

Skills and training investment vital to the success of Public Service Broadcasting

Consultation response from Creative Skillset April 2016

1. Introduction

1.1 Creative Skillset is the creative industries' key skills partner, working with and for industry to enable relevant skills provision that improves productivity, employability and creativity. Our objective is meeting our industries' skills needs by achieving an effective skills and talent development pipeline via portable skills from entry to executive level, in a fast-moving and intensely competitive global industry. We work across sectors including film, television, animation, games, visual effects, radio, publishing, advertising and marketing communications.

1.2 We welcome the opportunity to highlight challenges that are critical to the success of Public Service Broadcasting (PSB) in the UK. We believe challenges centre on the provision of a diverse and appropriately skilled workforce, which is vital to improving and sustaining productivity, creativity and employability across the creative industries, as well as helping deliver PSB purposes.

1.3 The UK has one of the most vibrant TV production sectors in the world, with an enviable track record of producing innovative and high quality content across genres. Our PSB system has been a driving force: the PSBs, between them, are responsible for some 80% of total investment in UK original non-news content.¹ Independent producers are responsible for around 60% of total commissioned hours on the five main PSB channels². This has been bolstered by the recent introduction of tax credits in PSB related industries³. A report by Olsberg and Nordicity reported that the High End TV Tax relief created some 16,800 jobs in the UK and generated some £852m for the UK economy⁴.

1.4 Given the rapid pace of change around technology, audience behaviour and business models, the demands placed on those working in production are constantly evolving. The creation of content, and its distribution on multiplatform devices, is integral to delivering PSB – and this relies on relevant talent and skills. PSB needs to serve both the media consumer and the citizen. A healthy and sustainable media market needs high quality, home-grown,

¹TV Producer Consolidation, Globalisation and Vertical Integration, Oliver and Ohlbaum 2015.

² ibid

³ A high-end television programme is defined to mean a drama (which includes comedy) or documentary production that is intended for broadcast and has expenditure per hour of slot length of not less than £1 million. BFI Cultural Test July 2015

⁴ Olsberg SPI and Nordicity's *The Economic Contribution of the UK's Film, High-end TV, Video Games and Animation Programme Sectors* report, commissioned by the BFC, BFI, Ukie, Pact and Pinewood, details the impact of the Film, High-end Television, Animation and Video Games Tax Reliefs on the economy, infrastructure and job creation

innovative content, effective distribution and plurality. Future PSB models need to support and invest in our industries' workforce in order to keep content relevant and our creative industries competitive.

1.5 As new platforms and formats emerge, old divides are blurred. A holistic and collaborative approach across not just PSBs but all screen-based industries is increasingly vital to ensure that the Creative Industries' talent base can compete globally. This requires upskilling and re-skilling with an integrated view and a systematic approach to tackling barriers to entry and enabling progression within an ever more casualised workforce.

2. Skills challenges in the Creative Industries

2.1 Barriers to entry – and the ability to attract, maintain and sustain a highly skilled, creative and productive workforce – are critical factors affecting the growth of the PSB workforce. There is currently a high proportion of graduates entering the Creative Industries, but a workforce from a wide range of backgrounds, with a rich mix of skills is vital to creativity and employability. Factors that might influence industry entrants' social and educational backgrounds include the systemic culture of those wishing to gain industry skills having to undertake unpaid 'work experience': in a 2014 survey of the creative media workforce, 82% of those surveyed who undertook work experience did so unpaid⁵. Similarly, there is still a lack of open recruitment practices: 71% of the creative media workforce in the same survey reported that they heard about their current job through informal routes.

2.2 This arguably affects the current state of diversity in the PSB workforce. Positive progress has been made: currently, overall representation of those from BAME groups in the TV industry currently stands at 9%⁶ – which, if compared to BAME representation in the overall UK workforce (10%⁷), and compared with similar exercises, shows improvement. There is still more to be done, however, and we believe an ideal starting point includes better monitoring at a more granular level to help PSBs. There is broad commitment across the Television sector to 'Diamond', the diversity monitoring system launching this summer. It will provide detailed and consistent reporting in a way that has not been possible before, co-ordinated by the Creative Diversity Network.

2.3 The Government's Apprenticeships levy⁸ could, if implemented effectively in 2017, provide a timely and effective opportunity for industry to help diversify and supply a cohort of new entrants to PSB. As both a graduate and non-graduate route, new Apprenticeships could – with industry backing – be a powerful driver for greater creative industry workforce diversity via paid, job-ready entrants.

2.4 Creative Skillset has worked with employer groups and training providers UK-wide to deliver 'trailblazer' Apprenticeship standards. We have developed content for roles including Broadcast Production Junior Content Producer and Props Technician – and, at a more

⁵ The Creative Media Workforce Survey, Creative Skillset 2014

⁶ The Creative Skillset Creative Industries Workforce Survey Autumn 2015

⁷ Labour Force Survey, October-December 2015 (Office for National Statistics)

⁸ Government announced an Apprenticeship levy in Summer Budget 2015. The levy will apply to all UK employers in both the private and public sectors and is payable on annual pay bills of more than £3 million. Employers can spend their levy funds on training their apprentice against an approved standard or framework. This includes either existing staff or new recruits as long as the training meets an approved standard or framework and the individual meets the apprentice eligibility criteria.

advanced level, an Apprenticeship in Outside Broadcast. We know from our work with partners including Channel 4 and the BBC that the appetite for Apprenticeships is growing, and we see a positive opportunity for PSB and its supply chain to benefit by working with us to create the right content and conditions to ensure that investment delivers the best value for levy-paying employers.

2.5 Within the current workforce, skills demands have been driven by growth in PSB 'tax relief' sectors (children's, TV, High End TV, film, animation), spurring a demand for rapid access to the latest skills and talent. However, in a 2015 survey some 22 out of 24 High End TV companies reported difficulties in crewing for their latest production⁹. These sectors share similar skills requirements, so there is a greater need to sustain a more flexible workforce that can move as demand requires between sectors – sharing know-how, injecting energy and stimulating innovation and transformation.

2.6 Coupled with this PSB industries, and TV in particular, comprise a high proportion of SMEs, with freelancers forming around 40% of the workforce. Many freelancers work in production-related roles: for example, 67% of camera staff and 60% of post-production staff are freelance¹⁰. Perhaps unsurprisingly, freelancers are more likely to report a training need (57%) compared with permanent employees (45%); and 74% claim to experience barriers to training and professional development compared with permanent employees (55%)¹¹. There is a risk of market failure in skills provision since our casualised workforce will, on the whole, not have employers investing in their training. The shift toward 'portfolio' careers is also likely to increase the proportion of freelancers in the PSB industries.

2.7 PSB broadcasters are investing in upskilling their workforce through measures such as the High End TV levy, contributing over £4million to training and skills for their workforce since 2013. This has resulted in several successful schemes delivered in collaboration with Creative Skillset. An example includes the 'Stepping Up' Programme, which aims to facilitate high end producers' progression into the role of TV Drama Producer across scripted, factual and other broadcast media. This initiative will support ten production placements over the next two years, ultimately supporting talent progression in a critical PSB genre while, at the same time, increasing the wider PSB talent pool. Despite this progress, a stronger and more coherent industry-wide approach is needed to tackle investment in upskilling and mobilising the PSB workforce.

3. Recommendations

3.1 Creative Skillset has previously outlined to OFCOM recommendations around the Codes of Practice for PSBs, as part of their review of the Independent TV Sector – as well as responding to the DCMS consultation on the BBC's Charter renewal. The following points summarise the suggestions we have previously made in respect of any adjustment to future codes, along with other ideas to address the challenges outlined above.

1. Producers and broadcasters should engage actively in the assessment of skills gaps and training outcomes, and in industry-wide development to provide quality career

⁹ *The Full Picture: The demand for skills in the UK TV production*. Creative Skillset, published March 2015.

¹⁰ Creative Skillset Creative Industries Workforce Survey Autumn 2015

¹¹ The Creative Media Workforce Survey, Creative Skillset 2014

information at school and college level, along with standards and accreditation across training and education.

2. There should be better use of existing online networks such as Hiive (www.hiive.co.uk) – the online network for creative professionals – where vacancies and development opportunities on productions can be openly advertised and filled on merit.
3. There should be improved industry coherence and investment on skills and training to support a growing freelance workforce, to enable movement between PSB sectors and increase the PSB talent pool.
4. Creative Skillset will continue to work in partnership with industry, ahead of the implementation of the 2017 levy, to ensure that future Apprenticeships meet PSB needs.