Response to the Call for Evidence - Good Work Review of the Creative Industries

April 2022

About TAC

TAC is the trade association for independent TV and content companies in Wales. There are over 50 companies in Wales, producing programmes and other audio-visual content for the BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Channel 5 and Sky as well as other commercial broadcasters. They produce almost all the original television and online media content for the Welsh-language media provider S4C, and a variety of radio productions for UK-wide networks. More at www.tac.cymru.

General Comment

We agree with the PEC that this is a legitimate area of study, as it is clearly important that those working in the creative industries are given due regard as to their working conditions and practices in order to safeguard their mental and physical health and assist their future development.

We would like the PEC to note that, within the timescale of the Call for Evidence TAC has not had time to survey our membership on the questions below and therefore the answers should be taken as a few general thoughts and comments.

Call for Evidence Questions

Current picture of job quality in the Creative Industries

1. **How would you define 'Good Work'? What would you see as the key dimensions or defining characteristics?**

    TAC has not developed its own definition, partly due to the fact that there are others who have already worked in this area. As a starting point however we would tend to agree on a general level with the definition offered by the CIPD:
    https://www.cipd.co.uk/knowledge/work/trends/goodwork#gref

    TAC does however work with the rest of the industry on issues around workplace conditions and working practices.

    TAC is a member of the Coalition for Change: https://www.coalitionforchange.org.uk/. The Coalition has drawn up a Freelancers Charter, which is the Coalition for Change's commitment

and guideline documentation in building a better world for freelancers working in the UK's TV industry.

There is also the Film & TV Charity, which supports all those working in film and TV with a 24/7 Support Line, access to financial advice and support, plus help with everything from mental wellbeing, discrimination and harassment, to a whole host of practical tools and resources: https://filmtvcharity.org.uk/

2. **Reflecting on this, and wider definitions and dimensions of Good Work (as set out in Box 1), how 'good' is work in the Creative Industries – overall and in different sub-sectors/jobs?**

Employees have a varied number of roles in TV production. The work can be long days but this should be compensated for by flexible working. There should be an established 'give and take' so that both side can be happy with the arrangement.

Respect is very important at work. The Equity TV/Film Industry Group is currently discussing an approach to standard resources and practices around addressing issues relating to bullying and harassment.

3. **What do you view as the positive aspects of work in the Creative Industries?** *Please note where these are evident in specific sub-sectors, artforms or creative contexts, or for certain types of creative workers.*

Ultimately working in TV and film production gives people the opportunity to contribute meaningfully to telling someone else's story and to entertain and inform.

A production is greater than the sum of its parts – everyone's work is an important part. The final product is visible and unique and enjoyed in specific ways by its audience.

It can also be a vibrant and creative atmosphere where people can become multiskilled and branch off into different areas of expertise.

4. **In what areas do you feel job quality needs to be improved in the Creative Industries? What poor or unfair practices are currently experienced by those working in the sector? What do you see as the underlying causes of these practices?** *Please note where these are evident in specific sub-sectors, artforms or creative contexts, or for certain types of creative workers.*

In our sector there is the opportunity to grow professional development, to create a clearer career path.

In terms of pay production companies are keen to increase pay for freelancers and employees, but there is a disparity between what is provided for in broadcaster's programme budgets and the desire for production companies to increase pay over time.

In particular BBC and S4C programme budgets have been reduced significantly in recent years. However the gap between genders appears to have been closed, although we only have anecdotal evidence for this.

'Craft' workers - set builders, sound technicians etc. – need always to be properly valued. There is a shortage of these skills at the moment, which ought to work in those workers' favour in terms of making higher demands but, again, some broadcaster budgets constrain the ability to pay higher rates in some cases. It is not ultimately in the producer's power to raise rates significantly unless budgets rise.

TAC encourages film and TV productions in Wales to be made by home-grown indigenous companies, using local production talent and with the whole production, including post-production and visual effects, being produced in Wales. We work in partnership with S4C to deliver a training programme which saw 283 people register for 16 training online sessions in 2021. This year there have already been 66 attendees for three courses. There are also initiatives such as Ffilm Cymru Wales' 'Foot in the Door' scheme providing 300 training opportunities for people to enter the Welsh film and TV sector.

It is important that the Welsh Government looks to invest further in Welsh TV production and training via Creative Wales, so that we have capacity to create content for all commissioners, incl. platforms such as Netflix, which would be compelling to potential international tourists.

Promoting Good Work in the Creative sector – priorities and policy options

5. **What do you see as the biggest priorities for improving job quality and advancing Good Work in the Creative Industries? Please identify priorities for a) Government, b) businesses and c) individuals.**

    Government: should work with the industry on establishing a clearer career path so that those entering TV production can be fully aware of the options open to them to develop and grow professionally.

    Businesses: should work with government on career path; communicate rights and responsibilities to employees; provide training on dealing with bullying / H&S and so on.

    Individuals: should be aware of rights and responsibilities

6. **Where do you see the greatest opportunities for <u>sector-based</u> approaches[1] to improving job quality, that complement pan-economy labour market reforms?**

    - A clear training and career path
    - Providing a good wage
    - The TV production sector, like much of the creative industries, is made up of SMEs – this allows more personal approach to employees and address individual needs, although equally it can be hard to schedule in key training / mentorship when companies are busy – a toolkit for enabling better enabling of this at work would be of use.

7. **What do you see as the three most significant actions government or industry could take to improve job quality and advance Good Work in the Creative Industries?**

    See answer to question 5

---

[1] A sectoral approach refers to policies, programmes or practices implemented within specific industry contexts, often to address distinct opportunities and challenges and working through existing communities of practice

8. **What are the most significant barriers to the achievement of Good Work in the Creative Industries, and how might these be addressed?**

    In terms of pay, there are as stated above constraints given available programme budgets.

    The privatisation of C4 could exacerbate this if it leads to contraction in the indie production sector.

    Elsewhere, the pace where a person lives and comes from can still be a barrier – there are still socio-economic hurdles to overcome.

    Efforts to promote the creative industries as a career are hampered by education curriculums' downplaying of creative subjects has not helped, as it has not assisted efforts to make creative careers more known and understood among younger people of varied backgrounds. However it's positive to see a more balanced curriculum in Wales now beingintroduced.

9. **Would you support stronger mandatory measures[2] for improving the quality of work in the Creative Sector? Are specific measures needed in certain sub-sectors, artforms or creative contexts, or for certain types of creative workers? Do you have any evidence of the benefits and problems of existing mandatory measures?**

    No. It is better to have a positive programme in place to incentivise employers to adopt best practice, rather than a punitive one-size-fits-all approach. This is particularly important in the creative industries where there are many small SMEs with a small employee base.

    Too many inflexible fixed requirements can be a large burden. It could have the unintended consequence of companies employing fewer people to avoid too many burdensome requirements.

    People have already left the industry during the Covid pandemic, so we would not want the workforce to shrink further.

10. **Would you support additional voluntary approaches[3] for improving the quality of work in the Creative Sector? Are specific measures needed in some sub-sectors, creative contexts or for certain types of creative workers? Do you have any evidence of the benefits and problems of existing voluntary approaches?**

    Yes. For example, if employers are encouraged and given the tools to show they are a Good Work employer then will attract the best people.

---

[2] Mandatory measures could include (for example): certification; levies; minimum pay or conditions; quotas or targets; use of public or private sector procurement / funding levers

[3] Voluntary approaches could include (for example): codes of practice; charters; workplace standards; voluntary accreditation schemes; resources or training for managers

11. **What greater role could social partnership[4] play in promoting Good Work in the Creative Industries? How might such arrangements be enabled, supported and incentivised?**

   The role of a trade body is important in this regard. TAC already works with other stakeholders in Wales – Creative Wales Stakeholder Group, S4C, BAFTA and so on.

12. **What greater role could employer leadership[5] – including individual action and collective measures – play in promoting Good Work in the Creative Industries? How might this be enabled, supported and incentivised?**

   TV production is a competitive environment but TAC companies share best practice through the training programme, networks etc.

   Through TAC they can take policies to Welsh Government to help career paths in the sector.

13. **What greater role could place-based approaches[6] play in promoting Good Work in the Creative Industries? How might this be enabled, supported and incentivised?**

   This is very relevant to Wales, which has a unique sector partly based around language and culture.

   Wales has network of agencies – CW, BAFTA, Film Cymru Wales local authorities etc. These are more accessible due to smaller size of Wales' population, and they understand local diversity of the local population.

   Landmark events such as the National Eisteddfod create opportunities. There is a common cause for the creative industries in Wales of ensuring Wales has coherent strategy and programme.

14. **What would Good Work look like for Creative freelancers, and how can this best be enabled, supported and incentivised?**

   There is no built-in way of increasing freelancer pay, due to issues around decreasing programme budgets. However pay structures should look to provide appropriate payment according to experience and specific skills offered.

   Employers need to make sure they are aware of rights and responsibilities – freelancers must avail themselves of these too.

---

[4] Social partnership and social dialogue capture the formal and informal arrangements supporting engagement and collaboration between, for example, government, employers, sector/occupational bodies, trade unions and workers
[5] Employer leadership refers to the actions that businesses can take to enhance job quality. This could include (for example) changing their own business practices to improve the quality of work offered to employees and contractors / freelancers; supporting and incentivising action by suppliers to improve business practices; and advocating and working collaboratively with other employers to drive change across the industry
[6] Place-based approaches refers to policies or programmes that could be implemented in specific regions or local areas to improve the quality of work in the Creative Industries. This could include (for example) local procurement / funding levers; codes of practice; charters or standards; or activities that bring together groups of Creative employers to work together to improve practices.

It could be possible to provide a 'handbook' for employees and freelancers so they are clear on their rights.

15. **How might we support greater a) access to, and enforcement of, worker or employment rights; b) financial security between contracts; c) worker voice and representation; and d) investment in skills and professional development for Creative Freelancers?**

    a) Access to rights: employers' information/signposting

    b) Pay between jobs : the Government could consider a 'universal basic income' to provide for creative workers between contracts

    c) Worker voice: Trades unions are the main route to this in TV production

    d) Skills: it is important that professional development of freelancers receives industry support. As examples, TAC does not charge freelancers for training and Screenskills offers very flexible free programme.