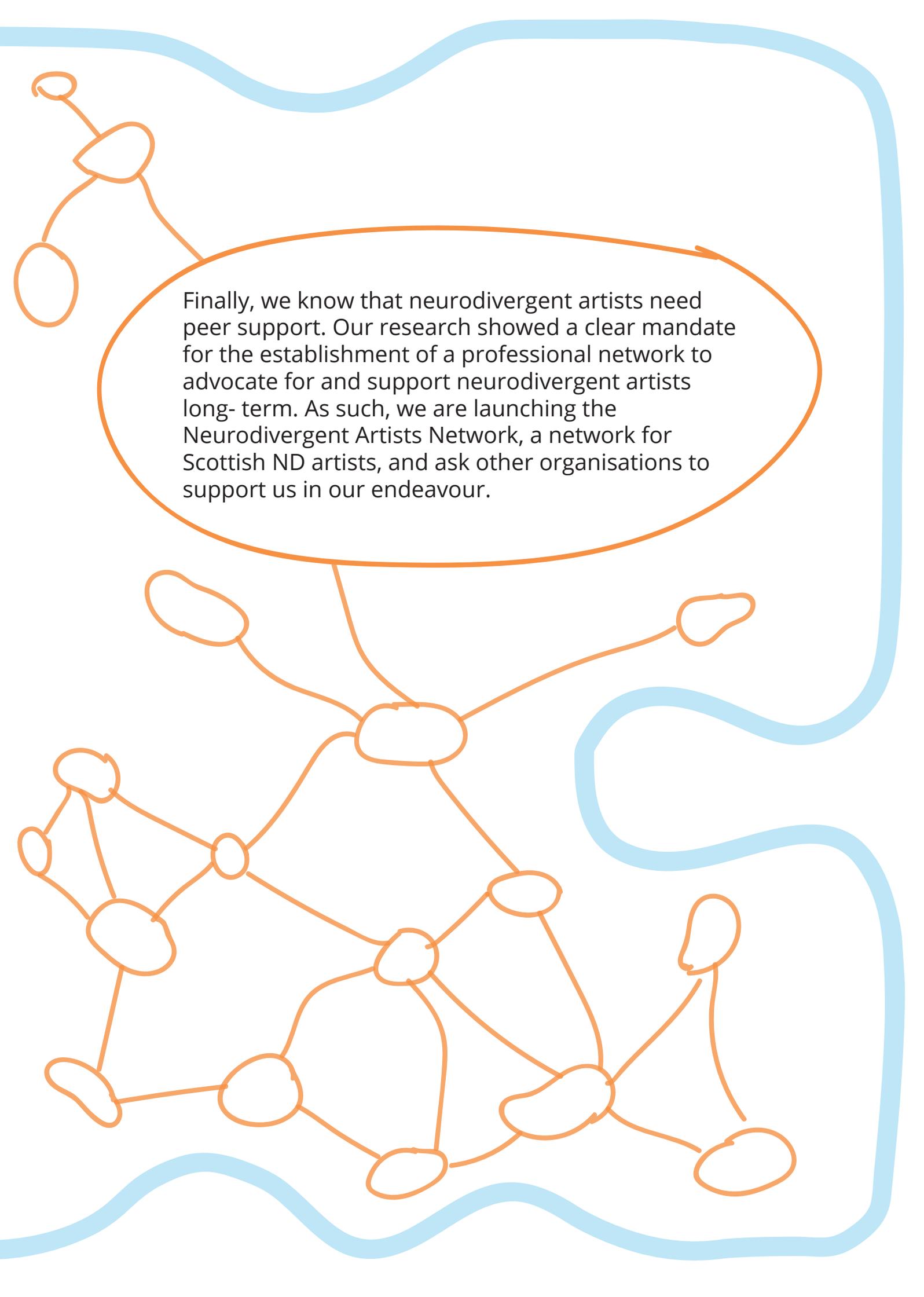
9. Pay a living wage

Do not expect hours of unpaid labour, and pay artists for their research and preparation time.



10. Prioritise lobbying for benefits reform

We need a compassionate benefits system that accommodates people with invisible disabilities and the variable nature of the creative industries. Organisations that work with disabled artists should pursue this as a matter of urgency.



Finally, we know that neurodivergent artists need peer support. Our research showed a clear mandate for the establishment of a professional network to advocate for and support neurodivergent artists long-term. As such, we are launching the Neurodivergent Artists Network, a network for Scottish ND artists, and ask other organisations to support us in our endeavour.



Further Information:

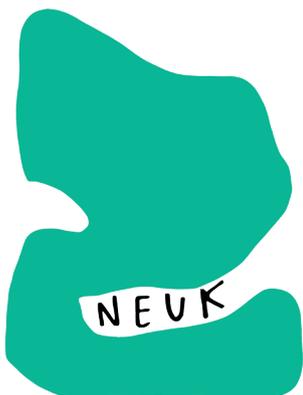
For more detailed information on how you can support the ND artists you work with, see our guide, *Working With Neurodivergent Artists*, on our website:
<https://neukcollective.co.uk/resources/>

<https://neukcollective.co.uk/>

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LOTTERY FUNDED

Designed by Max Alexander