

DISCOVER!

creative careers



Discover! Creative Careers Impact Report 2026



Funded by
UK Government

Introduction

Discover! Creative Careers exists to inform and inspire young people about careers in the creative industries.

The programme showcases creative careers unknown to many and explains what skills and qualifications they need to succeed in those careers when they leave school.

Since the relaunch of the programme in 2023, we have worked with a wide range of partners to reach over 210,000 young people through direct industry encounters.

Over the past year, Discover! Creative Careers has not only seen record reach during November's Discover! Creative Careers Month, but an extensive expansion across several geographical areas and with the inclusion of new programme strands, including successful new pilots in Scotland and Wales led by Into Film and Next Generation Creatives work experience programme led by Mission Accomplished.

We have also pioneered a new Sector Based Work Academy Programme (SWAP) for young jobseekers with Sharp Futures, Music Local, Future Yard and Hertfordshire Futures.



Together with our steering group, we have embedded excellent regional engagement across England through a new programme of micro grants, with additional activity led by Future Creators, Newcastle Gateshead Cultural Venues and specific Careers Hubs via the Careers and Enterprise Company.

Our flagship annual event expanded to an ambitious and far reaching **Discover! Creative Careers Month** which saw strengthened engagement with **schools, parents, and employers** in ways that will shape the talent pipeline for years to come.

Alongside this, we have had excellent support across the programme from our delivery partners Creative UK, Futures for All, Education and Employers and ERIC.

The opportunity for every young person to explore our creative sectors and develop the skills needed is at the heart of Discover! Creative Careers and I thank all the industry professionals, students and teachers who have taken part.

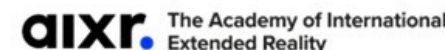
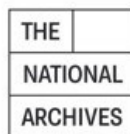
Mary Rose, Head of Discover! Creative Careers, ScreenSkills

Discover! Creative Careers has been industry-led since its inception in 2018.

The programme works with representatives from across all areas of the creative industries, education and careers landscape to shape and deliver the programme, allowing us to be responsive to skills shortages, sector developments and careers priorities.



2025-2026 steering group and delivery partners:



2025 – 2026 At A Glance

The programme far exceeded the ambitious target of 100,000 encounters to achieve 146,000 across the year.



Scotland

11,027 young people were reached through creative industry encounters delivered with partners across Scotland through a pilot programme led by Into Film Scotland.

Wales

9,359 young people were reached through creative industry encounters delivered with partners across Wales through a pilot programme led by Into Film Cymru.

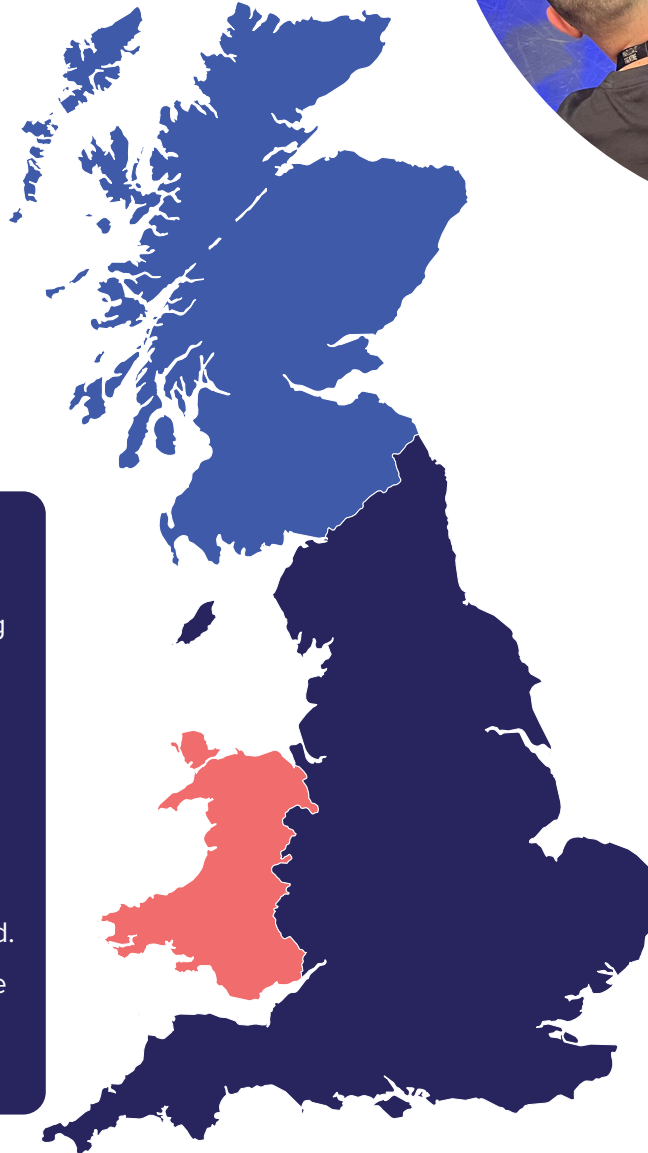
England

81,408 young people took part in activities across Discover! Creative Careers Month in November 2025, with events running online and in-person.

79 young people aged 18-24 were trained through the Sector-Based Work Academy Programme pilot delivered with the Department for Work and Pensions and industry partners in Manchester, Liverpool, Hertfordshire and Leeds.

430 young people aged 14-16 completed work experience placements through the Next Generation Creatives work experience pilot programme delivered by Mission Accomplished.

Over 6000 learners engaged in an online workshop programme during National Careers Week in March 2026, with several events co-created and led by young people.



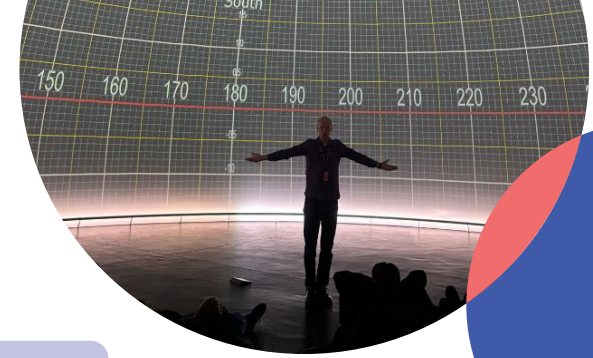
Online

Four brand-new eLearning modules launched introducing careers leaders, teachers and young people to creative industry careers, including specific versions for Wales and Scotland.

Webinars and online events delivered with the Department for Work and Pensions for Job Coaches and young people had a reach of over 9,500.

An awareness campaign led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport had 18.5 million video views and drove over 37,000 users to the Careers Finder on the Discover! website.

Discover! Creative Careers Month 2025



Young people
reached:

81,409



Schools
engaged:

1,200



Employers
engaged:

600

Since 2023:



Young people
reached:

216,000



Schools
engaged:

1500+



Employers
engaged:

1000+



Website
views:

284,000



Social media
reach:

**30
million**



Resources
downloaded:

**Over
1000**



In-kind contribution
from industry:
(activity and campaign)

**Over
£2million**



Hear from young people about their experiences:

"It's surprising that's there's more jobs in media than you would think. I'm happy I know that for my future."

Young person from Oldham Academy on a visit to the Waterloo Road film set with Rope Ladder Fiction, Manchester

"Actions speak louder than words... when you come to the office, meeting the people... seeing the work environment, you can now envision yourself in it."

Young person during an immersive VFX workshop at Framstore, London

"I just love using professional equipment. I also learnt that you can get into the creative industries not through qualifications but through who you are as a person. This is reassuring as someone who doesn't want to choose between a theatrical or scientific career."

Young person attending a Creative Careers Day in Wales

"We got to learn about the lighting and how it works, where they place them, how to operate them – it's all new to me."

Young person from Thamesview School on a visit to Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury

"I feel that I understand there is a wider variety of careers that are provided in the creative industries, rather than the most obvious/popular career options."

Next Generation Creatives Work experience placement

"I liked seeing the Casualty set as it was very detailed and authentic. It felt liked being in a real hospital which was very cool. I also liked talking to the people with different creative roles and learning about what they do."

Young person from Glan Taf School in Wales following their visit to the BBC Casualty set

"Didn't really think I was going to enjoy it, but hearing about dancing, travelling, radio-stations, actors was brilliant."

Young person from Dundee following a Discover! Creative Careers Scotland event

"I quite like how hands on it was because I got to see it happen right in front of me because most things in school are quite theory heavy, so you don't actually get to see it in practice. I also quite liked how I could ask questions to the speaker about how the creative industries work and how to find good pathways into them."

Young person following a Discover! Creative Careers Scotland event

"A few days of work experience can change how you see your future."

Next Generation Creatives Work experience placement

"I thought it was all dancing in the studio, I didn't realise that you had to do office jobs as well. It just opened my eyes... it was really useful for the future."

Young person at FABRIC Dance, Nottingham

Hear from some of our industry partners:

“Discover! Creative Careers Month has been the perfect platform for inspiring the next generation. From Coronation Street in Manchester to our London offices, we gave students a tangible look at the production journey from idea to transmission. It is vital we continue to demystify the industry and prove that a career in television is accessible to everyone.”

Sonny Hanley, Director, ITV Academy

“Programmes like Discover! Creative Careers are vital because they give young people the confidence to explore paths they may never have known existed. Watching pupils respond creatively to a real-world brief was inspiring — and a powerful reminder of why industry involvement matters.”

Stuart Yardsley, Zeno London

“Every young person deserves to be part of a sector that celebrates creativity and diversity. Partnering under the Discover! Creative Careers banner has helped open doors into live entertainment careers for over 1,700 young people — and that number will continue to grow as more events roll out into National Careers Week 2026.”

Alex Duarte-Davies, Steering Group member and Director, Get Into Theatre

“We are delighted to have this opportunity to offer advice and support about careers in audio and radio to 16-year-old students to help guide them in their academic choices. We are particularly keen to gain deeper understanding of requirements in Scotland and DCC and this event have helped us to do that in a positive and meaningful way.”

Employer reflecting on the Discover! Creative Careers Scotland programme

“Participating in Discover! Creative Careers has strengthened our engagement with emerging creative talent and helped us better understand how to make the animation industry more accessible to young people. It has encouraged us to reflect on how we communicate career pathways, showcase the range of roles within animation, and support young people who may not previously have considered the creative industries as a viable career. The programme has also helped position AfroSheep Animations as an active contributor to creative education and skills development in our community.”

AfroSheep Animations, based in Wales



Hear from teachers and careers leaders:

“The music production workshop was a huge hit, as pupils collaborated and got to create a tangible outcome in the form of a demo track. Many students also enjoyed the TV show workshop, where they got to work together and present their idea to the rest of the group. Pupils have come out of the event with a more broad knowledge of the paths into creative careers and about the careers that take place behind-the-scenes. They have been inspired by the creatives they met and have a renewed excitement and passion for their creative pursuits.”

Teacher from Brynteg Comprehensive, Swansea

“It’s always better to hear directly from ‘real’ people rather than teachers!”

Teacher from a secondary school in Glasgow

“Our students have had a great time dancing, they’ve had loads of questions talking about careers and listening to people’s journeys. The young people don’t get this experience usually so this is great for them to come here, do these workshops and be able to work in a dance studio that isn’t the school canteen!”

Teacher from Nottingham Academy following a visit to FABRIC in Nottingham

“This is so important for my students, not even just the students here today. They will go away and tell their friends about the things that they’ve seen and heard... the different careers that are there in the creative industries that people don’t even think about.”

Teacher from All Saints Catholic High School following a visit to Sheffield Theatres

“It’s so important for students to get out of their comfort zones and learn about the industry from experts and get first hand information and knowledge. I can see a big impact on some of our learners, they’re really coming out of their shell, they’re communicating more and working together and I can see a big increase in their confidence.”

Teacher from South Thames College following a visit to Framstore in London

“These are such amazing opportunities to visit places and hear from professional in a way the school cannot offer by itself. Seeing just how many close-by these places are is inspiring to the pupils in terms of making a realistic career option – it’s not just for Hollywood!”

Teacher from a secondary school in Midlothian



Deep dives

Delve into some of the inspiring activities that have taken place across 2025 – 2026



Discover! Creative Careers Month 2025

Taking place across November 2025, Discover! Creative Careers Month saw employers across the creative industries come together in an unprecedented show of collaboration and generosity, supporting over 80,000 young people.

During Discover! Creative Careers Month, employers across creative industry sub sectors delivered hundreds of sessions in schools, colleges, workplaces and cultural venues, alongside activity coordinated across the nations by industry partners, Into Film and online with Futures for All via Speakers for Schools and ERIC.

A total of 81,409 young people were reached through activities across the month, with over 600 employers participating and delivering activities, 86% of which were delivered in-person.

Reach across the month was enhanced through the launch of an awareness campaign, led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) with Creative UK and the Discover! programme. The campaign aimed to increase awareness, consideration and uptake of creative careers among young people aged 13-17 years old, as well as their parents and carers. The campaign had 18.5 million video views and drove over 37,000 users to the Careers Finder on the Discover! website.

The significant contribution from industry to deliver careers experiences and support the reach of the campaign across Discover! Creative Careers Month is estimated to be approximately £1,500,000 through in-kind investment. This includes approximately £479,700 to produce and participate in inspiring events for young people and approximately £1,00,000 worth of advertising space to maximise the campaign.

Industry partners across England, Scotland and Wales delivered hands-on, real-world insight across film and TV, gaming, architecture, archives, theatre, advertising, music and digital content, amongst others. This provided young people with the chance to meet professionals, explore behind-the-scenes roles and imagine themselves working in the sector.



Regional engagement

In England, we piloted applications for a new programme of microgrants via our steering group, aimed at supporting specific regional activities and enabling different sub-sectors to test new ideas that deepened engagement. With a focus on priority places, this enabled us to ensure young people could access high-quality creative careers experiences.

In total we reached over 24,000 young people through the regional microgrant activities.

This included:

Brighton Dome Festival and De La Warr Pavillion ran a series of activities including a Living Library of creative professionals visiting schools, a Creative Carousel of employer-led sessions in East Brighton, hands-on experiences in production, design, and performance and a youth-led event challenge.

Get Into Theatre delivered a programme of backstage tours and workshops at theatres and live music venues in Bristol, Bath and Swindon.

NE Ambition ran a programme of online events, teacher opportunities and a series of creative carousels for schools at cultural institutions across Durham, Tyne and Wear and Northumberland.

Newcastle Gateshead Cultural Venues (NGVC) worked with local industry across marketplace events, teacher CPD, insight sessions and work experience opportunities.

UK Music engaged partners across England including Newcastle, Leeds, Liverpool, East Midlands and Manchester for a range of activities including industry insights, workshops, backstage access and more.

Into Games delivered careers fairs and in-school interactive workshops with several games companies in Birmingham, London, Middlesbrough and Brighton.

The National Archives worked with archives across the country to establish schools engagement sessions that combined in-person experiences and careers information.

Crafts Council ran various events with makers in assemblies, delivered careers fairs and industry encounter days in Kirklees and Birmingham.

One Dance UK collaborated with the Bradford Creative Careers Festival, Black Country Dance Hub, Dance East and Move It to deliver various events for young people.

Education & Employers engaged creative volunteers for in-school and online events across England where they reached over 20,000 young people through their Inspiring the Future programme!





In Scotland, a pilot Discover! Creative Careers programme was delivered by the Into Film Scotland team who reached over 11,000 young people between September 2025 – March 2026.

Activities took place in schools, workplaces, online and via events at central venues that offered an opportunity to connect with young people and industry.

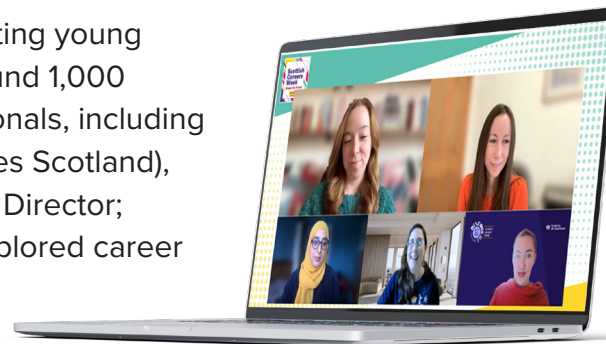
Events included:

A screen industry event where pupils from Newbattle High School attended a special effects makeup session delivered by Calum Macdonald from Gibbet FX. The session gave pupils a behind-the-scenes look at the craft of SFX makeup, alongside valuable insights into routes into the screen industries.

Fraser Johnston, Teacher at Newbattle High School, said:

“Having Callum come and inspire the students was amazing. Not only did they get so much from the SFX demonstration, but they also learned that there are many pathways into the film and television industry. With the creative sector booming in Scotland, these are the exact talks and workshops we are needing in schools. Thank you for organising Into Film.”

During Scottish Careers Week, an online careers session connecting young people across Scotland with industry professionals attracted around 1,000 viewers. The event featured a panel of creative industry professionals, including a Skills Development Manager; Karen Jamieson (Museum Galleries Scotland), Freelance Journalist; Eve Livingston, Freelance Screenwriter and Director; Raisah Ahmed and Festival Director; Helen Band. The session explored career pathways, industry insights, and essential skills for entering the creative industries.





In Wales, a pilot Discover! Creative Careers programme was delivered by the Into Film Cymru team who reached over 9,000 young people across events between September 2025 – March 2026.

Activities took place across the country and with all creative industry subsectors. Alongside industry open doors and online experiences, the team also delivered five flagship roadshow events in Conwy, Wrexham, Swansea, Torfaen, and Denbighshire.

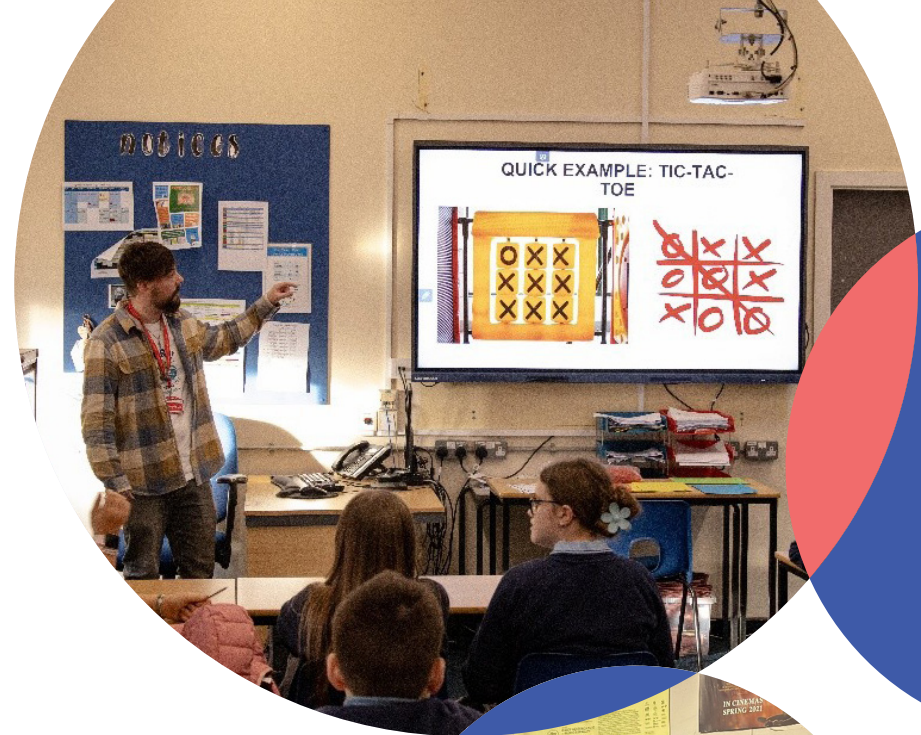
Events included:

Fashion and Brand Designer Ibby Abdi (IBY World), who has collaborated with the Cardiff City Football Club, facilitated a workshop with Year 10 Media Studies students at Pencoed Comprehensive School (Bridgend).

During the workshop, the young people were some of the first to see Ibby's promotional video for his brand-new collaboration with Football Association of Wales. Following the experience, one young person expressed "I liked learning how Ibby got to where he is today and the process he went through to be successful."

In North Wales Global Game Jam visited 3 secondary schools to inform and inspire over 370 young people about the various careers in the gaming sector. The workshops focused on story production roles.

Marketing Director, Joe Brown from 'Uncover Consultancy' visited Gower College in Swansea to deliver a full day's marketing workshop to 40 young people. **Following the event, one young person expressed** "I liked how Joe presented charismatically and explained his point in good detail. The activities were innovative as well."



Sector-Based Work Academy Programme (SWAP)

The programme's partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) continued through the launch of several Sector-Based Work Academy Programmes with creative industry partners.

A Sector-based Work Programme (SWAP) gives jobseekers who are 16 and over, and claiming benefits, the opportunity to apply for jobs through a short programme that includes: pre-employment training, a short work placement with a business a guaranteed job interview or help with your application process.

Across 2025 – 2026 we successfully delivered and launched five SWAPs, providing training opportunities for 79 18 – 24 year olds with the following partners:

- Sharp Futures in Manchester who ran 2 SWAPs with a focus on digital marketing
- Music venue Future Yard in Birkenhead, Liverpool
- Hertfordshire Futures with a focus on the film and TV sector
- Music Local in Leeds

We have also reached over 9000 jobseekers through a programme of webinars, some delivered to work coaches to support their knowledge and understanding of roles in the creative industries and other webinars directly to young people.





Work Experience Pilot with Next Generation Creatives

Delivered by Mission Accomplished, the Next Generation Creatives Work Experience Pilot was designed to provide young people with meaningful access to careers within the creative industries, while strengthening connections between education providers and creative businesses.

The programme aimed to improve access to creative career pathways, particularly for young people without existing industry connections, supporting a more inclusive and representative creative sector and making opportunities within the industry more accessible.

The pilot focused on engaging young people aged 14 to 16 (Years 10 and 11), providing them with opportunities to participate in workplace encounters and placements. These experiences were designed to give young people direct exposure to creative industry environments, helping to build awareness of career pathways, develop confidence, and support future progression.

Between May 2025 – March 2026, the pilot successfully demonstrated strong national demand for structured and flexible creative industry work experience opportunities. It delivered 139 placements with 430 completing placements.

Of the 430 young people who completed a placement during the pilot, 81% had identified access or additional needs, providing a strong indication of the profile of learners engaged.

This highlights the programme's ability to reach a diverse and inclusive group of young people, including those who may traditionally face barriers in accessing work experience opportunities, particularly within the creative industries.

"Our students have really benefitted from high quality face to face real world work experiences. At a time when work experience placements have become harder to source... these opportunities were invaluable." **Assistant Head Teacher, Queensbridge School**

"This was a fantastic programme which was well organised and thought out. Our students got a lot from the opportunity and developed excellent interpersonal skills from working in a professional environment." **Careers and Cultural Capital Lead, Walker Riverside Academy**



Find out more at:
www.discovercreative.careers



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