

Powering Skills

A five-year strategy for ScreenSkills

October 2024

Chapter 1

“ScreenSkills will power the skills needed to build a world-leading, inclusive and agile workforce for the UK screen industry, now and for the future.”

Chair Foreword

Ensuring the success of the UK screen industries requires a world-leading, inclusive and adaptable workforce. As the sector faces rapid change driven by technology, market shifts and evolving audience expectations, ScreenSkills’ role is more crucial than ever.

This strategy, shaped by input from over 1,600 stakeholders, positions ScreenSkills as the sector’s skills body. It outlines a commitment to addressing skills gaps and fostering sustainable growth through partnerships and advocacy.

Following the report, A Sustainable Future for Skills, a new, smaller Board of Trustees with diverse expertise will guide

decision-making and keep ScreenSkills aligned with the sector's evolving needs. The Board, Skills Councils, and the executive team will work closely to ensure a responsive approach to industry challenges.

Renewing partnerships is key to this strategy, focusing on collaboration across the sector and with education providers to create an integrated skills framework. ScreenSkills remains dedicated to a UK-wide approach, supporting regional talent and building an inclusive production ecosystem.

Traditional career paths are shifting as our workforce seeks to build sustainable careers across the sector. The increasing crossover of skills between games, digital, and other genres is unlocking significant potential. Transversal skills – such as problem-solving, creativity, and collaboration – are becoming essential as professionals increasingly work across television production, post, VFX, gaming, and digital media, creating new career pathways and enhancing innovation. Therefore, just as digital production from podcasts to direct-to-market content creation – can provide an alternative route into, and out of television production, so too will opportunities emerge in the games sector. Gaming is driving rapid technological advancement and creativity, and both industries share storytelling techniques and production methods that are fundamental to compelling content creation. ScreenSkills is ready to support this evolution by developing cross-sector training initiatives to address current skills gaps and future needs, helping to build a versatile, future-proof workforce and secure the long-term success of the UK's screen industries.

This five-year strategy is an opportunity to invest in a skilled, diverse, and agile workforce that reflects the UK audience and drives long-term success for the screen industries. I want to thank everyone at ScreenSkills for their hard work in developing this strategy that has clear objectives and priorities. Now it is time for us all to focus on, and invest in, a skilled, diverse and agile workforce that not only makes great

programmes that celebrate and reflect the UK audience, but who will also contribute to the long-term success of the UK screen industries.

Lisa Opie, Chair

CEO Foreword

The UK screen industries are undergoing a transformative period filled with challenges and opportunities. As we navigate rapid technological changes, shifting audience behaviours, and the urgent need for a more inclusive workforce, ScreenSkills' new five-year strategy aims to power the skills necessary for securing the industry's future and maintaining global excellence.

This strategy focuses on two key objectives: identifying current and future skills needs and ensuring that high-quality, inclusive training is accessible across the UK. To achieve this, we will enhance our research capabilities to provide more robust data on skills gaps, supporting workforce planning and targeted investment, while fostering continuous professional development across the industry.

Partnerships are central to this strategy. ScreenSkills will renew existing collaborations and create new ones across the UK to align training with industry needs and optimise resources. We will work closely with Skills Clusters and other companies to broaden participation in skills development, from apprenticeships to freelancer support.

The Government's renewed focus on industrial strategy in key sectors including the creative industries, provides a real opportunity to build a sustainable and skilled workforce for the future. ScreenSkills is committed to ensuring that the sector's needs are represented and that our workforce has access to the talent and training necessary to embrace emerging

technologies, with resilience and adaptability at its heart. By working closely with both industry leaders and Governments, ScreenSkills will help shape a future-proof workforce capable of driving long-term growth, attracting investment, and ensuring that benefits and opportunities are felt across the UK.

Our UK-wide approach ensures that talent development extends to every corner of the country and, by working with local partners, we will tailor initiatives to support regional production ecosystems. We also recognise the valuable work of the Skills Funds and will increase collaboration between them to further strengthen skills development and recognise career pathways across the sector.

ScreenSkills is proud to champion equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) as core drivers of innovation and creativity. Breaking down barriers to entry and progression, will improve opportunities for all and we will work with partners to address underrepresentation, fostering a more inclusive workforce that drives creativity.

This strategy, informed by input from over 1,600 industry professionals and beneficiaries, sets a collective vision for the future. I would like to extend my thanks to everyone who contributed their time and insights – my colleagues at ScreenSkills, the Skills Councils and all their committees, colleagues from across the sector and wider stakeholders.

We will continue to listen, adapt and collaborate to drive positive change in the screen sector. Together, we can build a workforce that not only meets the demands of today but is ready to lead in the future.

Laura Mansfield, Chief Executive

What We Heard

Between February and July 2024, ScreenSkills consulted with industry, as well as beneficiaries of its services, to gauge their views on the future role of ScreenSkills and the services that it offered. Over 1,600 people engaged in the consultation either through face-to-face interviews or online surveys.

From Industry

- 86% want a designated body to speak for industry at Government level on skills
- 80% want ScreenSkills to provide greater/more insights and intelligence
- 74% want ScreenSkills to pursue a more collaborative approach with other screen agencies/bodies
- 56% want ScreenSkills to focus more on experienced professionals than on pre- or new entrants

From Beneficiaries

- 69% valued e-learning
- 74% used ScreenSkills in the last year
- 66% valued placements

Chapter 2

Our Vision

“ScreenSkills is the industry-endorsed skills body for the screen sector. We champion and grow the skills of the UK screen industries now and for the future to ensure a world-leading, agile and inclusive workforce, offering people from every background opportunities to realise their potential.”

Objectives

Identifying and Communicating Skills Needs

- Providing insight into current and future skills demands in the sector

Enabling Access to High-Quality Training

- Promoting consistent, inclusive, quality training for the workforce to meet industry needs effectively

Chapter 3

At a Glance

The Outcomes for the Sector

- **Quality:** The sector will have a highly skilled and well-trained workforce
- **Skills:** Skills gaps and shortages will be quickly identified and addressed
- **Inclusivity:** The UK screen workforce will be more diverse and inclusive, better reflecting the diversity of the UK
- **Future-looking:** The workforce will be agile and responsive to emerging and future technologies and working practices
- **Collaborative:** UK skills provision will be pan-sector and collegiate

The Outcomes for ScreenSkills

- **An Aligned Skills Strategy**
By being a strategic lead, using data to define skills priorities and representing the sector to governments
- **A Renewed Approach to Partnerships**
A renewed commitment to partnerships across the sector to improve impact, access to opportunities and make training simpler
- **Improved Research and Data**
Expanding ScreenSkills' research capability to provide comprehensive, regular data on skills gaps and shortages

- **A Skills Body that is Led by and Representative of Industry**

Refined governance and accountability for a trusted skills body the industry can get behind

Partnerships

Strategic partnerships will be at the heart of ScreenSkills' efforts. By working closely with industry, training providers, educational institutions and government bodies, ScreenSkills aims to align efforts in skills development, ensuring that training programmes are relevant and impactful.

Key Initiatives

1. Research

4Skills and ScreenSkills to commission a workforce sizing and trends study

The BBC and ScreenSkills to co-commission research to explore entry-level opportunities and barriers to working in the creative industries

2. Partnerships

The BBC, Create Central and ScreenSkills to collaborate on mapping regional skills gaps and providing research to inform future training needs in the creative content sector

ScreenSkills to develop and extend its ScreenSkills Training Passport pilot

BFI Skills Clusters and ScreenSkills Mapping Project to signpost training and placements across the UK

ScreenSkills to work with Animation UK, UK Interactive Entertainment (Ukie) and UK Screen Alliance on skills development plans to build a sustainable talent base, recognising the growing convergence in skills between screen industry areas

3. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

CDN and ScreenSkills to form strategic partnership to leverage mutual resource efficiently and support evidence-based training interventions

Development of a partnership with the British Screen Forum and Sutton Trust to address socio-economic diversity through skills and career initiatives

4. Higher/Further Education

ScreenSkills to convene Skills Clusters and HE/FE institutions as well as a review of ScreenSkills Select course accreditation scheme

5. Supporting the Workforce

ScreenSkills to partner with Action for Freelancers to address issues including working conditions, recruitment and mental health

Benefits for our Audiences

- **Beneficiaries:** Simpler access to UK-wide training, quality skills and career resources, future-aligned learning, and strategic input to support career decisions and progression

- **Skills Fund contributors:** Improved data, skills forecasting, targeted training, clearer impact and ROI, strategic representation, greater access to partnerships and collaboration
 - **Wider sector:** Improved workforce planning, more consistent data, skills forecasting and strategic advocacy
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Our Governance

Key Recommendations

- ScreenSkills to establish a new Board reduced from 16 Trustees, ensuring appropriate skills, and diverse representation of industry interests from across the UK
- Greater collaboration fostered between the Board, Skills Councils, committees and the executive with clearer terms of reference and delegation of authority to streamline decision-making and alignment with overall strategic direction
- A bi-annual industry stakeholder forum as well as Board meetings held across the UK to encourage engagement and inclusivity

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

A commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion is central to ScreenSkills' vision. By actively fostering a workforce that reflects the diversity of the UK's population, ScreenSkills will work to create a more inclusive screen industry that welcomes talent from all backgrounds.

Data, Research, and Insight

ScreenSkills will be a leading hub for skills research for the screen industries. By providing insights into skills gaps, market trends and impact evaluations, ScreenSkills will enable better strategic planning and resource allocation in skills across the sector.

Supporting the Workforce

ScreenSkills will ensure clear visibility of sector skills provision by other organisations and directly support the UK workforce by partnering with the industry to offer:

- **Lifelong Learning:** ScreenSkills will offer learning opportunities to help freelancers and employees navigate their careers successfully
- **Career Pathways:** Clear career pathways, skills checklists, job descriptions and targeted training programmes for mid to senior-level professionals will be developed to facilitate career growth
- **On-the-Job Training:** Emphasising practical, hands-on experience, ScreenSkills will continue to promote on-the-job training and placements
- **Apprenticeships:** ScreenSkills will play a key role in shaping apprenticeship policies and lead the development of standards to meet industry needs effectively

ScreenSkills and Higher/Further Education

Working strategically with higher and further education institutions is key to aligning academic training with industry requirements. ScreenSkills will convene an Education Partnership Group to develop initiatives around curriculum content, ensuring graduates are equipped with the skills that the industry demands. An independently-chaired review of the ScreenSkills Select programme will ensure that national

accreditation for HE and FE courses continues to align with industry needs.

Future Skills and CreaTech

ScreenSkills will play a vital role in guiding the workforce to anticipate technological trends and stay competitive by fostering cross cutting skills such as collaboration, creative thinking, and problem-solving as well as enabling access to specific and evolving skills needed in areas such as digital, Generative AI and Virtual Production.

Policy and Advocacy

ScreenSkills will lead efforts to engage with governments on policy to advocate for the sector's needs, working alongside other sector skills organisations to develop shared policy positions to advance workforce development.

Measuring Success

Success will be measured by performance against objectives and service provision, a focus on effectiveness, value for money, reducing duplication and overall impact for beneficiaries, ensuring benefits to the industry and its workforce.

What Will Be Different?

- **Transparency:** ScreenSkills will build a new governance model, designed to foster greater accountability and transparency
- **Engagement:** ScreenSkills will take on a strategic convening role for the sector for skills, representing it to the UK Parliament and governments

- **Partnership:** A renewed approach to partnerships will simplify visibility of, and access to, training and placements nationwide
- **Data:** The development of a comprehensive data portfolio will provide critical insights into skills gaps, supporting more effective strategic planning
- **Efficiency:** ScreenSkills will commit to improved efficiency, value for money for funders and greater accountability

Chapter 4

The Context

Skills Task Force Report

In November 2023, the Screen Sector Skills Task Force, comprised of 28 organisations from across the screen industries, published *A Sustainable Future for Skills*, which outlined a clear vision for skills for the UK screen industries. To ensure the long-term health, success and competitiveness of the sector, it recommended that a more strategic, collaborative approach was needed, focused on partnerships that would support an innovative, future-facing, diverse and sustainable workforce.

The Task Force report outlined several key recommendations, including the establishment of a pan-sector strategic skills body to lead the development of a comprehensive, long-term Workforce Plan for the sector. The preferred option was for ScreenSkills to evolve into this strategic body, tasked with creating a five-year plan to guide the sector in workforce planning and skills development.

The report also emphasised that, as the lead option, ScreenSkills would be expected to enhance training provision by supporting choice and quality, drive effective outcomes to improve diversity and inclusion and develop skills-related policies that require collective industry input. Additionally, the body would play a crucial role in uniting the sector, and reducing fragmentation, convening stakeholders from across the screen industries to foster collaboration and amplify impact.

“The transformation of Screen Skills into a more cohesive, data led long-term strategic partner to the industry is vital to powering the future of the UK’s creative economies, and the Screen Sectors Skills Task Force supports this new strategy. Our industry thrives on innovation and talent, but to remain competitive on the global stage, we must provide a clearer roadmap for skills development and invest in sustainable and structured pathways for our workforce. With a more collaborative, connected and future facing approach we can ensure that our creative sectors not only meet current demands but continue to drive economic growth, cultural impact, workforce satisfaction and sustainability for generations to come.”

Georgia Brown, Chair, Skills Task Force

ScreenSkills

ScreenSkills is the skills body for the screen industries and was created in 2018 from Creative Skillset. Creative Skillset, in turn, had previously operated under the names Sector Skills Council and Skillset Sector Skills Council.

The five Skills Funds (Animation, Children’s TV, Film, High-end TV and Unscripted TV) facilitate on the job placements with production companies, and annually commission over 200 training providers across the UK to develop and deliver training and development programmes for the sector’s workforce. Since April 2020, the Funds have supported over 133,000 beneficiaries to develop and progress their careers.

In addition to commissioning training, ScreenSkills has developed an extensive library of free e-learning modules together with external experts, which support the growth of both technical as well as professional skills, knowledge and

behaviours for individuals at all stages of their careers, ensuring UK-wide access to essential training that meets the demands of the industry. To date these have been accessed by over 114,000 beneficiaries.

The UK Screen Industries

The UK screen sector, a key part of the creative industries, is a global success, producing content that unites, provokes and inspires millions. This success is built on a highly skilled workforce, making the UK a leader across genres.

However, the sector has become fragmented due to diverse production needs, geographical disparities, lack of co-ordination and inconsistent growth, driven by factors like the US writers' strike, advertising slow-downs and the Covid pandemic, which has shifted demand and impacted the workforce. In this context, carefully supporting the skilled workforce is critical.

Better understanding of the workforce now and in the future will enable an appropriate focus on retention of existing talent and re-skilling workers for emerging opportunities. Creating a more representative industry is equally vital; dismantling barriers to entry and prioritising equity, diversity and inclusion will foster innovation and keep UK content relevant to diverse audiences.

To remain competitive, the sector must also keep pace with societal and technological changes. Interventions like a VFX tax credit could attract investment, while content growth in areas like digital and social media, games, brand-led programming and filmed podcasts present new possibilities for content creators and collaboration.

These changes not only affect content creation and consumption but also require the workforce to adapt and embrace a more agile, interdisciplinary approach to career development.

ScreenSkills in the Nations and English Regions

ScreenSkills is a national organisation, based in London and with staff based in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and the English regions. Collaboration underscores ScreenSkills' commitment to the Nations and regions. Working with over 200 training providers, as well as over 1,000 production companies and industry partners, ScreenSkills offers workforce training, placements, workshops and networking, and develops occupational standards that underpin qualifications. These initiatives help strengthen the sector's national infrastructure and connect professionals across the UK.

The HETV Skills Fund has established industry-led Working Groups in each Nation to commission training, convening production companies and other industry organisations to commission training that meets the specific workforce needs in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Since its creation, the Unscripted TV Skills Fund has committed to invest at least 50% in the Nations and English regions every year. It has consistently exceeded this target – actively supporting local talent, production companies and training providers.

ScreenSkills' five-year strategy will further leverage this unique pan-UK reach, fostering closer collaboration with broadcasters, streamers, national screen agencies, BFI Skills Clusters, production companies and academic institutions. It will also support talent development throughout the UK by developing pathfinder pilots to model new ways of collaborating and contribute to a sustainable production ecosystem across the UK.

Chapter 5

Our Governance

ScreenSkills is an independent charity led by a Board of Trustees, supported by Councils, working groups, and sub-committees. It manages five restricted Skills Investment Funds – Animation, Children’s Television, Film and High-end Television, which are funded through voluntary contributions by companies benefiting from tax incentives. The Unscripted TV Fund is funded through co-investment by broadcasters, streamers, and production companies.

The ScreenSkills Board oversees governance, sets strategic objectives, ensures alignment with the charity’s mission, manages finances and mitigates risks. Through strategic planning and oversight, the Board maximises ScreenSkills’ impact and remains accountable for all actions, including those of the executive team and the Funds.

Building on the Skills Task Force report, a sub-committee of Trustees and independent sector representatives was established to review ScreenSkills’ governance. From February to September 2024, this sub-committee conducted a governance review of the Board, Finance and Audit Committee and the Skills Funds, consulting over 40 senior sector stakeholders.

The review aimed to assess and improve governance practices, accountability and transparency across the organisation in line with the Charity Governance Code.

Recommendations

The Governance Review made a number of recommendations relating to roles and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees and Finance and Audit Committee, as well as the Skills Funds and sub-committees, to ensure ScreenSkills can continue to support beneficiaries, meet its Charitable Aims, and deliver a shared strategy.

The key recommendations, with implementation from October 2024, are:

ScreenSkills Board of Trustees

- **Strategy:** The Board will take a more proactive and structured approach to setting the strategic direction of ScreenSkills in consultation with its key stakeholders
- **Board Membership:** A Board downsized from its current 16 Trustees that is representative of the whole of the UK in terms of specific sector experience and diversity as well as location
- **Board Skills Audit:** A skills audit of the current ScreenSkills Board to identify the expertise, skills and diverse perspectives required to improve decision making and ensure the charity can meet its new strategic aims
- **Board Appointments:** Implementing a transparent appointments process for the Chair, Board and Finance and Audit Committee that includes assessment and reporting on equity, diversity and inclusion. This includes establishing an interim appointments panel with external representation to select Trustees based on roles identified following the skills audit that will demonstrate transparency and fairness

- **Board Relationships:** Establishing more regular interaction between the Board, Skills Councils and executive team, to improve strategic alignment including Board approval of, and periodic reporting by, the Skills Councils on their strategies and operating plans

Skills Councils

- **Operational Rhythm and Annual Operating Plans:** The cadence of meetings and flow of information between each Skills Fund Council and the Board will be aligned to allow for more effective reporting to, and oversight by, the Board and the executive team. The Skills Fund Councils will also prepare (and the Board of Trustees will approve) annual Fund operating plans in line with the approved ScreenSkills strategy
- **Terms of Reference:** Skills Councils' terms of reference will be updated and, once finalised, will be published on the ScreenSkills website and shared with stakeholders to ensure clarity on membership, purpose and scope
- **Greater Transparency of Decision Making:** The Board and the Skills Councils will develop and communicate clear delegations of authority for each body within ScreenSkills

Future Engagement

ScreenSkills will convene a stakeholder forum to meet at least bi-annually online to improve engagement, enhance dialogue and provide more transparent and accountable reporting to the sector. This forum will evolve from the current membership of the Skills Task Force and expand to include some production companies, other sector-wide bodies and freelance representatives.

Starting in 2025, the Board of Trustees will also hold its meetings regularly in the Nations and regions to foster better local engagement with key stakeholders and partners.

Chapter 6

The Strategy In Detail

The Opportunity

ScreenSkills has an opportunity to transform and demonstrate that it can take the strategic lead to address the collective skills challenges for the industry – now and in the future – by:

- **Transforming** its operations and governance to enhance accountability and transparency to create a trusted pan-UK convening organisation
- **Identifying and forecasting** skills gaps/shortages to ensure training meets digital and physical production needs, and supports sustainable skills development
- **Partnering** across the sector nationwide to ensure collaborative, pan-UK training that accounts for the devolved nature of skills and the national and regional differences in skills and education
- **Convening** industry to clarify evolving skills needs for policymakers and education providers

Objectives and Priorities

ScreenSkills will focus on two key objectives over the next five years: identifying and communicating the sector's skills needs and ensuring that the workforce has access to high-quality, consistent training. ScreenSkills' online platform will be crucial to achieving both goals. Insights and data gathered from the first objective will guide the second, while the experience gained from delivering training will enrich our research and policy efforts.

Identify and communicate current and future skill needs

Evaluate UK-wide skills gaps and shortages from pre-entrants to established workforce

Short Term Priority

- Gather and analyse data on skillsets of UK workforce and shortages
- Communicate insights on immediate skills gaps and shortages to industry via centralised platform, briefings and webinars

Forecast evolving skills requirements for industry, wider stakeholders and government

Medium Term Priority

- Gather and develop insights on future skills trends
- Communicate insights on future skills gaps and shortages to industry and governments

Act as an independent convenor of industry, wider stakeholders and governments to direct skills-related investment and focus

Short Term Priority

- Development of industry Workforce Plan and influence the development of skills-related government policy

Medium Term Priority

- Convene industry to develop a united voice on skills

Enable high quality, consistent and inclusive training across the workforce

Define and increase a consistent quality of skills training

Medium Term Priority

- Define and share frameworks for high quality learning and work programmes
- Embed the ScreenSkills Training Passport across the workforce
- Standardise skill requirements and training where relevant across the industry, identifying and mapping skills requirements and setting standards

Simplify the skills provision landscape

Short Term Priority

- Identify, map and signpost training and development opportunities from providers, funders and organisations across the UK
- Further develop the ScreenSkills Training Passport across the workforce beyond pilot stage

Medium Term Priority

- Identify and develop career pathways across screen industries with a particular view to supporting current workforce development

Commission, partner or facilitate training that meets skills gaps and shortages

Short Term Priorities

- Commission, partner or facilitate training/courses/ e-learning for identified skills gaps and shortages with a particular focus on current workforce development
- Commission, partner or facilitate job-based development opportunities with a particular focus on current workforce development

ScreenSkills and Partnerships

A Sustainable Future for Skills highlighted that strategic partnerships were critical not only across the sector itself, but with education, as well as with local, regional and national Government. Interviews with stakeholders saw 81% emphasising the importance of partnerships for ScreenSkills.

ScreenSkills will seek to strengthen its multiple, existing relationships with key sector and trade organisations, as well as building new partnerships to achieve its objective of a more collaborative approach to skills across the sector.

While ScreenSkills will continue to commission programmes to mitigate skills gaps and shortages, it will redefine how it builds and sustain partnerships in the future.

The BBC, Create Central and ScreenSkills

Create Central, BBC and ScreenSkills will partner to support the West Midlands Skills Accelerator cluster programme, now in its second year. An industry-led body established to turbo-charge the creative content sector in the region, Create Central has identified the need for a more granular mapping of skills gaps across the region to support the development targeted training and development activity to meet these needs.

This will provide the skills and workforce to fuel the ongoing growth of the production sector in the West Midlands. The design and delivery of the regional skills initiatives will look to widen access and opportunity to the screen and creative industries, and reflect the diversity of the West Midlands, including socio-economic diversity.

ScreenSkills will provide the specialist research and data resource to enable the West Midlands to identify current and future sector skills needs and work with the BBC and other local partners, such as the West Midlands Combined Authority, to develop targeted interventions drawing from existing funding sources.

ScreenSkills Training Passport

The ScreenSkills Training Passport, currently in its pilot phase with partners BBC Studios, Sky, ITV Studios and Pact, aims to simplify career pathways and standardise skill provision across the screen industry. Designed to be a portable record of an individual's essential training achievements, the passport provides a streamlined way for professionals (particularly freelancers) to demonstrate their expertise to employers. It supports employers by making it easier to verify a worker's credentials and identify training needs. Central to both simplifying career

progression and standardising skills provision, we will develop the Training Passport with partners across the industry with the aim that it becomes an essential tool in the industry's efforts to address skills gaps, enhance workforce mobility and ensure consistent standards across the sector.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

ScreenSkills proudly champions inclusion as a core goal and integrates diversity into all its strategic objectives. The aim is to build a workforce that reflects the UK's diversity and create an inclusive environment that drives innovation and ensures equal opportunities for all.

Starting with its own organisation and governance, ScreenSkills will promote greater inclusion across the screen industries, supporting skill development and career progression.

ScreenSkills will strengthen partnerships with the Creative Diversity Network, The TV Access Project, and other organisations to promote equity and access, and work together to translate data into effective skills development.

Collaborations with new partners, such as The Adobe Foundation, will further enhance and develop programmes to improve EDI across the sector.

Working with British Screen Forum and the Sutton Trust

Development of a partnership with the British Screen Forum and Sutton Trust aiming to address socio-economic diversity through targeted skills and career initiatives.

Creative Diversity Network Strategic Partnership

A new partnership with Creative Diversity Network will enable both organisations to work together to ensure fairer and more equal career opportunities by leveraging CDN's Diamond diversity data to identify and address training needs, and by enabling both organisations to leverage resources and share expertise.

Data, Research and Insight

ScreenSkills will play a key role in providing data on current and future skills needs and is committed to sharing insights to guide workforce planning. It aims to forecast requirements, track training provision, and measure the effectiveness of interventions and then share these in an accessible, digestible way.

To become the leading hub for skills research in the screen industries, ScreenSkills will offer data insight on strategic skills gaps and shortages, labour market trends and impact evaluation. To achieve this, it plans to invest in its data and research capabilities and digital platform, while exploring research partnerships to secure additional funding and expertise and maximise reach. 94% of industry stakeholders identified the need for a single hub and convening body.

BBC and ScreenSkills Research

The BBC and ScreenSkills will co-commission research to gain more detailed insight of the routes into the screen industries to support workforce planning. The research may consider analysing areas such as key entry points, including HE and FE courses, internships, and entry-level jobs, as well as barriers to entry and the wider impact of training routes.

An initial step includes a new industry sizing study to better estimate the number of workers and gather demographic details, providing a baseline for future research. Additionally, ScreenSkills is collaborating through the Creative Industries Council's working group to conduct skills audits across the creative industries. These foundational research studies will underpin future research programmes.

ScreenSkills will also support awareness and clarity of skills development through sharing skills checklists and developing National Occupational Standards.

Ampere Research in Partnership with 4Skills

ScreenSkills and 4Skills are partnering on a pilot to research the size and profile of the screen industries' workforce and have commissioned Ampere Analysis to conduct the study. This study will provide a detailed breakdown of the film and television production and post production workforce by region, department, role, seniority and demographics. The methodology includes creating a taxonomy of roles and departments, workforce modelling, surveys of workers and interviews with employers, and will estimate production activity and workforce capacity, highlighting areas of shortage or oversupply.

The research, funded by Channel 4's training and development programme 4Skills, aims to give a clearer understanding of workforce scale, size and labour market trends. It will provide more accurate data for future studies and help organisations measure the impact of their training programmes.

Additionally, the findings will guide resource allocation, identify skills gaps and shortages, assist in better setting

targets and improve understanding of the industry's demographics, focusing on equity, diversity and inclusion.

Supporting the Workforce

ScreenSkills will support the predominantly freelance UK workforce by partnering with the industry to offer lifelong learning, helping people to navigate, build and sustain successful careers that adapt to the evolving screen industries.

Recognising the significant number of initiatives in the sector offering existing support for pre-entry and early career stages, ScreenSkills will focus its own training investment on mid and senior-level workers, emphasising retention and career development to keep valuable experience within the sector.

ScreenSkills will define clear career pathways, helping individuals understand the required skills, knowledge and behaviours as well as emerging progression routes, which will enable more informed career choices and support talent development across the sector.

By collecting data and offering high-quality and relevant training, ScreenSkills will enable individuals to build fulfilling and sustainable careers.

Action for Freelancers

ScreenSkills will work in close partnership with the new Action for Freelancers initiative alongside the Film and TV Charity, organisations such as Bectu and Pact and broadcasters including BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Paramount, Sky and UKTV to better support freelancers. As well as continuing to develop the Freelance Charter and a Freelance Hub, where resources can be accessed, Action

for Freelancers will look into areas such as working conditions, recruitment, skills and training, mental health and wellbeing and communication.

BFI Skills Clusters and ScreenSkills Mapping Project

The BFI Skills Clusters and ScreenSkills Mapping Project will help to align and signpost training, development, and placement opportunities across the UK's Nations and regions. By mapping available opportunities and collaborating with the Skills Clusters, the project will help ensure that high-quality, regionally-relevant training strengthens the UK's talent pipeline and supports inclusivity across all areas of the country, whilst mitigating against unnecessary duplication in activity.

The BFI Skills Clusters are led by Create Central, Film London, Northern Ireland Screen, Screen Berkshire (Resource Productions), Screen Scotland, Screen Alliance North, and Sgil Cymru.

Career Pathways in Scripted Television

A pilot initiative to create a visual depiction of traditional linear career pathways in the screen industries. Using existing scripted skills checklists as a foundation, the pilot seeks to provide the workforce with more structured career paths. These checklists, organised from junior to senior roles, were developed based on National Occupational Standards, with feedback from industry professionals, guilds, unions, and associations.

The benefits include a clearer understanding of career progression, more standardised expectations and training for role transitions, and a consistent reference for crew, training bodies and employers. It will also streamline

industry information, reduce duplication, and simplify the mapping of departments, job roles and required skills, and skill gaps, offering valuable insights for workforce development. The intention is to extend career pathways beyond the scripted pilot to cover all areas of the screen industries.

On-the-Job Training

Industry stakeholders and beneficiaries emphasised the importance of on-the-job training during the strategy consultation, aligning with the Skills Task Force report. This practical training allows people to apply new skills directly in their work environment, making learning more relevant and effective.

ScreenSkills will continue to prioritise placements in its training support and will also guide other organisations in offering structured, practical learning opportunities.

Apprenticeships

ScreenSkills will build on its previous work to play a key part in shaping apprenticeship policy for the screen industries. It will also continue its recognised role in convening industry to define Apprenticeship Standards to ensure they remain relevant and representative, always acknowledging the devolved nature of skills.

Between 2020 and 2024, ScreenSkills ran two apprenticeship pilots with industry partners. First with Netflix, Warner Bros Discovery and subsequently with Prime Video, Banijay, Fremantle, Lime Pictures and Sky with APX Content Ventures. The pilot programmes were co-funded respectively by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and the Department for Education.

The overall success of the pilots showed that apprenticeships can be a viable pathway, especially for those from diverse backgrounds, with 76% of apprentices securing further employment and 26% from working-class backgrounds. However, they also highlighted the need for reforms to improve their effectiveness and value for money.

ScreenSkills will build on its expertise in the screen sector, working with industry to advocate for greater flexibility in the use of the Apprenticeship Levy. It will aim to demystify and simplify the system, support employers in running successful apprenticeship programmes, make pathways clearer and create more opportunities across the UK.

76% of apprentices secured further employment

26% of apprentices were from working class backgrounds

ScreenSkills Trainee Finder

ScreenSkills Trainee Finder, supported by the Children's TV, Film and High-end TV Skills Funds, pairs training opportunities with hands-on production experience to provide vital pathways to those embarking on their screen careers. The new cross-Fund partnership will create more access to training opportunities across the UK, reflecting how the needs of production and the workforce are evolving, and meet the need to encourage people at an early stage in their career to think more broadly about ways to develop skills and build experience across more than one genre.

Future Skills and CreaTech

ScreenSkills will guide the screen sectors in developing future-ready skills to remain competitive in a rapidly evolving global market. The strategy focuses on two key areas: collaborating with national and regional partners to

communicate what will be needed to enhance technological skills through the CreaTech agenda and build the professional capabilities for a dynamic workforce.

With the convergence of industries like gaming and screen, driven by advances in interactive technologies, ScreenSkills aims to address the evolving skills requirements of both sectors.

By partnering with trade bodies, companies, screen agencies, educational institutions and Skills Clusters, ScreenSkills aims to commission cross-sector training that meets the changing needs of these industries, particularly as the convergence of gaming and screen industries reshapes their futures.

To future-proof the workforce, ScreenSkills will share insights on emerging technologies like Generative AI and virtual production, building on existing initiatives. This approach will identify current and future skills gaps, guiding targeted training investments. Consultation feedback highlighted the need for ScreenSkills to balance immediate skills gaps with future needs. Respondents wanted greater emphasis on building workforce resilience, as opposed to focusing solely on technical abilities and proficiency in relation to future skills.

Increasingly, the screen industries are seeing the importance of convergent skills that allow professionals to work fluidly across sectors like gaming, digital media, television, and film. Skills such as problem-solving, creative thinking, and collaboration are critical, enabling career mobility and innovation across genres. This convergence fosters a workforce that is not only equipped with technical skills but also capable of thriving in diverse, evolving industries and facing the future for the global market.

As an independent convenor, ScreenSkills will unite industry stakeholders to address skills challenges, fostering an adaptable, well-equipped workforce while promoting crucial,

cross-cutting professional skills such as collaboration, communication, creative thinking, information literacy, planning, and problem-solving – skills that will be critical by 2030.

Building on initiatives like the Unscripted TV Skills Fund's Short Courses, Work-Ready Skills and the sustainability e-learning module co-developed with BAFTA albert, ScreenSkills will foster resilience, agility and versatility, while promoting skills in revenue diversification and sustainable production.

Animation UK and ScreenSkills

ScreenSkills will collaborate with Animation UK, alongside UKIE and UK Screen Alliance, to develop skills plans aimed at building a sustainable talent base for the animation sector and across animation, VFX, post-production, and games. This will reflect the specialisation as well as the convergence and fluidity of skills, exploring collaboration opportunities to ensure talent have the transferable skills to progress their careers across the wider screen industries.

ScreenSkills and Games

ScreenSkills and UK Interactive Entertainment (Ukie), the trade body for the UK games and interactive entertainment industry, will explore opportunities to collaborate in championing skills development for the games sector to build a sustainable talent base across the UK for the long-term future of the UK games industry. The collaboration will have a particular focus on the growing crossover and convergence of skills between different genres and subsectors within the screen industries.

ScreenSkills, VFX and Post Production

ScreenSkills and UK Screen Alliance, the trade body for VFX and post-production, will explore possibilities for

collaboration in skills development and research into skills gaps, recognising that this part of the industry has a higher proportion of PAYE and long-term employment, and therefore the potential solutions will be different to those aimed at freelancers working in physical production. There is also significant scope to collaborate across the digital content creation disciplines of VFX, animation and games, to ensure a coherent supply of talent with transferrable skills.

Working with Higher and Further Education

To ensure the screen industries have access to HE and FE graduates with relevant skills, ScreenSkills will assume a more strategic role, aligning training with industry needs and sharing information, rather than providing direct training and events for students that can be provided more locally.

This will involve regularly convening a strategic education partnership with BFI Skills Clusters and education representatives, building on the work begun by the Skills Task Force. The group will focus on priority initiatives, including curriculum content and developing industry-ready skills, while sharing best practices.

As part of this group, ScreenSkills will take a leading role in working with UK-wide educational organisations. Acting on behalf of the screen industries and the strategic partnership group, ScreenSkills will help ensure a coordinated effort to improve and enhance the outcomes for students leaving full-time education.

An Independently-Chaired Review of ScreenSkills Select

Created in 2019, ScreenSkills Select is a national accreditation programme for HE and FE with 100 accredited courses in animation, film, games, TV and VFX. At this five year point in the programme, ScreenSkills will carry out an independently-chaired review of Select that will focus on ensuring that industry needs are understood and assess the value and potential impact of consistent standards for screen industries endorsement in education.

Policy and Advocacy

ScreenSkills will engage with the Government on education policy, collaborating with Skills England, the DfE, DCMS and national screen agencies to connect with devolved governments. It will act as the industry's voice on cross-sector skills policy, focusing on apprenticeship policy, the Growth and Skills Levy and skills development in the UK's industrial strategy. This includes organising pan-sector forums to share insights and directly advocating to governments and Parliament on key issues.

As a Board member of the Federation of Skills Bodies, ScreenSkills will collaborate with industry-led sector organisations like Cogent, Lantra, Tech UK, ECITB and UKFT to develop shared policy positions across sectors, where relevant to the screen sector, and support workforce development.

ScreenSkills supports Skills England's unified approach to national skills and looks forward to collaborating to address industry needs, ensuring both national and regional systems meet these requirements and involving employers in policy development.

Chapter 7

What Will Be Different?

ScreenSkills' new five-year strategy and focus on aligned priorities will enable it to refine and build on its offer to beneficiaries and to the sector, as well as provide focussed new services.

A Greater Strategic Role

ScreenSkills will take on a strategic role in bringing the screen sectors together, providing them with data and insight and helping to establish clear, joined-up priorities for skills development. As the industry's independent convenor, ScreenSkills will represent the sector's views and goals to the UK Parliament and devolved governments.

Clearer Governance and Accountability

ScreenSkills will refine its approach by adopting even more rigorous standards, with enhanced accountability and integrity in both its delivery mechanisms and reporting practices.

A Renewed Approach to Partnerships

A redefined approach to partnerships will help to improve access to training and placements across the UK and make access to opportunities simpler.

Research and Data for the Entire Sector

ScreenSkills will expand its research portfolio to offer the industry regular data on national skills gaps and shortages

across sub-sectors, disciplines and genres and support enhanced forecasting.

What Will it Mean?

As a charity and the skills body for the screen industries, with pan-sector relationships with individuals, organisations, producers and commissioners, it is crucial that ScreenSkills continues to act with integrity and be accountable for its activities.

ScreenSkills' strategy builds on its core values, ensuring a clear, effective approach to support the screen industries' evolving needs:

Industry-Focused: The strategy identifies and addresses skills gaps, ensuring training is consistent, accessible and meets market demands. ScreenSkills commits to delivering value for money and positive outcomes for beneficiaries through targeted research, workforce planning and quality training

Collaborative: ScreenSkills will build partnerships across the sector, enhancing skills development and simplifying access to opportunities. Governance changes and increased transparency will strengthen trust and support a unified, UK-wide approach

Inclusive: ScreenSkills will continue to put equity, diversity, and inclusion at its core, seeking to remove barriers to entry, share regular metrics and ask for feedback to ensure accountability

The Benefits

By adopting this strategy, ScreenSkills will benefit the audiences it serves directly and indirectly:

Workforce: Simpler and Enhanced Access to Training and Strategic Influence

- A comprehensive view of available UK skills and training provision for them
- Accessible, high-quality, and free information on training and career development
- Training aligned with current and future needs
- Strategic input on career development and apprenticeship policy

Skills Fund Contributors: Informed Decision-Making and Strategic Advocacy

- Enhanced ability to address workforce gaps using data
- Better UK-wide skills forecasting
- Targeted training for current and future needs
- Strategic representation to government departments and HE/FE institutions on skills
- Clear overview of skills/training provision across the UK

Wider Industry: Improved Workforce Planning and Effective Advocacy

- Enhanced ability to address workforce gaps using data
- Better UK-wide skills forecasting
- Strategic representation to government departments and HE/FE institutions on skills

Measuring Success

ScreenSkills will measure its impact through a set of key performance indicators for each strategic objective that focus on effectiveness and positive outcomes for both beneficiaries, partners and the wider sector.

Performance indicators for service provision are likely to include:

- Effectively Meeting Need: Service provision to address gaps and shortages will be supported by data
- Attendance and Completion Rates: Percentage of attendees versus places available and completion rates
- Total Number of Beneficiaries: Number of beneficiaries against target
- Value for Money: Ensuring cost per head is appropriate and delivers effective outcomes
- Reducing Duplication: Seeking to minimise duplication in skills provision or strategically align with partners to simplify access and improve impact and reach
- Positive outcomes for beneficiaries: Impact on beneficiaries including and beyond satisfaction rates

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