Chester Rose Financial Planning

Equity Pension Scheme

PROCEDURES IN THEATRE



Administered by:

Chester Rose Financial Planning Limited

SOCIETY OF LONDON THEATRE EST 1908

UK THEATRE EST 1894

itc independent theatre council

And others.

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EQUITY, CHESTER ROSE & AVIVA

EQUITY

The UK's performing arts and entertainment trade union devised the EPS.

Chester Rose Financial Planning

Authorised and regulated by the FCA (No. 726620). Designed and administer the EPS.

AVIVA

Product Provider and Fund Manager of the EPS.

EQUITY PENSION SCEME (EPS)

The EPS is a qualifying workplace pension scheme (since 01.10.2012).

Established in October 1997, the EPS is the only pension scheme approved by Equity and is the only arrangement that permits artists, stage managers and stunt coordinators/performers to benefit from contract related employer contributions.

Type

UK scheme. The scheme is a registered pension scheme under part 4 of the Finance Act 2004.
PSRN: 10079060.

Ownership

The member is the plan holder.

Eligibility for membership

All members of Equity are eligible to join as well as non-members of Equity (in respect of contract related contributions).

This applies whether engaged on a self-employed basis or via a limited company.

Age range

No lower age limit[1] and must be under 75 years of age.

Regardless of nationality - a UK NI number must be present.

[1] Child Stakeholder below the age of 16

CONTRACT RELATED CONTRIBUTIONS

Society of London Theatre – West End 06.04.2026

The Manager's Contribution will be equal to 5% of the member's weekly rehearsal / performance wage: subject to being provided with the correct details of EPS Membership.

The manager is permitted to impose a 'cap' on the amount of a wage that is pensionable. To calculate the cap, the minimum weekly wage applicable to the role of an individual is multiplied by 1.75 (see example*).

Productions will have multiple caps; a minimum wage being influenced by both theatre and role.

Example* - CATEGORY A theatre - performance

Role	Min Wage	Max ER 5%
Acting Stage Manager / Performer	£965.55	£84.49

965.55 x 1.75 = 1689.71 x 5% = 84.49

Toobtain the manager contribution, the member's commitment is a contribution of 3% of their weekly rehearsal / performance wage; caps may apply..

Continual employment with the same manager (not necessarily the same production) entitles the individual to an increased[2] manager contribution; to 7.5% on 2nd anniversary, 10.0% from the 5th.

The member contribution increases to 3.75% and 5.0% respectively.
Caps may apply.

Caps, rates etc. can be found on this excel spreadsheet, hosted our website's EPS Procedures page.

Increases[2] - mandatory for the manager, but discretionary if member declines or postpones the increase.

UK Theatre – commercial sector 01.04.2025

Provided that the member has notified the manager that they are a member of the EPS, the manager shall contribute an amount equal to 5% of the member's weekly rehearsal or performance wage, up to a maximum of 5% of 1.5 times the relevant basic minimum weekly rehearsal or performance wage (see the example below).

Depending on the theatre category the maximum weekly manager contribution will change.

Tier A* venue – performance

ASM/performer	£590.33	£44.28

590.33 x 1.5 = 885.50 x 5% = 44.28

Toobtain the manager contribution, the member's commitment is to contribute at least 3% of their weekly rehearsal or performance wage.

Note that this is an increase to the previously advised 2.5%. Do not attempt a retrospective backdate if you are only just now adopting the 3%.

All current caps, rates etc. can now be found on the excel spreadsheet via this link to on our website's EPS procedures page.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Toqualify for Tier A*, 60% of a tour must be performed in theatres of more than 1,500 seats.

Capacity relates to tickets on sale, not seating capacity of theatre 60% relates to the number of performing weeks, not the number of venues in the tour.

Overseas touring venues do not change capacities.

UK Theatre – subsidised sector 01.04.2025

Provided that the member has notified the manager that they are a member of the EPS, the manager shall contribute an amount equal to 5% of the member's weekly rehearsal or performance wage, up to a maximum of 5% of 1.5 times the appropriate Middle-Range Salary Levels.

Current Middle-Range Salary Levels are:

- £629.83 for grade 1 theatres
- £555.39 for grade 2 theatres 6
- £540.97 for grade 3 theatres

Grade 1 max: £629.83 x 1.5 = £944.75 x 5% = £47.24

Grade 2 max: £555.39 x 1.5 = £833.09 x 5% = £41.65

Grade 3 max: £540.97 x 1.5 = £811.46 x 5% = £40.57

Toobtain the manager contribution, the member's commitment is to contribute 3% of their weekly rehearsal or performance wage, again subject to the above maximum.

All current caps, rates etc. can now be found on the excel spreadsheet via this link to on our website's EPS procedures page.

Independent Theatre Council 06.04.2026

Fair Work Approved Scheme managers

Provided that the member has notified the manager that they are a member of the EPS, the manager shall contribute an amount equal to 5% of the member's banded weekly rehearsal or performance wage.

Toobtain the manager contribution, the member's commitment is to contribute 3% of their banded weekly rehearsal or performance wage.

Independent Theatre Council (cont)

Standard members

Provided that the member has notified the manager that they are a member of the EPS, the manager shall contribute an amount equal to 3% of the member's banded weekly rehearsal or performance wage.

Toobtain the manager contribution, the member's commitment is to contribute 5% of their banded weekly rehearsal or performance wage.

IMPORTANT NOTE

The 'pensionable' wage for calculating the above percentages is based on banded earnings as laid down in the current auto- enrolment legislation. This is the wage from £120.00 per week to £967.00 per week. Earnings under and over these amounts can be ignored.

What is pensionable?

'Qualifying earnings' is referenced by the Pensions Regulator as including salary, wages, commission, bonuses, overtime, statutory sick pay, statutory maternity, paternity and adoption pay.

Payments that an artist can expect to receive on a regular basis will count as qualifying earnings. For example, understudy responsibility payments, dance captain or swing payments, should be included. Ad hoc payments or expenses such as touring allowance, subsistence and meal allowances should not be included. If a royalty payment is included within a salary week in week out it becomes a part of qualifying earnings. However, if it is paid after a contract has finished, it cannot count towards qualifying earnings.

The following are to be included for the purpose of pension contribution calculation if they are not automatically included in the basic weekly rehearsal or performance wage but must be treated as a separate entity so as not to breach the weekly cap:

- Holiday pay
- Workshops

WEST END THEATRES BY CATEGORY

Category A theatres (1100 + seats)	
Adelphi	1500
Aldwych	1198
Apollo Victoria	1832
Barbican	1162
Cambridge	1253
Dominion	2137
Drury Lane	2188
Her Majesty's	1161
London Palladium	2291
Lyceum	2107
Palace	1390
Piccadilly	1200
Prince Edward	1625
Prince of Wales	1131
Savoy	1157
Shaftesbury	1405
Victoria Palace	1575

Category B theatres (800– 1099 seats)	
Gielgud	889
Lyric	916
Gillian Lynne	920
Noel Coward	877
Novello	1052
Old Vic	1067
Peacock	1000
Phoenix	1020
Playhouse	800
Sondheim	990
TR Haymarket	894

Category C theatres (799 seats and below)	
Apollo	775
Harold Pinter	795
Criterion	591
Duchess	476
Duke of York's	586
Fortune	432
Garrick	724
New Ambassador's	410
Royal Court	400
St James	312
St Martin's	546
Trafalgar Studio 1	381
Vaudeville	686
Wyndham's	759

TAXATION, VAT & NATIONAL INSURANCE

Taxation

Producer: As the members are, in the main, Schedule D for tax purposes, the manager pension contribution is effectively treated as an

Therefore, the manager pension contribution will be treated as an allowable business expense.

In all cases the manager pension contribution must be added to the weekly salary of the member before being deducted.

The above also applies to those engaged via a limited company.

Member: The effect is neutral as the manager contribution is directed into a Personal

Pension, which benefits from tax relief being granted at source.

The claiming of any additional tax relief due to the member being a higher rate taxpayer is the responsibility of the member.

VAT

As the manager contribution forms part of the overall wage for the member it is also

subject to VAT where a member is VAT Registered.

If the manager is VAT Registered, the additional VAT might be recovered in the manager's VAT Return.

National Insurance

This changed on 06.04.2014
The HMRC Summary of Responses can be found here.

However, the recommendation from

Chester Rose is as follows.

Producer: Producer to interpret or seek independent advice

Member: Member to interpret or seek independent advice

INFORMING EMPLOYERS

It is the responsibility of members to notify the employer that they are a member of the EPS and to provide their EPS membership reference in the space provided in the contract.

Only accept a member reference starting with 'P', 'A' at the end, and seven numbers in between.

A unique reference issued by Chester Rose to all EPS Members; it provides permission to deduct personal contributions, and the guarantee that reduced duties regarding auto-enrolment compliance can be applied; the EPS being a Qualifying Workplace Pension Scheme.

If a 'TK' reference is given instead of a 'P', refuse it, insist on the latter; if neither member nor agent can provide, Chester Rose can.

PROCESSING PAYMENTS

It is important that the member's basic engagement fee is increased by the employer contribution and then this should be shown as a deduction, thus bringing the basic engagement fee back to its original level. A further deduction of the members' contribution should also then be made.

CONTRIBUTION PAYMENT PROCEDURE

Contributions should be paid to Aviva on a monthly basis commencing as soon as practicable after the deductions have been made from the member's salary.

Currently, legislation dictates that pension deductions made in one month must be paid across by the employer to the member's pension provider no later than the 22nd of the month following the deduction.

Any late payments will be monitored and may be reported to the industry regulator, The Pensions Regulator (TPR), which has the power to impose fines.

Where a late payment is identified, Chester Rose may review the circumstances to determine whether an EPS Member may have been disadvantaged as a result of the delay. This could include, for example, potential loss of investment growth or contributions being allocated to the incorrect tax year.

Where appropriate, Chester Rose can, upon request and subject to agreement from the Production Company, carry out calculations to assess any potential loss and determine whether compensation may be due.

If such work is undertaken, the Production Company will be provided with details of the assessment, including any relevant calculations. Chester Rose will issue an invoice for the work carried out, payable within seven days of receipt. Where compensation is identified as being due, the Production Company will be responsible for paying this directly to Aviva for allocation to the relevant member policy. Our fee for carrying out such work is £250.00 per hour, subject to a minimum charge of £250.00.

A schedule, similar to the following, is to accompany the remittance to Chester Rose.

EXAMPLE SCHEDULE

Member's name	Membership number	Artist contribution	Contract contribution	Total contribution	Period covered	Production
AB Sample	P5232154A	25.00	50.00	75.00	01.01.00 31.01.00	ABC
CD Sample	P5232155A	20..00	40.00	60.00	01.01.00 31.01.00	ABC
Cheque total			135.000			

An excel spreadsheet to aid you in the calculation of these figures is available from Chester Rose and can also be found on our website.

IMPORTANT NOTE

All contribution payments to the EPS must be by BACS, quoting a reference from us and must be in GBP. Cheques are not permitted. A unique BACS reference and bank details shall be issued upon receipt of:

(i) your formal request to bacs@chesterrose.co.uk and
(ii) your fulfilment of our response requesting a, b and c below.
   a) Name & address of the production company
   b) Name on the paying bank account
   c) Receipt of £50 fee to cover costs relating to anti-money laundering and sanctions checks, which are requirements of our regulators (invoice will be issued).

Toensure correct processing of submissions, you shall also be given instruction as to the subject of your submission e-mails.

BACKDATING CONTRIBUTIONS

Avoiding problems

Whilst agreed[3] backdated payments can be accepted into the EPS, we fully understand the problems that can be incurred regarding their calculation and from when to backdate to.

We therefore recommend that as soon as a full cast, stunt and stage management listing is available for a production, it is e-mailed to Chester Rose. Any information received will be kept in the strictest of confidence.

E-mail c4c@chesterrose.co.uk

We shall then check the list against our member records and report our findings back to you if existing EPS members are found.

The result of this exercise will mean that you can identify and contact all those in the EPS at outset and remove the possibility of having to consider or authorise back payments at a later date.

We shall not use the cast lists you send us to encourage joining of the EPS.

Refunds - from April 2023

Please be aware that any schedule containing monies paid over for non-members who do not subsequently join and therefore must have monies refunded shall incur an administration cost of £25 per member, per schedule.

[3] Agreed backdated payments differ from late and backdated payments arising from a requirement to get up to date.

REFERENCE & COMPLIANCE

Every individual in the EPS will, at some point, have made the personal decision to join the scheme.

Historically, this was by completing and submitting an application form, and in more recent times has migrated to a more convenient and simple on-line registration process.

CLICK TO JOIN THE EPS SCHEME

Completing the registration produces a unique EPS Membership Reference which will start with 'P', then a 'five', six more numbers, and end with 'A' P 5 * * * * * * A This format provides you, the employer, with the guarantees you need: a) that the engaged individual is an EPS Member,

b) With the EPS being a QWPS, AE is not required,

c) You will have no legacy duties once they leave your employment.

References beginning TK or any other format should never be accepted as they cannot provide the guarantees mentioned above and which you need to fulfil your AE compliance duties

Contact us to obtain or check on any EPS Membership Reference issues

If a 'TK' reference is given instead of a 'P', refuse it, insist on the latter; if neither member nor agent can provide, Chester Rose can.

FEES

Employers in the creative sector currently enjoy fee-free access to the EPS, bar the following exceptions:

£50.00[4]

Upon registering a new company to become a contributor to the EPS, a one-off charge to cover costs relating to the necessary sanction checks. (3)

£25.00

A fee per member per submission when a refund is required. This relates to those that are not yet EPS Members and are included on a schedule or when an error, such as an overpayment for an EPS Member has been made.

Hourly rated fee[5]

Payable regarding late payments of contributions where the timescale involved may have had an adverse effect on the value of the members' EPS.

Bespoke requests, such as access to the EPS for the benefit of the Employer's Staff; are initially costed hourly at our minimum rate, moving to an agreed annual fee if suitable.

£250.00

Our minimum hourly rate, which is subject to change at any time and without prior notice.

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[4] Subject to change at any time and without prior notice.

[5] Refer to relevant page

CONTACT US

Scheme enquiries

For any further inquiries about the scheme, please contact our specialist administration and scheme processing team:

Phone: 020 3342 1282
e-mail: c4c@chesterrose.co.uk

Technical insight

If you need additional technical insight, please reach out to the scheme's Technical Lead, Andrew Barker:

Phone: 020 3342 1282
e-mail: andrew.barker@chesterrose.co.uk

Schedules

e-mail: schedules@chesterrose.co.uk

BACS reference request

e-mail: bacs@chesterrose.co.uk

Postal address

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