

Tuning out: Women in the UK Radio Industry

**A Skillset
report for
Sound Women**

October 2011

Background

Skillset conducted the first ever employment census of the Creative Media Industries in 1999. The Census requested key employment data from every company in the sector for which records were available. It provided the first ever picture of the employment of women in the industry, across sectors, occupational groups, and nations and regions. It reported both widespread under-representation across the board and enormous variance between sectors and occupations in levels of employment of women. In particular, it showed relatively low levels of women working in senior areas such as producing (as opposed to production), and extremely low levels in 'traditional male dominated' areas such as camera, sound, and lighting, compared with 'traditional female' occupations such as make up, hair, costume and wardrobe.

Over the next decade Skillset repeated the Census on a number of occasions, and supplemented it with a range of workforce surveys, collecting more detailed information on demographics, working patterns and skills development. A number of thematic findings emerged across all of those surveys, including higher levels of qualifications and workplace training among the female workforce, yet lower levels of income than men when comparing occupation with occupation. Perhaps most striking was a consistent under-representation of women beyond the age of thirty five in all segments of the workforce, coupled with far fewer women than men working in the industry with dependent children. Even taking into account higher numbers of women entering the industry in recent years, there is still evidence that some women have been leaving the industry because of difficulty reconciling managing a career in the Creative Industries with raising a family.

These separate strands of research, which contain a large volume of data on women and their experiences, have been conducted and reported independently and in isolation from one another. This report brings together for the first time the findings of this research as it relates to women in the radio industry, providing a comprehensive overview of employment of women, their working patterns, qualifications and skills development, compared with those of men in the radio industry.

PART TWO EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Representation¹

- 46% of the UK radio workforce is female, compared with 39% of the Creative Media workforce and 46% across the wider economy.
- A higher proportion of employees than freelancers in the radio industry are women – 50% compared to 32%.
- The proportion of women has fallen slightly since 2004 and 2006 when 48% of the workforce were women.
- Representation of women is highest in the following occupations: HR, finance, IT and secretarial/admin (classed as other occupations) (83%); legal (75%); distribution, sales and marketing (64%); business management (61%); and production (53%). It is lowest in editing (1%); engineering and transmission (9%); and studio operations (10%).
- Data from the Broadcast Equality and Training Regulator (BETR) provides an interesting profile of the radio workforce by grade. It shows a clear fall in representation of women as they travel up the hierarchy - 42% of managers are female, 34% of senior managers are female and 17% of those operating at Board level are female.²

Working Patterns and Career Issues³

- 50% of women are aged 35 or over compared with 60% of men. Even adjusting for increased levels of female new entrants in recent years, it is likely that women have been leaving the industry before or during middle age.
- 25% of men in the industry have dependent children living with them but only 16% of women, suggesting that many women leave the industry as a consequence of starting a family.
- On average, men in the industry earn more than women - £29,700 compared with £27,500.
- Women are more likely than men to have heard about their first job in the industry via an advertisement (32% and 26% respectively). Men tend to access jobs via more informal routes, including making contact direct with a company, via a friend or relative and word of mouth.

¹ Skillset Employment Census, 2006; Skillset Employment Census 2009; Labour Force Survey, January – December 2010

² Training & Skills and Equal Opportunities Report 2010, Broadcast Equality and Training Regulator (BETR), July 2011. NB: The scope of the BETR survey is limited to employers with 20 or more full time employees.

³ Skillset Creative Media Workforce Survey, 2010

- In terms of career changes planned for the next year, women are less likely than men to foresee any changes, with the exception of temporarily leaving their current role (7% and 3% respectively) and expectation of redundancy (10% and 8%). The biggest upcoming change anticipated by the radio workforce was broadening the scope of freelance work, a planned change for 37% of men and 19% of women. Men are also significantly more likely than women to foresee a move to a different permanent job in the radio sector (25% and 18% respectively) or a change of direction in their freelance work (24% and 9%).

Qualifications and Training⁴

- 73% of women working in the radio sector are graduates, compared to 60% of men. These figures also include a higher proportion of women than men holding a postgraduate qualification (34% and 25% respectively).
- A higher proportion of women (70%) than men (62%) in the sector received learning or skills development, but they are also more likely to report learning or skills development needs (57% compared with 45% of men). Women with learning or skills development needs are slightly more likely than men to experience barriers when trying to obtain it.

⁴ Skillset Creative Media Workforce Survey, 2010

PART THREE REPRESENTATION

46% of the overall UK radio workforce are women. This varies from 47% of those working in broadcast radio to 30% of those in independent production for radio (see **Figure 1**). Representation of women in the sector is higher than the wider Creative Media Industries (39%)⁵ but the same as the wider UK economy (46%).⁶

Figure 1 Overall Employment and Representation of Women in Radio

SECTOR	Total Employment (n)	Proportion of Women (%)
Radio	20,900	46
Broadcast Radio	19,900	47
Independent Production (Radio)	1,000	30

Source: Skillset 2009 Employment Census

Approaching a quarter (23%) of the radio workforce are employed on freelance contracts.⁷ It is therefore interesting to see how the proportion of women varies by contract type within the radio sector. Half (50%) of radio employees compared to a third (32%) of radio freelancers are women. Across the wider Creative Media Industries it is apparent that many sectors utilising a more stable, permanent employment model tend to employ higher levels of women. It may conceivably be that some forms of 'freelance' working models (such as repeated, unpredictable fixed-term contracts) are less feasible or attractive to women.

As shown in **Figure 2** representation of women in the radio workforce has fallen very slightly from levels recorded in 2004 and 2006 (both 48%). It should be noted that sector definitions used in Skillset's Employment Census have evolved over the years (for example independent production has only been discretely analysed since 2009), and the scope of the Census has broadened progressively since it was introduced.

Figure 2 Proportion of Women in the Workforce by Sector, 2004-2009

SECTOR	2004 (%)	2006 (%)	2009 (%)
Radio	48	48	46
Broadcast Radio	48	48	47
Independent Production (Radio)	N/A	N/A	30

Sources: Skillset 2004 Employment Census, Skillset 2006 Employment Census, Skillset 2009 Employment Census

Skillset's Employment Census also enables the radio workforce to be broken down by occupational group. **Figure 3** shows that women dominate the workforce in what is classed as 'other occupations' includes HR, finance, IT and secretarial/admin roles (83%), and legal related roles (75%). More than half the workforce in distribution, sales and marketing (64%), business management (61%), and production (53%) are women. Representation in all other occupations is below half, falling as low as 1% in editing, 9% in engineering and

⁵ Skillset (2009) Employment Census, Skillset (2010) Creative Media Workforce Survey and Labour Force Survey, ONS January to December 2010

⁶ Labour Force Survey, ONS January to December 2010

⁷ Including both sole traders and those with a contract of less than 365 days

transmission, and 10% in studio operations. In comparison to the wider Creative Media Industries the radio workforce has a much healthier representation of women in other occupations including HR, finance, IT and secretarial/admin roles; legal; production; distribution, sales and marketing; and business management. Occupations with a low proportion of women in the radio workforce tend to mirror the wider Creative Media Industries, although editing and studio operations are particular low points.

Figure 3 Proportion of Women in the Workforce by Occupational Group

SECTOR	Radio Workforce (%)	Creative Media Workforce ⁸ (%)
Occupational Group		
Strategic Management	23	21
Creative Development	24	25
Production	53	39
Legal	75	52
Broadcast Management	29	35
Engineering and Transmission	9	7
Editorial, Journalism and Sport	48	43
Content Development	19	11
Art and Design	13	12
Lighting	17	10
Audio/Sound/Music	23	11
Studio Operations	10	18
Editing	1	14
Libraries and Archives	48	34
Distribution, Sales and Marketing	64	45
Business Management	61	39
Other	83	35

Source: Skillset 2009 Employment Census

Data from the Broadcast Equality and Training Regulator (BETR) provides an interesting profile of the radio workforce by grade. It shows a clear fall in representation of women as they travel up the hierarchy, much more pronounced than within the television workforce. In the broadcast radio workforce⁹ 42% of managers are female, 34% of senior managers are female and 17% of those operating at board level are female.¹⁰

Finally, representation of women within the radio workforce varies considerably by nation and English region. Wales (53%) and the north east (50%) are home to the highest proportion of women in the radio workforce, whereas representation is lower in the west Midlands (39%), Yorkshire and the Humber (39%) and the south east (42%). All proportions are far higher than the wider Creative Media Industries. Data is taken from Skillset's Employment Census and includes sectors with a low proportion of women such as

⁸ Excludes Film Production, Photo Imaging, Publishing and Advertising.

⁹ The scope of the BETR survey is limited to employers with 20 or more full time employees which accounts for the difference in the overall % of women in comparison to Census data.

¹⁰ Training & Skills and Equal Opportunities Report 2010, Broadcast Equality and Training Regulator (BETR), July 2011.

Interactive Media and Computer Games, which brings down the average values for each region/nation.

Figure 4 Proportion of Women in the Workforce by Region/Nation

SECTOR	Radio Workforce (%)	Creative Media Workforce ¹¹ (%)
Region/Nation		
Wales	53	27
Scotland	46	34
Northern Ireland	44	23
England	45	27
London	46	31
South East	42	27
South West	45	17
West Midlands	39	18
East Midlands	44	25
North East	50	19
Yorkshire & the Humber	39	18
East of England	45	23
North West	48	27

Source: Skillset 2009 Employment Census

¹¹ Excludes Film Production, Photo Imaging, Publishing and Advertising.

PART FOUR WORKING PATTERNS AND CAREER ISSUES

One of the most consistent findings across Skillset's workforce surveys has been the relative under-representation of women aged over 35. Within the radio workforce, nearly three fifths (60%) of men are 35 or over compared with half (50%) of women. As shown in **Figure 5**, there is a particular lack of women in the 16-24 and 50+ age bands when compared to men.

The same pattern is apparent in the wider Creative Media Industries workforce where 66% of men are aged 35 or over compared with 49% of women.¹²

Figure 5 Proportion of the Radio Workforce Aged 35 or Over by Gender

Age band	Men (%)	Women (%)	Whole Radio Workforce
16-24	15	5	11
25-34	24	45	33
35-49	42	41	41
50+	19	9	15

Source: Skillset 2010 Creative Media Workforce Survey

To some extent the lower proportion of women aged 35 or over may be explained by higher proportions of women having entered the industry in recent years. Skillset's 2010 Creative Media Workforce Survey confirms that this might be the case, as 71% of women have entered the radio industry since 1995, compared with 56% of men. These figures mirror the pattern in the wider Creative Media workforce where 72% of women have entered the industry since 1995, compared with 58% of men.

Another consistent finding in recent years is that women working in radio (16%) are much less likely than men (25%) to have dependent children living with them.¹³ This pattern, also apparent in 2008 Skillset data¹⁴, lends support to the theory that women who have children are leaving the industry. It is mirrored in the wider Creative Media Industries, where 29% of men and 19% of women have dependent children living with them.¹⁵

Bearing in mind the age profile of the workforce it is unsurprising to find women in the radio workforce are more likely to be single than men (44% and 34% respectively). Again this is the case in the wider Creative Media Industries where women (38%) are more likely than men (30%) to be single.¹⁶

Men (£29,700) earn more on average per year than women (£27,500) working in the radio sector. The average income across the entire radio workforce stands at £28,650. This difference could of course be related to the younger age profile of women and the relative concentrations of men and women in different areas and occupations. The pay differential in

¹² Skillset (2010) Creative Media Workforce Survey

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Skillset (2008) Creative Media Workforce Survey showed that 33% of men and 22% of women in the radio workforce have dependent children

¹⁵ Skillset (2010) Creative Media Workforce Survey

¹⁶ Ibid

the radio sector is part of a wider issue across the Creative Media Industries (where men earn on average £32,950 compared to women who earn on average £28,300) and the whole of the UK economy.¹⁷

Skillset's 2010 Creative Media Workforce Survey also showed that men and women tend to enter the radio industry via different routes (see **Figure 6**). This may in part be due to the younger age profile of women. For example, a third of women (32%) heard about their first job via an advertisement, compared to 26% of men. More informal routes of access tended to be more common amongst men, including making contact direct with a company, via a friend or relative and word of mouth. There are few differences between the radio workforce and the wider Creative Media workforce.

Figure 6 How Heard About First Job in Industry by Gender

How heard about first job in industry	Men (%)	Women (%)	Whole Radio Workforce	Creative Media Workforce (%)
Advertisement	26	32	29	31
Online networking resource	2	4	3	3
Directly from an employer	11	12	13	10
Made contact with a	27	20	23	18
Friend or relative	18	15	17	16
Word of mouth	15	5	10	7
Careers service/advisor	4	2	3	3
Training/education	2	1	2	4
Recruitment agency/agent	3	5	4	6
Internal promotion/move	1	3	2	1
A project devised by you	6	0	3	5
Other	*	2	1	*

Source: Skillset 2010 Creative Media Workforce Survey

When it comes to work experience, men in the radio sector are more likely than women to have undertaken such work both prior to and after starting work in the radio industry. 54% of men and 48% of women undertook work experience prior to getting their first job in the sector. This is the opposite to the trend found in other Creative Media sectors where women are more likely than men to have undertaken work experience prior to starting work in the industry (42% and 33% respectively). The same is true of unpaid work experience whilst working in the sector. Amongst the radio workforce, 58% of men and 48% of women have undertaken unpaid work whilst working in the sector. This compares to 42% of women and 39% of men in the wider Creative Media Industries.¹⁸

Finally, any potential career changes in the coming year were also investigated in Skillset's 2010 Creative Media Workforce Survey. The biggest upcoming change for the radio workforce was broadening the scope of freelance work (mentioned by 28%) of the workforce, with men more likely than women to cite this change (see **Figure 7**). As men make up a higher proportion of freelancers in the radio workforce this is not such a surprise. Men are also significantly more likely than women to foresee a move to a different

¹⁷ Skillset (2010) Creative Media Workforce Survey

¹⁸ Ibid

permanent job in the radio sector or a change of direction in their freelance work. In virtually all areas women are less likely to foresee change in the coming year, with the exception of temporarily leaving their current role (likely in many cases to relate to maternity leave) and the expectation of redundancy. There are very few differences between the radio workforce and the wider Creative Media workforce.

Figure 7 Proportion of Men and Women Planning to Make Career Changes in Next 12 Months

Planning to...	Men (%)	Women (%)	Whole Radio Workforce (%)	Creative Media Workforce (%)
Move to a different permanent job in the same industry	25	18	22	20
Move to a different permanent job in different industry	12	5	9	8
Move to a different job outside Creative Media	10	11	10	7
Become freelance	14	7	11	9
Broaden scope of freelance	37	19	28	27
Change direction of freelance	24	9	17	14
Expect to be made redundant	8	10	9	7
Temporarily leave current role	3	7	4	5
Other	16	18	17	17

Source: Skillset 2010 Creative Media Workforce Survey

Balancing Children and Work in the Creative Media Industries

It is clear that women in the Creative Media Industries face a number of issues in trying to sustain and develop their careers, especially as they become older and make choices around whether or not to start a family. This appears to have resulted in a drain from the industry.

In 2008, Skillset and Women in Film and Television conducted a major study spanning the Creative Media Industries to try to identify the factors that determined the outcomes of women's decision making at key stages, especially around whether or not to attempt to remain in the industry as plans about starting a family are made.

The research was conducted by way of a series of interviews with experts or relevant organisations, and a series of focus groups with women in various combinations of career and family circumstances.

Here is a snapshot of the findings:

Decision to have a child

- There is a perceived lack of transparency or information about available maternity provision and difficulty or awkwardness asking, especially on joining a company because of perceived interest in having a family putting employers off.
- Freelancers operate outside the conventional employment model of having maternity leave entitlement or a guaranteed 'return to work'.
- For freelancers in particular, there is a need to reach a level of seniority and experience in order to feel confident that taking a break won't damage one's career.
- Some prospective parents have delayed starting a family for this reason, or changed career paths to more stable or permanent-based employment. This is the point at which many women have been permanently lost to the industry.

Experience of Maternity, Paternity and Work

- General levels of maternity provision have improved over the years but are still perceived as very poor in some areas.
- There is a common fear of taking full advantage of maternity provision, for fear of being marginalised in a competitive area or losing touch with a fast paced industry.
- Working right up to the birth of the child and/or working during maternity leave (usually unpaid) are common outcomes of this.
- Lack of awareness of the implications of pregnancy by employers in the lead up to taking maternity leave has also been commonly reported.

Returning to Work

- Of those women who left the industry, money was the biggest determining factor, and in most cases the economics of income against childcare costs had not been viable. This had been found to be particularly problematic on the arrival of a second child and as children got older and their caring needs become more complex.
- For the most part, both men and women had been unsuccessful in reducing their working hours after becoming parents. As a result, some had resorted to changing career paths either within or outside the sector to more stable occupations, which in some cases they felt had pushed them down the career ladder. Others had chosen their family over their career and stopped working altogether and many were continuing to struggle with combining parenting with a demanding career.
- There was a strong feeling that individuals without children were willing to accept working conditions that a parent could not, for example long working hours. Many study participants across each demographic commented that employers are not under any pressure to change their ways of working as a result. For the mothers who had left the sector this was cited as a major factor for leaving.

Sustaining a career in the Creative Media Industries as a parent

- Many of the women felt that their experience of motherhood enhanced their value in the workplace, especially in respect of planning and time management as combining work with childcare necessitates exceptional organisational skills.
- Most women who had left the industry were aware of having made a personal sacrifice. A number had waited until their children went to school and then retrained in other areas such as teaching. Few women who had continued working in the sector had spent time not working, apart from during limited breaks during and following pregnancy.
- Perhaps as a result of societal pressures, several of the women who had remained in the industry after having a child felt that their children were missing out on something, particularly their time, because they had done so. This was a major motivating factor for many who had decided to leave the industry; feelings of guilt emanating from concern that they were neglecting their children and in some cases their employer, resulted in a conscious decision to care for their children full-time or enter a different and less demanding industry.

PART FIVE QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING

Nearly a quarter (73%) of women working in the radio sector are educated to degree level, compared to three fifths (60%) of men. These figures also include a higher proportion of women than men holding a postgraduate qualification (34% and 25% respectively).¹⁹ This difference in profile was evident in Skillset's 2008 Creative Media Workforce Survey when 81% of women and 61% of men were graduates. It is a pattern echoed in many other sectors of the Creative Media Industries (across the Industries 77% of women and 59% of men are graduates) and again could be linked to the younger age profile of women in the workforce. The proportion of graduates within the wider Creative Media workforce is much higher amongst those who have entered the sector since 1990.²⁰

Overall, 66% of the radio workforce had received learning or skills development in the past twelve months. A higher percentage of women (70%) than men (62%) in the sector received learning or skills development, which is also apparent within most other Creative Media sectors (across the entire sector 58% of women and 54% of men had received learning or skills development in the past twelve months).²¹

The proportion of women in radio reporting learning or skills development needs is also higher than among men (57% compared to 45%), a pattern which again holds true across many other sectors within the wider Creative Media Industries (56% of women and 52% of men across the Creative Media Industries have current learning or skills development needs). In this instance the gap has widened slightly since 2008 when 55% of women and 47% of men working in radio had learning or skills development needs. In both surveys 51% of the whole radio workforce cited learning or skills development needs.²²

Two thirds (67%) of the wider radio workforce had tried to obtain learning or skills development. Women who need learning or skills development are much more likely than men to have sought it (76% and 55% respectively). This is also the case across other Creative Media sectors (65% of women and 60% of men overall). In 2008 the difference was less marked in radio with 68% of women and 64% of men reporting that they had sought learning or skills development.²³

Figure 8 shows the proportion of the radio workforce reporting a number of barriers to receiving training, and the respective proportions of men and women. 88% of the radio workforce reported barriers to training in 2010, varying from 89% of women to 85% of men. The main barrier appears to be a lack of suitable opportunities in their own region or nation, and more so for men (46%) than women (24%). The reverse pattern is true with respect to fees being too high, with 33% of women and 18% of men citing it as a barrier to obtaining learning or skills development. Interestingly domestic or personal arrangements are only a

¹⁹ Skillset (2010) Creative Media Workforce Survey

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid

²² Skillset (2010) Creative Media Workforce Survey and Skillset (2008) Creative Media Workforce Survey

²³ Ibid

barrier for one in ten women (11%), although this is still higher than the proportion of men citing this barrier (6%).

Figures for the wider Creative Media Industries are also included for comparison but it should be noted that there are vast differences between the responses of freelancers and employees to this question. This may therefore skew some comparisons. However, there is indicative evidence that a lack of suitable opportunities in their own region/nation is more of an issue for the radio workforce than other sectors. On the other hand fees being too high and particularly a lack of materials online would appear to be less of an issue than for other sectors.²⁴

Figure 8 Proportions of Men and Women Reporting Main Types of Barrier

Type of Barrier	Men (%)	Women (%)	Whole Radio Workforce	Creative Media Workforce (%)
Lack of suitable opportunities in	11	7	8	12
Lack of suitable opportunities in own region/nation	46	24	35	19
Possible loss of earnings	18	7	11	10
Fees are too high	18	33	25	46
Opportunities are in inconvenient	11	6	8	19
Opportunities are at inconvenient	11	13	11	18
Domestic/personal arrangements	6	11	9	11
Fear of losing work through committing time in advance	6	11	9	16
Lack of information about what is available	17	4	9	16
Difficult to assess the quality of	13	4	7	9
Lack of availability of materials	11	5	7	27
Employers not willing to pay	16	11	12	25
Employers not willing to give time	26	19	22	21
No barriers or obstacles	16	11	12	12
Other	5	4	4	3

Source: Skillset 2010 Creative Media Workforce Survey

²⁴ Skillset (2010) Creative Media Workforce Survey

PART SIX SOURCES AND REFERENCES

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- Labour Force Survey (Office for National Statistics, 2010)
- Creative Media Workforce Survey (Skillset, 2008)
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- Employment Census (Skillset, 2006)
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