Organist and Ceremonies rates

2026

These rates represent minimum recommended fees and are not differentiated by location or venue type. It is not uncommon for higher fees to be negotiated to reflect the location, region, venue, nature of the engagement, level of responsibility or other factors relevant to the engagement.

Minimum rates per musician

Regular services (maximum of 1.5 hours)

Service	**Minimum rate**
Organ playing without choral/vocal accompaniment	£89.46
Organ playing with choral/vocal accompaniment (without responsibility for directing the choir)	£107.35
Organ playing with responsibility for directing the choir	£128.81

Overtime (after 1.5 hours): payable at 1/6th of the fee per 15 minutes (or part thereof).

Special services (maximum of 1.5 hours)

Includes weddings, funerals, carol services and memorial services, festivals etc.

Service	**Minimum rate**
Organ playing without choral/vocal accompaniment	£146.47
Organ playing with choral/vocal accompaniment (without responsibility for directing the choir)	£175.76
Organ playing with responsibility for directing the choir	£210.91

Overtime (after 1.5 hours): payable at 1/6th of the fee per 15 minutes (or part thereof).

Services requiring significantly extended musical direction (e.g. fully choral services with multiple rehearsed items) may be treated as enhanced services and an uplift agreed separately.

Crematoria

Service	Minimum rate
Minimum fee	£89.46
Per additional service	£45.73

For playing at the funeral and at the crematorium – double fee

Overtime (after 1.5 hours): payable at 1/6th of the fee per 15 minutes (or part thereof).

Rehearsals

Same-day rehearsals – maximum of 1.5 hours

Same-day rehearsals – up to 1.5 hours	Minimum rate
Organ playing without choral/vocal accompaniment	£75.19
Organ playing with choral/vocal accompaniment (without responsibility for directing the choir)	£90.23
Organ playing with responsibility for directing the choir	£108.27
Rehearsals on a day other than the performance day - up to 1.5 hours	Full agreed service fee, plus any applicable additional payments (including travel and porterage).

Rehearsals on a day other than the performance day - up to 1.5 hours

Full service fee, plus any applicable additional payments (including travel and porterage).

Overtime (after 1.5 hours): payable at 1/6th of the fee per 15 minutes (or part thereof).

Preparation time – hourly rate £59.64

Preparation time may include a range of duties connected with the engagement, including but not limited to, general administration, learning repertoire*, familiarisation with a new instrument, meetings, emails and other duties reasonably required to facilitate the engagement.

*Where repertoire requires significant additional preparation time, an uplift to the preparation fee may be agreed.

This rate does not cover specialist music preparation such as arranging, orchestration, transcribing, copying or photocopying. The MU's minimum recommended rates for these can be found here: Arranging, Music Preparation and Orchestration Rates

Resident Organists

Resident Organist means an organist engaged on a formal, regular basis. It may include regular attendance at and playing during services, weddings, funerals, memorials and other ceremonial occasions.

Organ playing without choral/vocal accompaniment (weekly rate: yearly rate ÷ 52)

3 hours per week: £9,303.37 pa

4 hours per week: £12,404.50 pa

5 hours per week: £15,505.62 pa

Organ playing with choral/vocal accompaniment (but without responsibility for directing the choir) (weekly rate: yearly rate ÷ 52)

3 hours per week: £11,164.05 pa

4 hours per week: £14,885.40 pa

5 hours per week: £18,606.74 pa

Organ playing with responsibility for directing the choir (weekly rate: yearly rate ÷ 52)

3 hours per week: £13,396.86 pa

4 hours per week: £16,076.23 pa

5 hours per week: £19,291.47 pa

The Preparation time hourly rate above may be used to quote for additional duties reasonably required beyond what is included in the organist's agreed responsibilities, including, but not limited to, extensive administrative and librarian responsibilities, recruitment and outreach.

Overtime (after 1.5 hours): payable at 1/6th of the fee per 15 minutes (or part thereof).

Holiday pay

The musician is entitled to 28 days holiday in line with Working Time Regulations.

Bank holidays when worked are payable at double time.

Video recording

Permission to record the organist should be sought in advance

A video recording for private purposes of a wedding or other 'special service' may be made subject to a) the organist giving their permission b) a fee of £107.00 being paid.

Please note that this fee only grants the person arranging and paying for the recording the necessary permissions. Private use means personal, non-commercial use of the recording by that person. Separate permissions, rates or agreements may apply for any use beyond private purposes. Please contact your regional MU office if further use is proposed or if you have any concerns regarding the use of any recordings beyond private purposes. See below for information on the MU's livestreaming fees.

Organists should be aware that venues may have their own policies, permissions or restrictions relating to recording and the subsequent use of recordings. Please clarify these arrangements at the point of contract.

Live streaming

Please note that these fees are to clear limited-term rights and are in addition to regular organists' fees

The headline rates are:

- Unlimited streaming over a 24-hour period (no further ability to view): £45.00
- 30 days unlimited streaming: £60.00
- 3 months unlimited streaming: £75.00
- 6 months unlimited streaming: £100.00

You can find these rates and more information here.

Distance fees – in respect of time travelled

£13.23 per hour pro rata.

For travel time and mileage: https://www.theaa.com/driving/mileage-calculator.jsp

Fuel fees and travel expenses

56p per mile

HMRC travel rates: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/rates/travel.htm

Standard class rail fare

www.thetrainline.co.uk

Congestion/Toll Charges/Parking

All charges to be paid by the engager

Porterage

Group A - £41.65 – Electric Guitar (inc' Amp); Bass Guitar (inc' Amp); Double Bass.

Group B - £36.00 – Bass Sax, Tuba.

Group C - £28.60 – Contra Bassoon; Baritone Sax; French Horn + 1 other brass instrument; Trombone + 1 other brass instrument or bag of mutes: Two Saxes; Cello; Bass Clarinet: Pedalboards.

Group D – subject to individual negotiation – Drum Kit; Percussion; Harps: Keyboards: P.A.

Doubling/Trebling/Quadrupling

15% of fee for each additional instrument

Breaks

Minimum of 15 mins per 2 hours playing

Late fees

Payable when the time of return is between midnight and 2:00 am: £37.50

Overnight stay

Payable when return would be after 2:00 am: £147.00

Subsistence

Payable per day to cover meals and expenses: £65.80

Guidance notes

The MU's live rates are based on an hourly rate which a self-employed musician needs to charge in order to earn an income, relative to their training, experience and expertise. Individual negotiations can be made based on these minimum rates.

If you're self-employed, you do not have a contract of employment with an employer. You're more likely to be contracted to provide services over a certain period of time for a fee and be in business in your own right.

You'll also pay your own tax and National Insurance contributions.

You don't have employment rights as such if you're self-employed as you are your own boss and can therefore decide how much to charge for your work and how much holiday to give yourself.

You do have some legal protection.

You must not be discriminated against and you're entitled to a safe and healthy working environment on your client's premises.

Self-employed women who have recently left their jobs may be entitled to Maternity Allowance.