**New Creative Workforce for the Future**

More young people will be given the opportunity to work in creative industries, thanks to a new scheme developed by the West of England Combined Authority (WECA) and delivered by partners including the University of the West of England.

Creative Workforce for the Future will support small to medium-sized companies to develop a more inclusive workforce in the region’s cultural and creative industries. It will draw on the wealth of talent available from currently under-represented groups, in particular people from black, Asian and minority ethnic or disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds. In Bristol, 11% of the city’s working age population are from ethnic minorities – a position not reflected within the film and TV sector.

West of England Mayor, Tim Bowles said: “Our world-renowned creative and cultural sector is a crucial part of the West of England’s economy. Creative industries have been one of the fastest growing sectors across the UK for the past decade, and this is reflected in the West of England, with 27% growth in digital and creative employment between 2015 and 2017.

“I want to ensure that everyone, regardless of background, has an opportunity to have a career in the creative industries. Bristol is one of the BBC’s three key sites, along with London and Manchester, and the BBC Natural History Unit is soon to be expanded as a core part of the region’s production activity. It is also the home of Channel 4’s new Creative Hub. These businesses need skilled employees now, and this demand is expected to increase.”

Creative Workforce for the Future will work with the world-class cluster of creative small and medium-sized businesses – which is concentrated in Bristol and Bath – and reach out to talent across the region.

Bridging the gap from education to work, participants will undertake placements at different creative and cultural hubs to develop their experience, CV, portfolio and industry contacts, and gain access to a Talent Network offering opportunity, industry expertise and advice. The tailored support will continue for an additional 12 months to help them develop further experience through employment, contract and / or freelance work.

The Creative Workforce for the Future programme will be delivered by WECA’s partners in the Network for Creative Enterprise, led by the University of the West of England and Watershed, with hubs including [The Guild Bath](https://www.theguildhub.co.uk/en), [Knowle West Media Centre](https://kwmc.org.uk/), [Spike Island](https://www.spikeisland.org.uk/), and [Rife Magazine](https://www.rifemagazine.co.uk/) at Watershed, who are joined by new hubs Bristol City Council’s [Bristol Museums](https://www.bristolmuseums.org.uk/?gclid=Cj0KCQiA9dDwBRC9ARIsABbedBMjtDSp_q8vgsieJpOBRLT8nkfGQzv3XY0lDsZqFAaurAhQ_X8sdtMaAoAKEALw_wcB) and [Creative Youth Network](https://www.creativeyouthnetwork.org.uk/). They will work with business networks in the region including [Bristol Media](https://www.bristolmedia.co.uk/), [the Royal Television Society](https://rts.org.uk/), [Creative Bath](https://www.creativebath.org/), [TechSpark](https://www.techspark.co/), [Bristol Games Hub](https://bristolgameshub.com/), [the West of England Design Forum](https://wedesignforum.co.uk/) and [Engine Shed](https://engine-shed.co.uk/), and the Channel 4 Creative Hub which launched on 15 January in Bristol.

Channel 4’s Managing Director Nations and Regions, Sinead Rocks, said: “The creative industries need to be more representative of the UK as it is today and so we’re delighted that Creative Workforce for the Future will be nurturing and developing fresh, untapped talent with a particular focus on young people from under-represented groups in really tangible ways.”

Lynn Barlow, Assistant Vice-Chancellor for Creative and Cultural Industries Engagement at UWE Bristol, said: “As a university we have a key role to play in bridging the attainment gap of all young people in the region. It is vitally important the make up of the regional film and TV sector reflects the diversity seen in Bristol’s communities and we’re proud to be leading the Creative Workforce for the Future initiative with WECA. This crucial work to widen access to employment in the creative industries runs alongside our sector-leading work to widen participation in higher education.

“We aim to produce graduates who are ready and able to work and we recognise how valuable internships and placements can be. The internships available through this programme offer a fantastic opportunity for young people to launch their careers in the creative industries, and we’ll be encouraging eligible students at UWE Bristol to apply for them.”

Victoria Tillotson, Talent Development lead at Watershed said: “It can be incredibly difficult for young people to get a foot in the door of the creative industries. Creative Workforce for the Future tackles this issue head on, bridging the gap between underrepresented young people and creative companies who are excited to embrace new voices within their teams. Watershed is delighted to be a part of this vital programme. Through Rife Magazine, we will work with the programme’s cultural hubs to create a powerful Talent Network that will begin to change Bristol and Bath’s creative industries, promising a brighter future for everyone.”

Creative Workforce for the Future is identified in the West of England [Employment and Skills Plan](https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/employment-skills-plan/), developed by WECA in partnership with businesses and skills providers, in line with the region’s [Local Industrial Strategy](https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/ourstrategy/). It is supported by investment from the West of England Combined Authority and the European Social Fund and is being delivered as part of the Bristol + Bath Creative R+D programme.

Creative SMEs which are keen to find out more about Creative Workforce for the Future and express an interest in being part of the project should visit: <https://bristolbathcreative.org/take-part/creative-workforce>.

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*Notes to Editors:*

*The Creative Industries Sector Deal describes the West of England as a ‘globally significant, high-growth creative cluster’. It forms a hugely dynamic part of the West of England innovation ecosystem; and works as a catalyst, providing imaginative, artistic and inspired solutions to challenges across many different industrial sectors.*

*The UK Creative Industries have been one of the fastest growing industrial sectors for the past decade and this is reflected in the West of England, with 27% growth in digital and creative employment between 2015 and 2017. The ability to combine creativity and technology is a significant strength and Bristol is one of only 2 cities outside London which feature in the top 10 for both creative and high-tech clusters.*

*Bristol and Bath have been cited by Tech City UK (2017) as the third largest and the most productive tech cluster in the UK; with over 36,000 digital workers to date and an £8.1 billion digital tech turnover.*

***Creative and cultural industries***

*Creative technology is a growing and distinctive strength for the region with a number of nationally significant projects underway:*

* *Bristol-based Aardman Animations are part of the successful consortia awarded funding by UK Research and Innovation through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund as part of their ‘Audiences of the Future’ programme to explore cutting-edge and immersive experiences; and*
* *WECA has secured funding from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport to pilot a 2-year Creative Scale-Up programme that aims to help creative firms access finance through an intensive business readiness support programme that will commence in autumn 2019.*

*The region’s four universities play a key role in the creative sector via research, investment and knowledge sharing. A successful bid was led by the University of the West of England to become one of 8 Arts and Humanities Research Council creative clusters – a partnership aiming to improve the performance of the creative industries in the region, bringing together the 4 universities and industry partners to develop understanding about user engagement with new platforms including 5G connectivity, virtual and augmented reality.*

***Talent Network – Managed by Rife at Watershed***

*In order to support more people to gain and sustain careers within the creative industries we are establishing the Talent Network - a network for 18 - 30 year olds who are or want to work within the creative sector. The Talent Network will be managed by* [*Rife*](https://www.rifemagazine.co.uk/)*, a youth-led magazine and a professional development programme. Since 2014 it has been genuinely changing lives by nurturing young talent from diverse backgrounds, connecting them to opportunities and careers they wouldn’t otherwise have access to.*

***Network for Creative Enterprise***

*The Network for Creative Enterprise (NfCE) was established in October 2017 to help freelance artists, creative practitioners, start-up microbusinesses, and small to medium enterprises (SMEs) in the West of England LEP area make a sustainable living from their creative ideas. The programme was awarded £1,000,000 by Arts Council England and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to achieve this ambition.*

*Network for Creative Enterprise (NfCE) was a partnership between UWE Bristol and*[*Watershed*](http://www.watershed.co.uk/)*, who worked closely with*[*The Guild (Coworking Bath)*](http://www.theguildhub.co.uk/en)*,*[*Knowle West Media Centre*](https://kwmc.org.uk/thefactory/)*and*[*Spike Island*](http://www.spikeisland.org.uk/)*to support creatives across the West of England to make a sustainable living from their ideas.*

*Between October 2017 and June 2019, the programme offered free workspace, skills development workshops, bespoke business support, small bursaries, one-to-one mentoring, showcasing opportunities and other resources to creatives looking to grow or start their business.*

*The NfCE approach has been to understand the West of England’s creative sector as a rich ecology of diverse practices and ambitions, which, with the right kind of flexible support at the right time, could thrive in ways that were sustainable, impactful and meaningful to participants and stakeholders.*

*Final Report*: [*https://www.watershed.co.uk/sites/default/files/publications/2019-12-09/nfce\_final\_report\_web.pdf*](https://www.watershed.co.uk/sites/default/files/publications/2019-12-09/nfce_final_report_web.pdf)

***Hub bios***

[***Watershed***](https://www.watershed.co.uk/)*is a cultural venue and producer developing cultural engagement, imagination and talent. We are based in Bristol but place no boundaries on our desire to connect with artists and audiences in the wider world. We curate ideas, spaces and talent to enable artistic visions and creative collaborations to flourish. We produce work that cuts across film, media, music, theatre, design, visual art, and the creative and technology sectors.* [*Rife*](https://www.rifemagazine.co.uk/) *is part of this work, a youth-led magazine and a professional development programme. Since 2014 it has been genuinely changing lives by nurturing young talent from diverse backgrounds, connecting them to opportunities and careers they wouldn’t otherwise have access to.*

***Knowle West Media Centre (KWMC)****is an arts organization and charity that uses technology and the arts to support people to make positive changes in their lives and communities.  KWMC has been based in South Bristol since 1996, where it began as a photography and health project.  Its many current projects include skills training and employment opportunities for young people, the creative agency Eight, and community-based programmes exploring issues from health to housing. KWMC also runs The Factory, an award-winning digital manufacturing space based at Filwood Green Business Park.  Knowle West Media Centre is supported by Bristol City Council and supported using public funding by Arts Council England. For more details call 0117 903 0444 or visit*[*kwmc.org.uk*](http://kwmc.org.uk)

[***Spike Island***](http://www.spikeisland.org.uk/)

*Founded in the mid-1970s, Spike Island is a dynamic arts centre that supports, produces and presents contemporary art and culture. We engage audiences in our work through an exceptional artistic programme of large-scale exhibitions and interdisciplinary events; and we directly support local and international artists and artist-led organisations through major new commissions, subsidised studio provision and critically-engaged artist development opportunities that widen access to our programme and facilities. We also offer bespoke exhibition services and are home to a café, workspaces for designers and creative businesses, and the University of the West of England’s Fine Arts programme. FFI:* [*www.spikeisland.org.uk*](http://www.spikeisland.org.uk)

***Bristol******City Council’s Bristol Museums***

*Bristol Culture has a large portfolio that includes services from the Film Office, Bottle Yard Studios and Site Permissions, making Bristol one of the best places in the country to produce film and TV, to collections and archives that work with colleagues across the world to bring exciting and engaging collections to our city museums. Placement participants will be hosted in our Programming team which undertake a broad range of work across the City Council’s cultural estate to deliver exhibitions, events and other activities in collaboration with a diverse group of professionals. Interns will work on a number of critical upcoming projects delivering creative content in support of the planning, execution and evaluation of Bristol Culture activities. The Culture and Creative Industries Service at Bristol City Council are thrilled to be part of this exciting and innovative collaborative project that will mark a step change in how cultural and creative anchor institutions find, select and develop their future workforce. The Creative Workforce for the Future brings together a diverse range of partners and expertise and will provide placement participants with unprecedented access to skills, network development and mentoring which will support them to begin thriving and sustainable careers within the cultural and creative sectors. We look forward to deepening the relationship between the City Council and cultural and creative SMEs within the city to support these rapidly growing sectors while meeting our shared ambitions of creating a city of hope and aspiration.*

[***The Guild***](https://www.theguildhub.co.uk/en)*is Bath's coworking space for the tech and creative communities. Established since 2013 in a beautiful Grade 1 listed building in the centre of the city, The Guild has grown into a genuine hub for people to work, meet others and network. Over 200 members currently use the space to work, and a busy member-led event programme ensures that the space remains a beacon which represents and reflects the diverse creative and tech talent within the city.*

[***Creative Youth Network***](https://www.creativeyouthnetwork.org.uk/) *is a registered youth charity in Bristol. They help young people to reach their potential, building lasting, secure relationships based on trust and the unique needs of each person. In their safe and creative environments across Bristol and South Gloucester, they encourage young people to unlock their skills and confidence, find and use their voices and enter adulthood with the ability to change their own world for the better. FFI:* [*https://www.creativeyouthnetwork.org.uk/*](https://www.creativeyouthnetwork.org.uk/)