



Venue Information

This document gives an overview of Empty Shop HQ as a building and its function within Empty Shop CIC as an organisation. It outlines what type of events can take place and provides some basic information to help you decide if your event is a good fit.

Context

Empty Shop CIC is a non profit, community arts & culture organisation. Founded in 2008 we opened our first 'Empty Shop' in January 2009 in order to provide accessible space for the arts community in Durham. Since then we have used 21 temporary spaces to deliver and facilitate hundreds of events for thousands of people. Quite early on, we came to the conclusion we needed a permanent physical space, to give us some consistency in between the temporary use spaces; in effect we needed a home for the organisation.

About Empty Shop HQ

Empty Shop HQ was acquired in January 2010 and served as that much needed 'home'. It housed a studio group and 4 exhibition spaces and was almost entirely visual arts focused. Over the next few years it became a hub for the creative community and was evolving into a much broader venue - it late 2012 we formalised this by getting the various licences needed to host a variety of cultural events, not just visual art. It now played host to 'anything cultural' including gigs, theatre productions, poetry nights, film screenings, talks, workshops and much more. Since then it has developed into a space that delivers close to 200 events a year, from the niche and fringe activity to sell out gigs. Empty shop HQ provides a much needed platform in Durham, bringing together people and crossing over audiences.

These frequently asked questions below should give an overview of how events work here and should answer questions relating to your proposed activity.



FAQ's

What is Empty Shop HQ in a nutshell?

Simply put, Empty Shop HQ is an independent, performance focused, arts venue.

Can I put on an event at HQ?

Empty Shop HQ is a community driven venue providing a platform for people to host creative events.

Programming an event into HQ is conditional on it being in keeping with the aims and vision for the space.

The two main questions you need to ask yourself are:

1) **Is the event a cultural performance?**

Examples of the kind of events that happen here: Gigs, musical performances, poetry readings, film screenings, talks, 'fringe style' theatre productions, stand up comedy and more.

2) **Is the event open to a broad audience interested in culture?**

Ultimately, events hosted at HQ should be arts focused and open to all. It is important that anyone is welcome to cultural events hosted at Empty Shop HQ. This includes people of all ages, backgrounds and ability. Whilst we are open to some private hires (see below), we will always give precedence to events that are open to our audience.

Safer spaces, audience and behaviour

HQ is a **safer space** and an all ages venue. We ask all visitors to be respectful of each other in the spirit of creating a non-threatening environment which promotes collaboration, generosity and positivity. Empty Shop CIC values everyone's well being and comfort and asks everyone to respect the building and other users of the premises.

This includes the audience your event brings into the building. We would therefore ask you to be sensitive to this environment when promoting your event. In short we ask you to 'vouch' for your audience and be responsible in managing your events.

In addition, it is important to us that events are open to our broad network and in the spirit of inclusivity, that they feel welcome at any event we host.

We expect you to keep all of this in mind when considering an event at HQ,



It fits! What next?

Great! If it is a gig or a theatre performance then please read the info below before you get in touch.

If it something else, then this should be pretty straight forward: Please email hq@emptyshop.org with as much detail as possible, including potential dates, and we'll take it from there.

Is there a hire fee?

Maybe... As a non profit organisation hire fees go towards running costs and the upkeep of the building, As a community organisation however it is important to us that a hire fee isn't a barrier to you hosting your event with us, and you can talk to us if you feel it is.

Usually hires fall into one of 3 options:

- 1) If your event is linked to an institution, organisation or group with a budget, then we ask you to pay our standard fee of £50 a day.
- 2) If your event has no 'social' aspect and the bar won't be used we ask you to contribute to the £50 fee as best you can.
- 3) If your event is small (15 people or less) then we ask you to contribute to the £50 fee as best you can.

Can I charge for my event / can I sell tickets?

Yes, you can charge on the door or set up advance tickets but be aware that we don't offer any kind of box office service, so ticketing systems are the responsibility of the organiser.

We don't usually ask for a door split or a cut of ticket sales, we prefer that money to go to the artists and to help cover costs of the event, please confirm this with us at the time of booking.

I'm in a band, can I play a gig at HQ?

Probably! As a venue, we simply act as hosts for the most part and programme very little ourselves. There are a few ways in which gigs at HQ normally happen:

- 1) If you are a band looking for a gig we would suggest that you go through a local promoter or collaborate with another group to make your event a success

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- 2) If you are interested in promoting your own night and have experience in doing so, get in touch and we'll see what we can arrange. *Remember, we like events to be for a broad audience and open to everyone, if you are hoping to put a private gig on for friends, then please see the section below on 'Private Hire'*
- 3) If you are new to this and want to get experience in putting gigs on, we may be able to help with that - so please get in touch.

Do you have any restrictions on music genre?

Unfortunately, yes. In practical terms the building is really old and the event space is a fringe venue, or more simply, just a room. It is not a purpose built gig space and as such has no sound proofing. This means anything too loud and erratic is a no go. As a rough guide (although not conclusive) genres such as hardcore, metal etc are just not suited to HQ.

It is also worth saying that, whilst not a hard and fast rule, as a performance art venue we don't usually accommodate cover bands, and instead steer towards original music.

In other terms, as an all ages, inclusive community venue, the events need to encourage a safe welcoming environment for all.

Do you have any in-house kit?

Although it's something we are looking into, we currently don't have any kit so you would need to arrange your own PA etc.

Can I put on a theatre production / play?

Theatre productions can work very well here, but bear in mind that it is just a room, not a theatre! Think of it like a fringe venue. There are also a number of restrictions given how heavily used the space is as a broader cultural venue. If you are flexible and prepared to do a short run, please get in touch. Site visits welcome but please contact us to arrange a time.

Private hire

If you would like to hire the space for a private event we can consider your event providing it's sympathetic to the ethos of the space (see 'Safer spaces, audience and behaviour'). If you think it's a good fit then get in touch but please be aware that as a performance arts venue we always give precedence to cultural events.

Please note, this document is constantly evolving and designed as a guide. It is not strict policy and we reserve the right to change it at any time and make decisions which contradict the information written here.