# Buckinghamshire Local Skills Report 2021

## A focus on… the Creative Industries

Much of the evidence presented within this paper has been gathered from members of the Buckinghamshire Creative Sector Skills Action Group. For more details about this group, please contact Heather Dean, [heather@bbf.uk.org](mailto:heather@bbf.uk.org)

# Some key facts

* The Creative Industries include:
  + Film, TV, video, animation, VFX/SFX, radio and photography
  + Music, performing and visual arts
  + Museums, galleries, libraries and heritage
  + IT, video games, software and computer services (‘creative tech’)
  + Publishing
  + Design (product, graphic, fashion)
  + Crafts
  + Architecture
  + Advertising and marketing
* Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, the creative industries were one of the fastest growing parts of the UK economy[[1]](#footnote-2)
* There are twice as many creative industry jobs within the Buckinghamshire economy than the national average, many of which are in the film and TV sector[[2]](#footnote-3).
* At the heart of Buckinghamshire’s film and TV (or ‘screen’) sector is the world-renowned Pinewood Studios, home of the British film industry and the James Bond and Star Wars franchises.
* Buckinghamshire’s film and TV sector sits within a wider West of London Screen Cluster, which includes studios at Leavesden, Elstree, Shepperton, Long Cross, Bovingdon and, within the next few years, Reading.
* The West of London Screen Cluster is experiencing significant growth, with at least 40 new sound stages are expected to come on board over the next two years.
* Amongst those supplying the sector with talent is the National Film and Television School (NFTS). Based in Beaconsfield, NFTS is the pre-eminent film, television and games teaching institution in the UK, with alumni including multiple Oscar and BAFTA award winners.
* Buckinghamshire’s film and TV companies are concentrated in the south of the county.
* Local TV companies include CTV Outside Broadcasts and Naked West: think Strictly Blackpool and royal weddings; Escape to the County and Grand Designs.
* Buckinghamshire’s film and TV sector has a wide supply chain and generates employment across many disciplines. For example, equipment manufacturing, catering provision, accommodation, transportation, carpentry, rigging, accountancy, prosthetics and more.
* In addition to film and TV, Buckinghamshire also has higher than average levels of employment within the advertising, specialist design, artistic creation and sound recording / music publications segments of the creative industries.
* Some key companies in these sectors include: Aylesbury Waterside Theatre, Wycombe Swan Theatre, Elgiva Theatre, Simon Elvin Ltd, Epic Games Ltd, Buckinghamshire Music Trust and Garsington Opera, AC Entertainment.
* Around 15,000 people work as employees within Buckinghamshire's creative industries, with many more working in the sector on a freelance basis[[3]](#footnote-4).
* There are high levels of self-employment with the creative industries, with freelancers / those working on fixed term contracts making up around a third of the workforce[[4]](#footnote-5).
* Freelancers in the creative sector most commonly undertake specialist design activities, work in film, TV and video production or are involve in artistic creation and the performing arts[[5]](#footnote-6).
* Film crews (of up to 1,000 per large production) are primarily made up of freelances who move between studios.

As film and TV is Buckinghamshire’s creative specialism, the remainder of this paper focuses in on this element, summarising workforce trends, skills priorities, skills shortage roles and learning provision.

Deep dives into the skills requirements of other elements of the creative sector will be undertaken later in the year.

# Workforce trends

## TV and film

* There is a significant and growing demand for creative talent to produce film and streaming content in the West of London Screen Cluster area (Pinewood, Leavesden, Elstree, Shepperton, Reading, Long Cross, Bovingdon). With the likes of Netflix, Disney, Universal, Warner Bros and Sky investing heavily in the area.
* Geographically Buckinghamshire is in the centre of the cluster and does, and could continue to, provide a large proportion of the industry’s freelance workforce.
* The workforce is already stretched to capacity and there is therefore a need for quick investment in skills to maximise the impact of growth opportunity for the local economy.
* Whilst the film sector was impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, with filming paused for the first few months of the pandemic and many freelancers unable to access financial support, it was one of the first sectors to bounce-back, with the introduction of strict Covid-19 protocols and procedures.
* The outside broadcast element of the sector suffered an immediate and severe hit at the beginning of the pandemic, with many staff furloughed. The re-starting of elite sport enabled the resumption of some activity, followed by some re-starting of light entertainment. However, the continued closure of the events sector (including music festivals, concerts and award ceremonies) has led to a reduction in the need for production personnel and some job losses.
* The way of running outside broadcasts has changed dramatically as a result of Covid-19 and could reduce demand for staff to some extent. The word ‘broadcast’ is being dropped from job titles and qualifications to reflect the change in way people consume content.
* Some of those furloughed or temporarily out of work during the pandemic used the opportunity to upskill and/or undertake coronavirus awareness training. Thecallsheet.co.uk published over 100 ‘[isolation productivity](http://www.thecallsheet.co.uk/news/100-resources-isolation-productivity)’ resources for those not working.
* In recent years, EU citizens have made up a large proportion of the UK’s visual production workforce. A reduction in the number of EU citizens moving to the UK to work in the sector, as a result of the UK leaving the EU, along with the potential loss of workers moving back to their native country during the Covid-19 pandemic, could exacerbate the industry’s talent gap.
* There has been considerable growth in the availability of entry level jobs within the sector, which looks set to continue. Meaning there are many opportunities for young people. However, pathways for more technical roles has been cited as an issue.
* Whilst skills gaps tend to be concentrated in higher level roles, and employers usually focus recruitment at entry level.
* Finding people who can think creatively and are critical thinkers can be difficult. Many find it easier to train people in the technical skills than to train people to be creative.
* Many jobs are not advertised formally, but instead recruitment is through agencies and, increasingly, through LinkedIN.
* There is a drive by UK broadcasters to improve diversity and inclusion, with a recognition that there is a lack of diversity behind the camera, particularly at senior levels.
* The level of qualifications required for many occupations are overstated. The vast majority require a level 3 or higher qualification combined with the right experience/attitude. Time spent within the industry is of high value.
* There is an increasing demand for people with creative skills and qualifications within non-creative companies. Particularly due to more companies wishing to create on-line content as a result of Covid-19.
* There is expected to be increased demand in the future for extended reality (augmented and virtual) capabilities.

## Culture

* Affordability of apprenticeships is leading to issues related to the development of the workforce and improving diversity within the sector.
* There is a strong local interest in talent for freelancers within Buckinghamshire.
* The expectation for freelancers to work for free within the sector, albeit a view that is becoming increasingly synonymous, is deterring people entering the sector as a future career choice.
* Demand for digital skills within the sector is growing, however there is a gap in the awareness of the advantages for digital skills within certain organisations not just limited to film & TV.

### Skills shortage roles – 2021

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| Role | Level | Further information |
| Production managers | Experienced | * Frequently mentioned as a skills shortage occupation. * Large companies are using their Apprenticeship levy to train people in-house at this level. |
| Production co-ordinators | Entry | * There has been heavy investment by companies in the Production Co-ordinator Apprenticeship, which reflects the skills needs. |
| Camera / sound operators | Entry | * Broadcasters have not tended to invest in new talent. * Large proportion of people in these roles are now reaching retirement and leaving the labour market. * It is recognised that investment is now needed at entry level. * Takes two years to train someone to be able to operate at entry level (e.g. at the BBC) |
| Visual effects |  | * A new Apprenticeship is up and running and is in high demand. |
| Location managers | Experienced | * This is the skills gap that the [Skills to Screen: Aviation](https://www.screenskills.com/about-us/press-releases/lights-camera-action-heathrow-jobseekers-supported-into-film-industry/) initiative has aimed to address in light of job losses at Heathrow Airport. |
| Production accountancy | Experienced | * This is a specialised accountancy role. * Difficult to find people with industry experience / industry contextualisation. |
| Tutors / chaperones (for young actors) | Entry | * Role has changed as a result of Covid [need to check how] |
| Editing (online, offline, dubbing, post production) |  | * Companies report current skills need |
| Engineers |  |  |
| Covid assistants / location marshals | Entry | * New roles to ensure productions are not disrupted by Covid-19 outbreaks. |

# Education, training and skills provision (February 2021)

## National Film and TV School

Masters (full-time, 2 years)

* Cinematography
* Composing for Film and Television
* Creative Business for Entrepreneurs and Executives
* Digital Effects
* Directing Science and Natural History
* Directing and Producing Television Entertainment
* Directing Animation
* Directing Documentary
* Directing Fiction
* Editing
* Film Studies Programming and Curation
* Games Design and Development
* Marketing, Distribution, Sales and Exhibition
* Producing
* Production Design
* Screenwriting
* Sound Design

Diplomas (full and part-time, 1 year)

* Assistant Camera (Focus Pulling and Loading)
* Assistant Directing and Floor Managing
* Cameras, Sound and Vision Mixing for Television Production
* Creative Producing for Digital Platforms
* Directing Commercials
* Factual Development and Production
* Location Sound Recording for Film and Television
* Model Making for Animation
* Motion Graphics and Titles
* Production Accounting for Film and Television
* Production Management for Film and Television
* Script Development
* Sports Production
* Writing and Producing Comedy

Certificates (short courses)

* Casting
* Character Animation
* Filmmaking
* Location Management for Film and TV Production
* Post Production Supervision
* Producing Your First Feature
* Screenwriting: Finding Your Voice
* Script Supervision and Continuity for Film and Television
* Summerdocs
* TV Drama: Creating The Bible

## Buckinghamshire New University

Degrees

* Audio and Music Production
* Events, Festivals and Venue Management
* Film and TV Production
* Music Business
* Music Performance Management
* Music Production and Business
* Music Production and Performance
* Music Technology
* Songwriting
* Sound Design

Postgraduate

* 3D Animation
* Period Hair and Wig Design
* Prosthetics and Sculpting
* Screenwriting
* Film Producing

## Buckinghamshire College Group

Level 1

* [Level 1 Diploma in Creative Digital Media](https://www.buckscollegegroup.ac.uk/creative-media/1522-level-1-diploma-in-creative-digital-media)
* [Level 1 Award in 3D Modelling and Game Technology](https://www.buckscollegegroup.ac.uk/creative-media/1702-level-1-award-in-3d-modelling-and-game-technology)

Level 2

* Level 2 Diploma in Professional Competence for Crane Technicians
* Level 2 Diploma in Professional Competence for Grips
* Level 2 Diploma in Creative Media Production & Technology

Level 3

* Level 3 Diploma in Professional Competence for Advanced Grips
* Level 3 Extended Diploma in Television and Film
* Level 3 Extended Diploma in CGI, Live action and Animation
* Level 3 Diploma in Set Design for Theatre and Film

Level 4

* UAL Foundation Diploma in Art & Design (Specialising in Props)
* UAL Foundation Diploma in Art and Design (Specialising in Directing and Production Skills)

## Apprenticeship providers

Main creative media Apprenticeship providers delivering in Buckinghamshire

* All Spring Media
  + Specialises in[**Broadcast Production Assistant**](https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/broadcast-production-assistant/)and[**Junior Content Producer**](https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeship-standards/junior-content-producer/)Apprenticeships
  + Works with BBC, ITV, Channel 4, advertising sector
* DiVA Apprenticeships
  + Junior Content Producer Apprenticeships

## Pinewood training providers

* Actors Studio
* Bells and Two Tones
* Charles Wilson Engineers
* Creative Media Skills Institute
* Film Design International
* International Moving Image Society
* MSS Safety
* Octaga Security Services
* Resource Productions BFI Film Academy
* Rigging Services
* Sony's Digital Motion Picture Centre
* The Iver Make-Up Academy

More details available [here](https://pinewoodgroup.com/on-the-lot?studio-name=pinewood-studios)

## University of Buckingham

* BA in Digital News and Media

For further information on routes into Buckinghamshire’s creative sector, see the Buckinghamshire Skills Hub [website](https://bucksskillshub.org/sectors/creative-industries).

## Free Learning Programmes

The Creative Collective (for Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Surrey residents)

* Creative Collective One to One
  + Freelancer network with one-to-one tailored support sessions.
* Creative Collective Meet Up
  + Local artists and arts organisations discuss and collaborate.
* Zoom and Social Media introductory training.
* Into Film Club (for 11-19 year olds)
* Script Saturday (for 11-19 year olds)

1. [Creative Industries Federation](https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/statistics), 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Business Register and Employment Survey, ONS, 2019 and self-employment estimates based on the Labour Force Survey. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Business Register and Employment Survey 2019, ONS [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. [Creative Industries Federation](https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/statistics), 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. [Creative Industries Federation](https://www.creativeindustriesfederation.com/statistics), 2020 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)