



Exploring opportunities for job seekers in **Rhondda  
Cynon Taf** within the **TV & Film making industry**

## **Final Report**

Written by **Dr Ellie Farmahan**  
and **Russell Todd**

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**Part One:**

# Background and Context

# Introduction

## Background

[Straeon Research Ltd](#) was commissioned, in December 2022, to conduct a piece of work exploring opportunities in the TV and film making industry for job seekers in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The work was commissioned by Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) Arts Service, to support Communities for Work Plus (CfW+) in their work with job seekers in Rhondda Cynon Taf. The brief was to support the development and sustainability of the creative industries through a number of activities, including research into opportunities in the creative industries across the county; an awareness raising campaign; event(s); and a detailed report.

The project team comprised:

**Dr Ellie Farmahan:** Director, Straeon Research Ltd. Straeon was set up in 2020 and conducts research and evaluation in the fields of creative industries, health inequalities, and arts in health. Contact Ellie at [ellie@straeon.co.uk](mailto:ellie@straeon.co.uk)

**Russell Todd:** a freelance writer, researcher and consultant on community development and community work. Contact Russell at [russell@russelltodd.cymru](mailto:russell@russelltodd.cymru)

**Bak:** an award-winning campaigns agency with expertise in social change whose clients include National Theatre Wales, Welsh Refugee Council, Turkish Workers Party, Wrexham County Borough Council and Football Association of Wales. Contact Dave Evans at **bak** at [dave@wearebak.com](mailto:dave@wearebak.com).

**Jarrad Terry** was invited to join the project team to provide an opportunity for a young person from RCT to develop their capacity as a paid member of the team. As a member of staff with the Council who had come through the kickstarter scheme, it was anticipated that he would drive the campaign via social media beyond the life of this time-limited piece of work. Ellie and Russell conducted the desk research, industry engagement and prepared the report. Bak were responsible for the campaign and the landing page. The whole team contributed to the event. Overall guidance on the brief was provided by Anne Hayes at RCTCBC Arts Service.

A note about terminology: in this report, the phrases 'TV and film industry' and 'Screen industry' are used interchangeably. The more commonly used term in the field is Screen industry, however this is taken to include areas such as animation and gaming, which were not in the remit for this project. Although the original brief indicated the project should cover the creative industries 'with a focus on TV and film', the focus was narrowed to just TV and film in early project team meetings to ensure the project could be completed to a high standard on time.

## Methodology

The research methodology comprised:

- Desk research of the TV and film making industry;
- Engagement with employers in the TV and film making sector in South Wales;

- Engagement with industry agencies and training providers;
- Two focus groups with CfW+ staff;
- A focus group with serving prisoners (as part of a separate study on prisoner education).

The two focus groups with CfW+ staff were facilitated by Ellie and Russell. The focus group with prisoners took place as part of a separate research project exploring prisoner education. [Inside Out Support Wales](#) (ISOW) kindly agreed to include questions about employment in the TV and film making industry on our behalf. We had no direct contact with job seekers and/or clients of CfW+.

In addition, a public-facing campaign was developed which directs viewers to a landing page with information on opportunities. The campaign was informed by the research activities. A number of real-life case studies of people currently working in TV and film were recorded to appeal to the client base of CfW+. A creative document was prepared by bak, and fed into by the whole team, leading to the creation of an identity and brand for the campaign. Bak also designed the website, and the whole team contributed content.

## Communities for Work Plus

Until recently, Welsh Government had two employability programmes: Communities for Work (CfW) and Communities for Work Plus (CfW+). The former was funded by the European Social Fund whose funding has now ended, a consequence of the UK's exit from the European Union. CfW+ is now the single, comprehensive programme.

The programme has a five step model, within which support is individualised and tailored:

1. **Essential Skills for everyone** – builds confidence, identifies in a non-discriminatory way any literacy or numeracy support the participant might need
2. **Pathway to Employment** – generic training like health and safety, workplace first aid, interview skills
3. **Mentoring programme** – intensive one-to-one support that helps identify a career path. Employs solution-focused brief intervention therapy designed to get people to take action themselves
4. **Employment Routes** – for moving people closer to securing employment; tailored support; may include people who want a change of career
5. **In-work support** – for 2 months additional support whilst new to the workplace

Referrals can be made by Jobcentre Plus, by the voluntary sector or people can self-refer. Some of the voluntary sector relationships are nurtured through the adult community learning (ACL) partnership, which includes a focus on promoting the programmes, understanding what is available by way of support, and understanding what partners can offer CfW+.

Pathways exist for those sectors where there are routinely a number of vacancies, e.g., care, rail, construction, security. Though there has not to date been a pathway for TV and film within the Council, there has been activity in other areas of the Arts sector, notably music. For example, RCT Arts delivered '[Fortitude Through Music](#)', a programme which engages young people with ambitions to be musicians, and runs alongside Young Promoters Network(YPN) to develop music industry

experience and opportunities. Similarly, [The Forte Project](#), developed in RCT which now runs independently across Wales. The programme takes emerging artists from across Wales and enables them to work alongside assigned industry mentors to develop their careers within the music industry.

It should be noted that, in part, career pathways in other industries have been developed within CfW+ because employers have come to the programme and expressed its needs:

*When an employer has come along and said 'we need x, y and Z', we just need to understand what it is we need to put together to take advantage of it*

FG1

The TV and film making industry has not made this sort of representation to CfW+. We also heard CfW+ staff have very rarely, if ever in some cases, encountered clients enquiring about careers in TV and film. To a certain extent, a 'vicious circle' may have unwittingly been created in relation to the industry: clients rarely enquire about it, so CfW+ has not needed to know more about the industry, which in turn rarely raises it as a possibility with clients. We see a positive outcome of the campaign to be a circle that changes from being vicious to being virtuous: a greater awareness of opportunities prompts more client enquiries with CfW+.

Although there is to date no established pathway within CfW+, there are pathways into the industry for job seekers and aspiring screen professionals from a variety of other sources. These are noted later in the report.

## The Creative Industries in the UK and Wales

The creative industries emerged as a priority for UK economic development in 1998, when the newly formed UK Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) identified 13 business sub-sectors which "*have their origin in individual creativity, skill and talent and which have a potential for wealth and job creation through the generation and exploitation of intellectual property*"<sup>1</sup>. The UK Government's Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport reported that, in 2019, the creative industries contributed £115.9 billion annually to the UK economy, equating to £13.2 million an hour<sup>2</sup>. Within these figures, the Welsh 'share' amounted to £2.2 billion generated by a workforce of over 56,000 people, with the creative industries considered to have long been in Wales. As the then Deputy Minister for Culture and Sport, Lord Dafydd Elis-Thomas, said in a statement about COVID-19 and the creative industries:

*"[They] have been one of the fastest growing parts of the Welsh economy for a number of years. The sector doesn't just create jobs and wealth, it contributes to a strong national brand and helps to promote Wales and its culture and talent to the world"*<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hargreaves, I, Grant, A (2011) *Creative industries in the South Wales Valleys: a working paper*.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.great.gov.uk/international/content/investment/sectors/creative-industries/>

<sup>3</sup> Source: [Business Wales, written statement from Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism](#).

Since the pandemic, these figures have dropped, with Creative Wales<sup>4</sup> currently stating that the creative industries in Wales have a combined turnover of over £1.7 billion and employ 35,400 people in Wales. Creative Wales published the findings of its most recent survey in October 2022<sup>5</sup>, which was completed by 344 respondents; 65 from the screen industry. In the survey, the industry is broken down into the following categories:

- Music;
- Screen, including TV and Film;
- Digital;
- Publishing;
- Other e.g., artist, photographer;

And segments it into the following business types:

- Self-employed;
- Freelancer;
- Employee;
- Employer/director/owner

The headline findings of this survey suggest:

- Over half the businesses trading in the industry (including sole traders) are located in South East Wales (54%), the region within which RCT<sup>6</sup> is located;
- Just over in 1 in 3 people employed in the sector are freelance or self-employed;
- 94% of businesses have been trading for a minimum of six years; with 82% having done so in excess of a decade;
- 94% of respondents identify as white.

Understandably, creative industries state ‘increasing profitability’ as their biggest priority in their next financial year (54% of respondents). In respect of CfW+’s aim of supporting more people into the creative industries, it is interesting to observe that the third most important priority is ‘growing the workforce’ (21%). ‘Diversifying the workforce’ was also mentioned as a priority, however, the survey does not define ‘diversifying’. Since the survey enquires about respondents’ ethnicity and Welsh language ability, it is reasonable to assume it includes these elements, but not necessarily other areas of diversity such as sexual identity, faith/religion, class, disability, and educational attainment.

Many businesses in the industry stated they were *not* recruiting at the time of the survey<sup>7</sup>, though a quarter of respondents had faced difficulties in recruitment, most acutely in the Music industry (48% of respondents) followed by Screen (36%) and Digital (32%).

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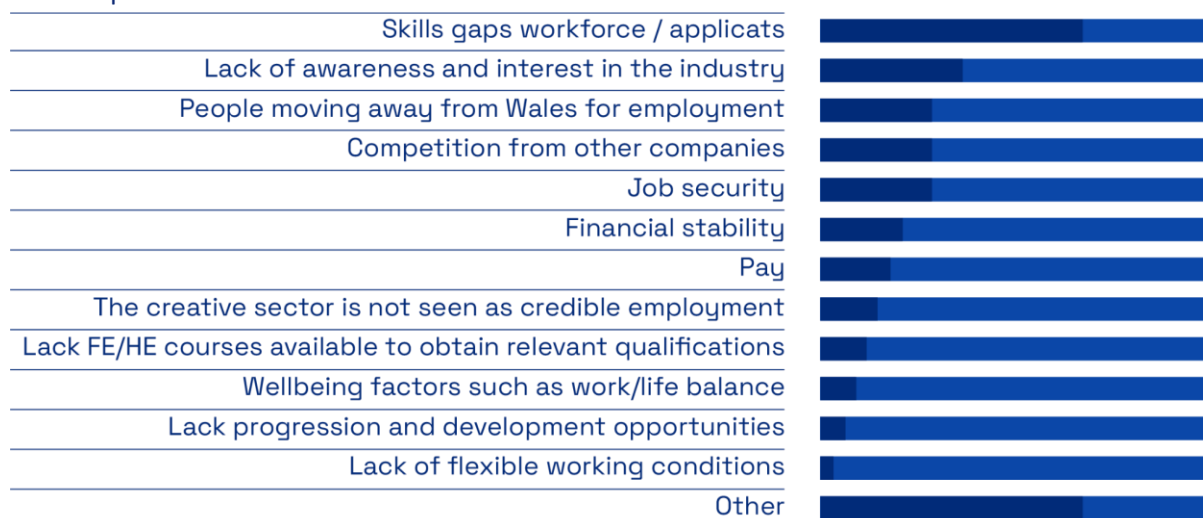
<sup>4</sup> [Creative Wales](https://www.creative.wales/), set up in 2020 by Welsh Government is the agency tasked to “support the creative industries in Wales [and] harness the power of our creative sectors, drive growth in our economy and help build a prosperous future for our country.” (<https://www.creative.wales/>).

<sup>5</sup> Hood, S (2022) *Creative Wales Industry Survey 2022 Report*, Strategic Research and Insight, Welsh Government, <https://www.gov.wales/creative-wales-industry-survey-2022>.

<sup>6</sup> The report does not state the number/percentage of respondents located in RCT.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p.15

Of the respondents who express experiencing recruitment difficulties, the reasons why they think this is reported as<sup>8</sup>:



Of the respondents that have a skills gap in the workforce, the specific gaps were reported as<sup>9</sup>:



South East Wales was the only region to register 'growing the workforce' in its top 3 priorities. When segmented by industry category, it is the Screen industry that records 'growing the workforce' as the highest priority.

## The Screen Industry in Wales

The key datasets relating to the Screen industry in Wales come from two surveys: the Creative Wales survey mentioned above, and the Media Cymru Screen industry workforce survey which was conducted in 2022/23 with a total of 424 responses. This is a considerably larger dataset than the Creative Wales dataset, given that only 65 respondents from the latter were from the Screen industry. The full results of the Media Cymru survey were not available at the time of writing, however they will be available in the Spring of 2023.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, p.16

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, p.17



It has been found that 86% of businesses in the Screen industry have been operating for at least six years, with 68% in excess of a decade<sup>10</sup>, and over half of the Screen sector has seen an increase in its turnover, far in excess of the other creative industries sectors<sup>11</sup>. It is also the sector to report the joint-lowest proportion of businesses reporting decrease in turnover (23%, joint with the Digital sector)<sup>12</sup>. The Screen sector also reports confidence in running their business profitably in their next financial year with 56% of respondents reporting being confident or very confident<sup>13</sup>. Only 1 in 10 respondents were confident they would *not* operate profitably<sup>14</sup>.

Employers reported being the most confident in being profitable in the current financial year (60% combined), despite over one third of respondents in the Screen sector expressing difficulty in recruiting into the sector<sup>15</sup>. Combined with their identifying growing the workforce as a priority suggests being able to recruit into the Screen sector is a factor in their confidence in profitability.

CfW+ staff were concerned that working in the TV and film sector would require job seekers to be set up for self-employment, and that this would be unappealing to their clients. In respect of this, it was worth noting that 44% of respondents in the Media Cymru workforce survey identified as employed full-time, and 40% as freelance<sup>16</sup>. In terms of gender, disability and ethnicity, 45% were female, 52% male, 2% non-binary and 1% preferred not to say; 12% of respondents said that they have a disability; and 92% of respondents identified as white.

In regards to Welsh language, it is the Screen sector where fluency is encountered most within the creative industries sectors: 40% of respondents are fluent or almost. However, the majority of these were located in North Wales, with only 16% of respondents in South East Wales (including RCT) expressing a similar level of fluency. Nevertheless, other data in relation to Welsh suggests the language is commonplace within the workplace in the creative industries and CfW+ clients, irrespective of their level of fluency, should be prepared to expect to routinely encounter the Welsh language should they gain employment in the industry.

## Working environments, Culture and Wellbeing

The TV and film industry has a relatively poor reputation when it comes to working conditions, wellbeing and working cultures. In 2017, location manager Michael Harm took his own life, blaming working conditions and calling on the industry to do more to look after its workforce. Following this and other deaths in the industry, the prevalence of widespread bullying and harassment came into the public view, and in 2018 the Film and TV Charity launched a 24/7 support line. As a result of the calls coming through to the support line, which cited poor mental health as the number one reason for challenges faced by the workforce, the Charity launched its first 'Looking Glass Survey' in 2019. More than 9000 people completed the online survey, and the [results](#) showed that 87% of the

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<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, p.9

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, p.12

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, p.13

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, p.14

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, p.15

<sup>16</sup> Media Cymru screen Industry Workforce Survey, reported at the Media Cymru conference, 2023.

workforce had experienced a mental health problem, which is well above the 65% UK-wide figure. Over 50% of respondents had considered taking their own life, compared to 1 in 5 in the wider UK economy. One in ten respondents had taken steps to take their own life. This crisis of mental health prompted considerable action within the industry.

Also in 2020, a [report](#) published by the University of York highlighted the inequality in terms of gender, ethnicity, disability, social class and more in the screen industries, highlighting that *“the organisational structure of the screen industries exacerbates these inequalities because of project-based contracts and an increased reliance on informal networks for entering into and maintaining employment as well as the pervasiveness of unsociable working hours”*<sup>17</sup>.

This added evidence to the weight of problematic working conditions and working culture made visible in the industry. [The Time Project](#) pointed out that *“We’re told we are lucky to be here, we’re told not to speak up, we’re told to work harder and longer if we want to get on”*. It is known within the industry that long hours and hard work are the norm, and The Time Project is aiming to challenge this by establishing patterns of work and overwork in the industry.

In a recent workforce survey, it was found that 47% of men and 58% of women in the industry had considered leaving. The top reasons were, for women, work-life balance; stress and mental health; job security and caring responsibilities. For men, the top reasons were job security; stress and mental health; financial reasons; and toxic environment / long working hours<sup>18</sup>

Calls for change in the industry have been strong. Efforts are being made to create fairer, more inclusive and supportive working environments. Indeed, in response to the worrying findings in the Looking Glass Survey, in 2020 the [Whole Picture Programme](#) was launched by the Film and TV Charity, to address the problems raised in the survey. This is an industry-led movement for better mental health in film, TV and cinema. The programme is an evidence-based and collaborative approach to tackling poor mental health in the industry over a period of ten years, with a 2-year ‘urgent’ programme of action implemented immediately.

In addition to this, in February 2022, the BFI announced [additional funding](#) for ‘wellbeing facilitators’ for projects backed by the BFI Film Fund. The aim of these new roles is to *“champion and facilitate a positive working culture, as well as being an independent point of contact for any issues – including stress, bullying and harassment, discrimination, and adult safeguarding – throughout the lifecycle of the production.”*

Employers are beginning to recognise that bullying, harassment, unconscious bias and mental health are all important issues and training needs in the industry. Providers such as [6ft from the spotlight](#) and [Cult Cymru](#) provide production companies with training in areas such as mental health and wellbeing and equality, aiming to create a fairer and more inclusive industry as well as safe, happy and healthy working environments. [ScreenSkills](#) also offers training for anybody working in the industry on addressing unconscious bias at work, bullying and harassment at work, and mental health awareness at work. Courses are aimed at those already working in the industry, as well as

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<sup>17</sup> Ozimek, AM. (2020) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Screen Industries: a scoping review. <https://screen-network.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Equality-Diversity-and-Inclusion-in-the-Screen-Industries.pdf>

<sup>18</sup> Media Cymru screen Industry Workforce Survey, reported at the Media Cymru conference, 2023.

newcomers, which is useful to CfW+ clients wanting to expand their knowledge and understanding of the industry.

In one interview, it was stated that although there is a willingness among production companies and broadcasters to address working cultures, action needs to come from the 'top'. With this in mind, the Head of Unscripted at Welsh language broadcaster S4C spoke at a conference in March 2023 about the broadcaster's three current priorities. These are:

1. Workforce wellbeing;
2. Access to the industry for all backgrounds;
3. Workforce training.

Since the Looking Glass Survey, partnerships between S4C and other companies such as Screen Skills, RAD Cymru, CRIW and It's My Shout have sprouted to develop training and improve wellbeing. S4C has joined the [Coalition for Change](#), along with other broadcasters such as ITV, Channel 4, BBC, Sky, UKTV, Channel 5 and Amazon Prime Video. The Coalition for Change is a body seeking to improve working conditions for freelancers in the industry. The coalition discusses issues that impact freelancers working in TV including recruitment practices, health and safety, workplace culture, diversity and inclusivity, bullying and harassment, training and talent progression, new talent and mental health and wellbeing. There is also a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) between S4C and the Welsh Government to increase the number of Welsh speakers in Wales to one million by 2050.

In 2021, the Looking Glass Survey was repeated and found that conditions had *not* worsened, in fact there were some small improvements, which indicates that the initiatives and collaborative action taking place were having an impact. In 2022 [a report was published](#) following a third Looking Glass Survey. The findings from the third survey showed that things were slowly improving in the industry, with rates of bullying and harassment decreasing slightly from 53% in 2021 to 46% in 2022, and overall mental wellbeing scores coming out slightly higher. Encouragingly, 80% of the workforce reported that they sensed a positive change in culture and behaviours. The Looking Glass survey will be repeated every two years to monitor changes in the industry.

## Barriers to working in TV and film

We asked CfW+ advisers what they felt the barriers were facing job seekers when it came to the TV and film industry. Responses fell into five broad categories:

### Self-employment

In recent workforce surveys, over 40% of respondents reported being employed full time. Nevertheless, a key mode of employment in the TV and film making industry remains self-employment. Contracts may run into each other, and people may experience some continuity of employment, however being freelance is a psychological and material barrier for many people. The world of self-assessment and taxation can be overwhelming for people new to freelance working, and the HMRC online system is difficult to navigate. Aside from the administrative dimension to self-employment, many are put off by the material lack of security that this way of working brings. A key

feature of the TV and Film industry is that projects are time-driven and teams move frequently on to new productions.

The current rise in precariousness - one of the Western liberal economies' contemporary 'eight giants' according to Guy Standing<sup>19</sup> (cf. Williams Beveridge's five giants that needed slaying for wider social security social advancement) - has led to a 'precariat'<sup>20</sup> (cf. a traditional proletariat) characterised by:

*"A growing proportion of people...living bits-and-pieces lives, relying on low wages and incomes that are increasingly volatile and unpredictable and on inadequate and uncertain benefits in times of loss of earnings power"<sup>21</sup>*

If this is the material, lived experience of a number of CfW+ clients then it is reasonable for them to assume that a career in TV and film making will do little to reduce one's precariousness.

## Unsociable working hours

Linked to the previous point, a key feature of the TV and Film making industry is the unsociable working hours. Productions run on timescales very different to other sectors, and staff may be required to be on set or location very early in the morning, or to stay late into the evening. Working hours can be far from regular, and staff are expected to be available according to the demands of the job. Being available and reliable are crucial as the time-driven nature of productions means that there is no time to re-recruit if staff are unable to meet the requirements of the job. This feature of the industry can present a number of practical challenges, the most obstructive of which is childcare. Parents of dependent children find childcare a challenge even for employment in more traditional sectors, and even if available, the costs can be prohibitive. Many RCT residents, particularly lone parents, are looking for employment during school hours to enable them to be available for their children outside of school hours. The TV and film making industry provides few opportunities for this type of work, and parents may struggle to see the benefit in pursuing a career in this sector while their children are young or if they have additional needs.

## Transport and travel

Transport and travel barriers were mentioned in the data and reflect wider feeling in the industry. In a workforce survey, respondents highlighted that travel is an obstacle, with key barriers being distance to workplaces; the cost of travel; lack of car / driving licence; lack of public transport. Transport links within RCT and between RCT and other parts of South Wales are partial, and there is no late-night public transport service that could facilitate the unsociable hours that careers in the TV and Film making industry often demand. Within RCT the Taf valley is particularly poorly served in respect of rail provision in comparison to the Rhondda and Cynon valleys.

The South Wales Metro might improve these in the future, but for the time being for RCT residents who do not drive or do not have access to a car, it would be very difficult to work on-location in

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<sup>19</sup> Standing, G., (2020) *Battling Eight Giants*, I.B. Tauris

<sup>20</sup> Harvey, D. (2010) *The Enigma of Capital and the Crises of Capitalism*, Oxford University Press.

<sup>21</sup> Standing, *ibid.*, p.8

areas that public transport does not reach. These challenges are key material reasons why many job-seekers may not be able to pursue a career in the TV and film making industry.

## Lack of knowledge

There is a general lack of awareness among job seekers, CfW+ advisers and the general public regarding:

- The type and range of roles available in the TV and film making industry;
- Working environments;
- Recruitment processes;
- Rates of pay;
- How competitive the industry is for job seekers; and
- Qualifications/competencies usually required.

Most people, when the TV and film industry is mentioned, have a narrow conception of what roles exist within the industry with an assumption that they relate to acting, directing, filming and editing. However, it has been repeatedly stated to us that virtually any role within the world of employment also exists within the Screen industry. Similarly, transferability of skills is a key factor in making inroads into the industry, and there have been people who have moved into the industry from fields such as hospitality who have the necessary skills to carry out similar tasks within TV and film.

Related to the sense that work in TV and film making is insecure and temporary, is a concern that pay is low. On the contrary, [The Good Work Review](#) report identifies that average pay in the industry can be as much as a third higher than the UK average<sup>22</sup>. A word of caution however: one senior industry figure told us that pay can be high because it is expected, indeed encouraged, that workers take extended periods of time off for self-care and that pay is expected to cover these periods of 'downtime'. Interestingly, we have not seen any reference to advice and support in the industry around budgeting for such patterns of income (which is not to say it does not exist).

Lastly, there appears to be a lack of knowledge about the working environments that clients might find themselves working in. Of course, these can be varied in the industry depending on the nature of productions, including in studios such as Bad Wolf or Dragon; but maybe on location outdoors or at other indoor venues right across South Wales and beyond. As we have reported here, working environments and cultures are changing within the industry and there are a range of initiatives aiming to enhance wellbeing and address the mental health issues within the workforce.

## “I wouldn't know where to start”

We have not spent much time with jobseekers during this enquiry. However, during the course of refining the campaign personas with CfW+ staff, it emerged that clients not only know little about the industry, but they are unlikely to know anyone - family, friends or peers - who work in the industry. An aim of our campaign is to change how jobseekers in RCT view themselves and the types of sector within which they may seek opportunities. The name of our campaign is Change Your Focus

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<sup>22</sup> Carey, H, Giles, L, O'Brien, D (2023) *Job quality in the Creative Industries: The final report from the Creative PEC's Good Work Review*, Nesta, <https://cdn2.assets-servd.host/creative-pec/production/assets/publications/PEC-GWR-Job-quality-in-the-Creative-Industries-v7.pdf>

which reflects this. We know that a career in TV and film is simply not on the radar of many job seekers receiving support from CfW+. This was also seen in the responses given by prisoners when asked about whether they might pursue job opportunities in the industry on their release:

*I don't know anyone in it. [I] wouldn't know where to go to find out about it*

FG3

A clear majority of respondents had never considered a career in the TV and film sector before. All of them had experience of work, as well as of employment in armed forces, but had never considered that this sector could be open to them.

*[I] wouldn't know where to start. I've just not thought of anything like that*

FG3

*Like I watch the telly and that, and it looks cool. But no man, I'm not going to be able to get on there am I like?*

FG3

To a certain extent these views might be considered reflective of the typical self-exclusion by people with criminal records, but there appears to be a wider 'internalisation' that 'people like us' do not attain careers in the TV and film making industry. Such cultural assumptions are complex and influenced by a multitude of factors related to things like education and schooling, family background and influences, narrow social networks, and a lack of representation.



**Part Two:**

**Advice from Industry &  
Resources**

## Recruiting for the TV and Film making industry

A key finding of the research is that many vacancies in TV and film making are not advertised in the same way as other industries, and that recruitment happens through more informal and/or less 'public' channels. [Screen Survey Wales 2021](#) found that 77.7% of companies listed 'word of mouth' as a recruitment method, and 76.9% of freelancers listed 'personal contacts and networks' as one of their main sources of work. Almost 30% of companies listed 'word of mouth' as their *only* method of recruitment. Of those employers who *do* advertise, vacancies are almost entirely advertised online at sites such as LinkedIn, Monster, Reed, Jobsite, Indeed etc. As well as these vacancy websites, some organisations will advertise on their own websites and use social media channels. Though finding these sites may not require a high degree of digital literacy, navigating them, refining job searches and submitting applications will require some digital skills. Notwithstanding support from CfW+ advisors and work coaches, those job seekers who lack digital skills - or face other IT-related barriers related to data poverty<sup>23</sup> - might find that vacancies are even harder to find.

The reliance on word of mouth over other forms of recruitment is due to the specific nature of work in the TV and film making industry. When recruiting crew members, production managers are keen to work with people they know and who have a good track record within the industry. This is because reliability is a key characteristic required from staff. The time-sensitive nature of productions means that there is no time to re-recruit if staff are unreliable or unable to perform the tasks required of them. Therefore, word of mouth and personal recommendations often go further than a CV when it comes to securing positions within this sector. There are implications for this type of recruitment, which makes it difficult for new talent to break through to the industry. For those facing multiple forms of disadvantage, which is the case for many job seekers in RCT, this is especially difficult.

In terms of what employers are looking for in the TV and Film making industry, there is less emphasis on experience and qualifications, and more attention paid to the personal attributes of individuals. There are clear attributes required to be successful in the industry, and someone with these attributes may develop and maintain a lucrative career in TV and film making, even in the absence of formal qualifications.

### Areas of personal competence

The industry recognises that it can be a tough one in which to make inroads, but once this has been achieved and an individual shows that they are reliable, self-starting and has the right attitude, then they will be remembered and brought along to the next production. Despite the issues regarding the inequalities inherent in the TV and film making industry, there still may be job seekers suitable and determined to develop a career in the TV and film making industry. It is possible that people may have transferable skills from other areas of their lives, and have no specific experience of the industry.

For example, one industry figure referred to how he annually meets young academy rugby players who are released from their professional careers to discuss opportunities in the industry because it

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<sup>23</sup> Lucas, P., Robinson, R, Treacy, L., (2021) *Data Policy in Scotland and Wales*, Y Lab and Nesta



is recognised that their ability to adhere strictly to diet and training programmes, experience of a team environment, and listening to instructions are attributes that are in demand in the TV and film making industry. If, then, so much depends on personal attributes, we need to be clear on what these are. There is currently no psychometric measure for job seekers exploring whether they would be a good fit for the TV and Film making industry. However, there are some key areas of personal competence identified in our data:

- **Willingness to learn and ‘get stuck in’** regardless of the role - this was repeatedly mentioned as a key requirement of anyone wanting to make inroads into the TV and Film making industry.
- **Flexibility** - crew may be needed at 6am on location, or they may be needed late at night. Being flexible and able to adapt to changing environments is a key requirement.
- **Creativity** - not just in terms of ‘creative’ roles, but bringing new ideas to the team and finding creative solutions to problems.
- **Passion and enthusiasm** - employers are looking for people who have a strong desire to be in the industry and love what they do. Having hobbies and interests that demonstrate this can count for more than formal qualifications.
- **Organisation and attention to detail** - due to the fast-paced nature of the industry, these attributes are important
- **Team working** - particularly relevant for production crews, which have been described as ‘little families’; they need to be able to work together effectively and get on with each other.

## Making inroads into the TV and Film making industry

The TV and film making industry may seem mysterious and difficult to get into, especially given what we have heard about the lack of advertising of roles and little knowledge of the type and range of roles available. This section provides information about how job seekers can make inroads into the industry through various routes.

### Having a support network

The industry was described in one interview as a “*cut throat, hard industry*”, and what we have presented in this report supports this claim. Having a local support network would be beneficial to people making inroads into the industry for the first time, as well as signposting to the support cited earlier that is available (e.g., The TV and Film Charity’s helpline). Having strong support in terms of child care, transport and personal relationships may help to overcome some of the barriers facing job seekers, however we are not suggesting that this is a solution to the structural issues facing the industry workforce. In the short term, however, if an individual has this type of support they may be more likely to make inroads into the industry.

## Formal pathways

There are a number of formal pathways into the TV and film making industry available to school-leavers and those returning to education. In RCT, there are a number of education providers with courses that may lead directly into roles within the industry. Several of these sit with CfW+ on the Adult Community Learning Partnership Operational Group where pathways into other sectors (e.g., the NHS) are already discussed. While the campaign is running, this ACL forum may wish to consider exploring a pathway(s) into TV and Film.

## University of South Wales (USW)

Since 2019, USW has had a dedicated [Film and TV School](#). The School brought together all of the University's successful Film and TV related courses, offering a range of undergraduate and postgraduate opportunities. The School works closely with the industry and offers opportunities for students to work on live productions as part of their training. For example, over 40 USW students and graduates worked on His Dark Materials when it was in production at Bad Wolf Studios.

Undergraduate courses on offer at the School are:

- [BA \(Hons\) Film](#)
- [BA \(Hons\) TV and Film Set Design](#)
- [BA \(Hons\) Cinema](#)
- [BA \(Hons\) Media Production](#)
- [BA \(Hons\) Performance and Media](#)
- [BA \(Hons\) Visual Effects and Motion Graphics](#)

Postgraduate courses on offer at the School are:

- [MA Film](#)
- [MA Film \(Directing\)](#)
- [MA Film \(Documentary\)](#)
- [MA Film \(Production Management\)](#)
- [MA Film \(Visual Effects\)](#)

## Screen Academies Wales

This is a new initiative aiming to deliver skills, education and training for people to enter the screen industry via three new Academies including Dragon Studios in RCT. Funded by Creative Wales, the Academies are led by USW in partnership with Bangor University and Screen Alliance Wales. The Academies will provide real-world experience through workshops, placements and outreach work. The key contact at USW is [Huw Swayne](#), Dean for Partnerships and Business Development.

## Coleg Y Cymoedd

[Coleg y Cymoedd](#) has four campuses, three of which are in RCT: Nantgarw, Llwynypia and Aberdare. They welcome [adult learners](#) and there is [financial support](#) available for eligible students via

Educational Maintenance Allowances (for 16-18 year olds) and Welsh Government Learning Grants (for 19 year olds and above).

Their [School of Creative Industries](#) offers courses in:

- [Art and Design](#) (10 courses)
- [Performing Arts](#) (9 courses)
- [Hair, Media Makeup and Special Effects](#) (4 courses)
- [Media](#) (12 courses)
- [Music Technology](#) (3 courses)
- [Photography](#) (2 courses)
- [Multimedia](#) (12 courses)
- [Fashion and Costume](#) (2 courses)
- [Prop making](#) (4 courses)

Coleg y Cymoedd also offers a range of [apprenticeships](#) in areas that could lead to careers in the TV and film industry, including Accountancy, Carpentry, Electrical and Hospitality and Catering.

## Facebook Groups

There are a number of Facebook groups where opportunities are posted on a regular basis. These may also facilitate networking within the industry and help individuals to gain experience or find new collaborators. Ffilm Cymru's 'One Foot in the Door' toolkit suggests searching for the following on Facebook:

- TV and Film Freelancers working in Wales
- South Wales Film Network & Self Promotion
- North Wales Film-Makers & Crew
- Cardiff Film Network (CFN)
- Film & TV Production Crew UK
- Working in TV
- Film Crew UK
- People in TV: Runners
- Newport CAN
- The Riverfront

## Training, funding and support

There are abundant opportunities for training, both in-person and online, for anybody wanting to make inroads into the TV and film making industry.

[Sgil Cymru](#) is a media training provider in Wales. They partner with companies such as BBC Cymru Wales, S4C, ITV Cymru Wales and Real SFX to provide apprenticeships, along with a range of TV and film training opportunities in conjunction with Screen Skills (see below).

[Screen Skills](#) offers free e-learning courses for people at any level within the screen industry. Courses range from entry-level courses in areas such as how to apply for work, how to interview, as well as training in safeguarding and diversity, equality and inclusion training. Screen Skills also offers time-limited bursaries and advice on working in the industry.

[Screen Alliance Wales](#) (SAW) provides educational and learning opportunities for schools and careers advisers, with a classroom based within Wolf Studios in Cardiff. SAW has developed excellent learning resources for schools, and run educational tours and talks to raise awareness of the industry, inspire young people, and provide professional expertise and advice to those wanting to seek future careers. Alongside this, SAW provides traineeships, work shadowing placements and a training network, and advertises a range of vacancies on its [website](#). This would be an excellent place to start with clients looking for potential careers in TV and film making.

[Media Cymru](#) is a consortium of industry and academic partners who are working together for a fairer, greener screen industry in Wales. They have 23 member organisations, predominantly from the TV and film making industry, who work together to bring more funding, training and opportunities to people in Wales.

[Ffilm Cymru Wales](#) is a source of funding and training for new entrants as well as established filmmakers. The 'Foot in the Door' scheme may be of particular interest for CfW+, as this is aimed at the type of people who may be on advisers' case loads. Ffilm Cymru partners with organisations such as housing associations to raise awareness of the full range of careers available for people wanting to kick-start their career in the industry. The scheme offers support for childcare and transport. Ffilm Cymru has published a toolkit which will be useful for CfW+ advisers, see Appendix 3.

[It's My Shout](#) is a training scheme which provides opportunities for people of all ages in Wales to get involved in film-making. It produces films for BBC Wales, S4C, Welsh Government and the Arts Council of Wales. They link communities with industry professionals and provide courses and access routes in the full range of roles available in the production process.

[Welsh Broadcasting Trust](#) is a charity which provides funding for individuals seeking training in the broadcasting industry. They have been established since the 1980s but are relatively under the radar compared to other organisations. They meet three times per year to assess funding applications (link to application form is on the website).

[The British Film Institute \(BFI\)](#) is the lead organisation for film in the UK and uses Lottery funds to support film production, distribution, education and audience development. They run [courses](#) for young people (16-19) through the BFI Academy.

[Film Hub Wales](#) is one of 8 hubs funded by the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN), and offers funding and support to film makers and organisations that screen films to public audiences.

[Discover Creative Careers](#) is a careers advice resource which explains what different [roles](#) in the creative sector (not just TV and Film) are available. They have information on [courses](#) for young people and schools, and are aimed at a younger audience, but may offer some interesting insights for people wondering about different careers in the creative sector.

[The Creative Skills Fund](#), from Creative Wales, has supported a number of projects in the Screen and creative industry in Wales, including:

[Screen Academies Wales](#), led by the University of South Wales, in partnership with Screen Alliance Wales;

[Re-Focus](#), led by Hijinx, a training programme for production companies on improving inclusivity for learning disabled and/or autistic team members. This includes the development of a 'Creative Enablers' programme whereby an enabler will accompany a learning disabled / autistic actor or crew member on set and support them throughout their role.

[NTFS Cymru Wales](#) is a training provider which trains newcomers to the industry as well as upskilling those already in the industry. The Welsh Government provides [bursaries](#) to eligible students to increase equality and diversity within the industry.

[TRC Cymru](#) launched [rad Cymru](#) in partnership with BBC, Channel 4, Creative Wales and S4C, which supports 8 trainees in paid traineeships in Welsh broadcasting companies. The 8-month traineeships are aimed at under-represented groups, including those either with a disability, or from disadvantaged backgrounds. Applications for the current funding round have closed, but interested parties can register their interest [here](#).

## Trade Unions and workplace support

Belonging to a Trade Union is uncommon in the creative industries; unionisation rates are low with only 9% in a union or form of worker/staff association (cf. 21% across all industries)<sup>24</sup>. Though on the surface trade union membership for freelancers might sound like an oxymoron, there are options available such as [Community](#), [Indycube](#) (which has a significant presence in Wales) and [Unison](#) all offering support to and services for self-employment. Knowledge of these by CfW+ advisors and job seekers may help reduce the sense of precarity.

Other organisations that work to continually improve the working conditions within the CI generally, or TV and Film making industry specifically, include:

- [Bectu](#) is the union for 'creative ambition', supporting over 40,000 contract and freelance staff working in the creative industries across the UK. It provides support and training in a range of topics including employment law, equality and diversity, health and safety and wellbeing.
- [CULT Cymru](#) (Creative Unions Learning Together) was established in 2008 and is supported by the Welsh Government's Wales Union Learning Fund. It works in partnership with Equity, the Musicians' Union, the Writer's Guild of Great Britain, and the Wales TUC, suggesting it lacks a TV/film focus; however its staff have a long track record of working in the industry. It supports thousands of workers "to reach their potential" by offering learning opportunities that are relevant, accessible and affordable. Many of these are heavily subsidised or free.

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<sup>24</sup> Carey et al, *ibid.*, p.68

- [The Film and TV Charity](#)'s charity's vision, as it approaches its centenary, is "a supportive film and TV community that works together to make our industry work better"<sup>25</sup>. It does this by:
  - Supporting those facing disadvantage
  - Preventing or relieve financial hardship
  - Promoting physical, mental and social wellbeing
  - Promoting equality, diversity and inclusion, by reducing, preventing and discouraging discrimination and the resulting barriers in the industry<sup>26</sup>.

Its website hosts a [directory of resources](#) which are free and designed specifically for film, TV, and cinema freelancers working behind the scenes.

- [The Royal Television Society](#) (RTS) offers a range of industry advice sessions and resources that can be accessed via signing-up for its e-circular; its [Wales events portal](#); or its [Futures programme](#) (though this tends to have more of a graduate focus)

## Vacancies in the TV and Film making industry

### Facilities Management companies

A key message from the research is that recruitment for the TV and film making industry can be, as one industry representative told us, "very chaotic". As we have reported, recruitment often tends to take place outside of the usual mechanisms. In job areas such as rigging (set construction) or catering, for example, openings come up at very short notice, and there is no time to recruit via a vacancy site or even on the company website. Recruiters are often ringing around to find people to come in at short notice. Facilities management companies, rather than production companies, provide the services that job seekers in RCT may well be suited to. One recommendation is for job seekers to proactively contact facilities management companies by telephone, to ask if there are any openings and how they might register themselves as open to work.

Below is a list of facilities management companies in South Wales. This list is not exhaustive and there may be other similar companies with opportunities for work:

#### [Facilities by ADF](#) (Offices in Bridgend and Surrey)

Tel: 01656 725560

Email: via [contact form](#)

Current vacancies: <https://facilitiesbyadf.com/careers/>

#### [TitanServ Film Set Security & Cleaning](#) (Offices in Swansea and Leeds)

Tel: 01792 720955

Email: [tscltd@titanserv.co.uk](mailto:tscltd@titanserv.co.uk)

#### [Silurian Film and TV Security](#) (Offices in Port Talbot and North Wales)

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<sup>25</sup> <https://filmtvcharity.org.uk/about-us/our-goals/>

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.*

Tel: 01639 892795  
Email: [enquiries@siluriansecurity.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@siluriansecurity.co.uk)

**Nia Facilities Management** (Caerphilly)  
Tel: 0333 188 1001  
Email: [info@niafm.com](mailto:info@niafm.com)

**Access Bookings** (National, with an office in Cardiff)  
Tel: 029 2108 0714  
Email: [contactus@accessbookings.com](mailto:contactus@accessbookings.com)

**Kinetic Pixel** (Caerphilly)  
Tel: 029 2008 9820  
Email: [info@kpx.tv](mailto:info@kpx.tv)

**Executive Cars Wales** (Bridgend)  
Tel: 01656 857793 / 07887 942868  
Email: [dave@executivecarswales.co.uk](mailto:dave@executivecarswales.co.uk)

**Christopher Lee Location Catering** (South Wales)  
Tel: 01656 372509 / 07985 914385  
Email: [Julie@christopherlee.biz](mailto:Julie@christopherlee.biz)

**United Worldwide Logistics** (Bridgend)  
Tel: 01656 856 733  
Email: [SALES@UNITEDWL.COM](mailto:SALES@UNITEDWL.COM)

**Dalton Security Ltd** (Porthcawl)  
Tel: 07535 409692

**Inferno Catering** (Cardiff)  
Tel: 029 2274 5434 / 07745 674141  
Email: [info@infernocatering.co.uk](mailto:info@infernocatering.co.uk)

**Moonshine Catering** (South Wales)  
Tel: 07843 148712 / 07366 755571  
Email: [contact@moonshinecatering.com](mailto:contact@moonshinecatering.com)

## **Advertised vacancies**

We asked industry employers who *do* advertise vacancies to tell us about the types of roles they advertise for. The range was broad, including:

- Administrators
- Marketing assistants
- Project managers
- Project co-ordination
- Videographers
- Editors
- Finance assistants
- Production assistants
- Drivers
- Mechanics
- Cleaners
- Account managers
- Trades people
- Fleet managers

Employers reported that they recruit for a mixture of full and part time roles, with the majority being freelance or 'casual' contract arrangements. The length of contract also varies, but were always short-term, ranging from one month to 3 years, with most around the 6-12 month mark.

We have compiled the following list of websites which publicise job vacancies in the TV and Film making industry. Some are Wales-based; others are national, but employers in Wales advertise using these sites:

<https://www.screenalliancewales.com/vacancies>

<https://cultureconnect.wales/jobs>

<https://arts.wales/news-jobs-opportunities>

<https://creativecardiff.org.uk/opportunities>

<https://diverseecymru.org.uk/vacancies/>

<https://disabilityarts.cymru/hwb>

<https://www.independentcinemaoffice.org.uk/jobs/>

<https://www.wearecreative.uk/about/jobs/>

<https://filmhubwales.org/en/category/jobs/>



## Next Steps

The piece of work we have completed was an initial exploration of TV and Film industry opportunities for job seekers within RCT. In making our enquiries, doing the desk-research and speaking with industry professionals, we became aware of a number of issues facing the industry. These included gaps in knowledge relating to the types of roles on offer, and access issues for job seekers that may affect the chances of people from RCT making inroads into the industry. Although we are seeing changes in the industry, particularly an awareness and growing responsibility for mental wellbeing, there remain a number of structural inequalities that may prevent many job seekers from RCT from pursuing a career in TV and Film. Unless steps are taken to reduce or remove these barriers, we will see little meaningful change to the inequality and lack of diversity within the industry.

We see an opportunity for RCTCBC Arts Service and CfW+ to develop closer relationships with the industry and related organisations, to both highlight opportunities to job seekers, and to represent the interests of people living in RCT. We believe that job seekers in RCT stand the best chance of making inroads into the industry if RCTCBC Arts Service and CfW+ are able to work in partnership with industry partners and related organisations going forward.

We recommend the following next steps for RCTCBC Arts Service and CfW+, in order to build on this work and develop a feasible pathway into the TV and Film making industry for job seekers in RCT:

### Development of CfW+ best practice

- Continue to focus on clients' strengths/assets, but think laterally about how clients' attributes can be applied to the TV and film making industry. The development of a psychometric test may be worth considering, in order to identify those job seekers with the personal attributes necessary for the industry;
- Refer job seekers to the Change Your Focus landing page if they demonstrate a desire or the capabilities to work in the TV and Film making industry;
- Similarly, where a client expresses an interest in the TV and film sector, CfW+ should not be overly focused on their CV as this may carry little weight in the pursuit of employment. Instead, consider alternative methods of showcasing a client's aptitude e.g., a short 'show reel' of previous work/roles; or a portfolio of previous projects of potential relevance;
- Keep the Change Your Focus landing page up to date with new and current links to opportunities and job vacancies. This will require some resource, but could be included as part of someone's current role within the Council;
- Encourage clients who gain employment in the TV and film sector to participate in surveys related to working conditions, dignity at work, mental health, etc., as a means of highlighting both poor *and* good practice;
- Although significant effort is being made to address wellbeing and mindfulness in the sector,

there remains evidence that employment in the sector can be harmful for people's mental and emotional wellbeing. Remain aware of the potential impact of employment on clients with a history of low self-esteem and episodes of poor mental health;

- Remain mindful of clients' digital literacy. The Change Your Focus campaign is largely online, and in this way is reflective of how many opportunities in the TV and film sector are similarly advertised only online.

## Developing relationships for change

- Develop links with schemes such as Creative Enablers (Hijinx) and Wellbeing Facilitators (6ft from the Spotlight) which provide workplace support, to gain an understanding of how CfW+ can best provide post-employment support in the TV and Film making industry, as it does in other industries;
- Develop relationships with potential industry partners and funding bodies with a view to providing more accessible opportunities for job seekers (e.g. paid placements covering transport costs, child care, etc);
- Work with the voluntary sector to develop community and/or co-operative forms of transport that might circumvent the barriers in place due to poor public transport, particularly during the construction of the South Wales Metro;
- Establish relationships with organisations (listed [here](#)) who are engaged in:
  - work to reduce the precariousness of self-employment;
  - promote 'collective' forms of self-employment such as co-operatives or community;
  - protect and/or support workers when their employment conditions become harmful, e.g., trade unions.

# Appendix 1

## Examples of other initiatives in the wider creative industries

It is important for any programme that aims to remove barriers to participation or increase diversity to ensure representation is a core element, i.e., the opportunity for people to see ‘people like them’. Many of the links in the main body of the report contain case studies that may be of interest to CfW+. In addition, here are examples of recent and current initiatives supporting people into employment in the wider creative industries:

- [Mab Gwalia Welsh Drama Student Scholarship](#) supporting people to access the best drama training regardless of their financial background. It is funded by Michael Sheen and Manic Street Preachers<sup>27</sup>.
- [Northern Fiction Alliance](#), a radical publishing collective founded in 2016 in northern England to support and showcase working-class writers<sup>28</sup>
- [Able Radio](#) - a community radio station based in Torfaen that was set up in 2006 and believed to be the first radio station run by people with learning disabilities and autism in the world.
- [Inclusive Journalism Cymru](#) - a brand new<sup>29</sup> collaborative and participatory initiative developed along community organising principles for anyone in Wales who feels they or their community has been systemically under-represented in the journalism industry.
- [Foot In The Door](#) - an initiative run by Ffilm Cymru Wales in partnership with housing associations, that provides trainees an opportunity to spend time on filming sets in Wales such as *Apostle*, *Denmark*, *Craith* and *Dream Horse*. It also provides support and mentoring over the longer-term beyond the end of placements. For example, one of the trainees on *Dream Horse* worked in the costume department and is quoted as saying, “Before, I had a lack of experience, confidence and support, which Foot in the Door has now provided.”<sup>30</sup>
- The [Higgins Photography Initiative](#) - run by [Cardiff MADE](#) this has recently launched for emerging photographers, who are currently not in education, to continue developing their photographic practice to a professional level.

The extent to which trainees and participants on these initiatives require prior skills or to have completed placements varies. For example, a small number of the Foot In the Door trainees who spent a week on the *Apostle* set ‘graduated’ to longer paid placements on the set of *Denmark*. The *Craith* trainees had a lower entry requirement and received tailored training during the placement as well. It is worth noting too that the *Craith* trainees were from a Valleys authority (Blaenau Gwent),

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<sup>27</sup> <https://nation.cymru/culture/michael-sheen-and-manics-join-forces-to-offer-student-scholarship/>

<sup>28</sup> Charnley, L (2021) Taking back our voice, *Red Pepper*, 232, pp.54-55.

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.journalism.co.uk/news/inclusive-journalism-cymru-wants-to-change-welsh-newsrooms/s2/a1002937/>

<sup>30</sup> <https://ffilmcymruwales.com/our-work/meggie-morgan>

and despite *Craith* being a mainly Welsh language production, Welsh language skills were not a requirement of the trainees.

## Appendix 2

### Role models from RCT

There are a number of potential role models from RCT who have forged successful careers in the TV and film industry. Many FE and HE courses and industry schemes draw on individuals from the industry to share their experiences and wisdom. Here are a few:

- The aforementioned *Apostle* production was directed by [Gareth Huw Evans](#). Originally from Hirwaun, he has numerous international directing and writing credits to his name.
- [bak's](#) David Evans is originally from Tonyrefail and is a producer and documentary filmmaker who recently screened a film *Pongo Calling* at the 2022 [Sheffield DocFest](#). He founded the former Wales International Documentary Film Festival that was based for many years at Blackwood Miners' Institute.
- [Charlotte James](#) is from neighbouring Merthyr Tydfil and founded [Ffasiwn Studio](#) and who is focused on making work that is socially engaged with community participation.
- [Lee Haven Jones](#) is a filmmaker and TV director from the Cynon valley who recently gained plaudits for his Welsh language horror film *Gwledd*.



[changeyourfocus.org](http://changeyourfocus.org)



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