# BAFTA

# INVISIBLE BARRIERS

Guidance and recommendations to assist hirers in the screen industries to support individuals from low socio-economic backgrounds to progress and sustain a career within them

*Version 1 - A BAFTA Resource Guide*

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# CONTENTS

# FOREWORD

The subject of socio-economic diversity in the screen industries is complex and often overlooked in discussions of representation and diversity. Unlike other areas of underrepresentation, such as race or gender, class and financial inequality tend to be marginalised and rarely prioritised and not measured consistently – or even at all – across the industries. We must consider socio-economic disadvantage alongside other intersections of underrepresentation and protected characteristics.

Historically, socio-economic diversity has been neglected in data monitoring and target setting practices, even within organisations like BAFTA. To address this issue, BAFTA now conducts an annual survey of its membership as part of its commitment to transparency. The findings have revealed that the number of BAFTA members from low socio-economic backgrounds is well below national and work force averages. Additionally, research from the UK's Creative Industries

Policy and Evidence Centre in 2021 [Link here] highlighted the need to employ 250,000 more working-class individuals in the screen industries to achieve socio-economic diversity comparable to the wider economy. Whilst some progress has been made recently, there is still much to be done.

The under-representation of working-class people in the screen industries raises important questions. Are careers in the arts perceived as unattainable? Are the working environments hostile and unwelcoming? Is it a result of the deep-rooted inequality that pervades the UK? These questions prompted BAFTA to conduct a study, gathering the unfiltered experiences of BAFTA members from low socio-economic backgrounds who have

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# FOREWORD <span style="color:salmon">Continued...</span>

successfully established themselves in the industry.

The insights and data collected from this study, along with the testimony of these individuals, form the core of the following pages.

This resource seeks to amplify the voices of those who contributed to the study and the communities they represent. By sharing their lived experiences, navigating their own paths, and overcoming obstacles to sustain a career in film, games, and TV, they shed light

on the current state of the industry and offer recommendations to make it more equitable for those entering and working within the screen industries.

While the initial research and feedback primarily focused on the scripted world, it is acknowledged that socio-economic diversity issues extend throughout non-scripted and the games industries. Efforts will be made to expand the coverage of these areas in the resource over the coming months and years.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all the individuals who have shared their personal experiences over the past couple of years. Their vulnerability, truth, and trust have been invaluable. What I have learned is that imposter syndrome affects us all, and it can be seen as a super-power. Feeling uncomfortable in certain spaces, being different, looking a certain way, or thinking in unconventional ways are all qualities that have shaped the UK screen industries. We now need to give more people the opportunity to start on the inside lane.

**Mariayah Kaderbhai,
Head of Programmes, BAFTA**

# ABOUT *INVISIBLE BARRIERS*

### What Is It?

*Invisible Barriers* is an **industry-wide resource guide** for hirers sharing practical advice on increasing socio-economic diversity on-and-off-screen in the words of those with lived experience of navigating the industries. It covers the ins-and-outs of authentic storytelling and how depictions of low socio-economic characters can perpetuate negative and overly simplified stereotypes. These, when coupled with perceived societal stigmas towards such issues as poverty, can negatively impact career progression. Above all, it's a guide with the testimonies of more than 20 leading creatives across sectors and craft disciplines, who share their experiences and underscore that there is likely to be a much wider pool of extraordinary creatives whose talent is untapped in the current climate.

### What it isn't

*Invisible Barriers* is not, and does not try to be, a solution to all of the issues surrounding socio-economic diversity in the screen industries. It does not claim to cover every genre, every department or every sector. It aims to start a conversation and provoke discussion; to aid better understanding and to propose a direction of travel for the industry and for BAFTA — but it is not the final destination. We invite you to join us on the journey.

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# ABOUT *INVISIBLE BARRIERS*

### Who Is It for?

*Invisible Barriers* was created primarily to assist hirers and other creative leaders – from talent managers, broadcast commissioners and independent producers to film studio and games developers – to become more class aware and inclusive in their practices. More broadly it is for anyone who wishes to better understand barriers that impact those from low socio-economic backgrounds.

### How to use it

*Invisible Barriers* provides a series of bespoke filmed testimonials with practitioners who have faced career challenges as a result of their background yet have gone on to reach a high degree of success in their careers. These leading creatives and practitioners provide a wide range of authentic insight, expert guidance and lived experiences, in the hope that future generations don't experience the same barriers they did.
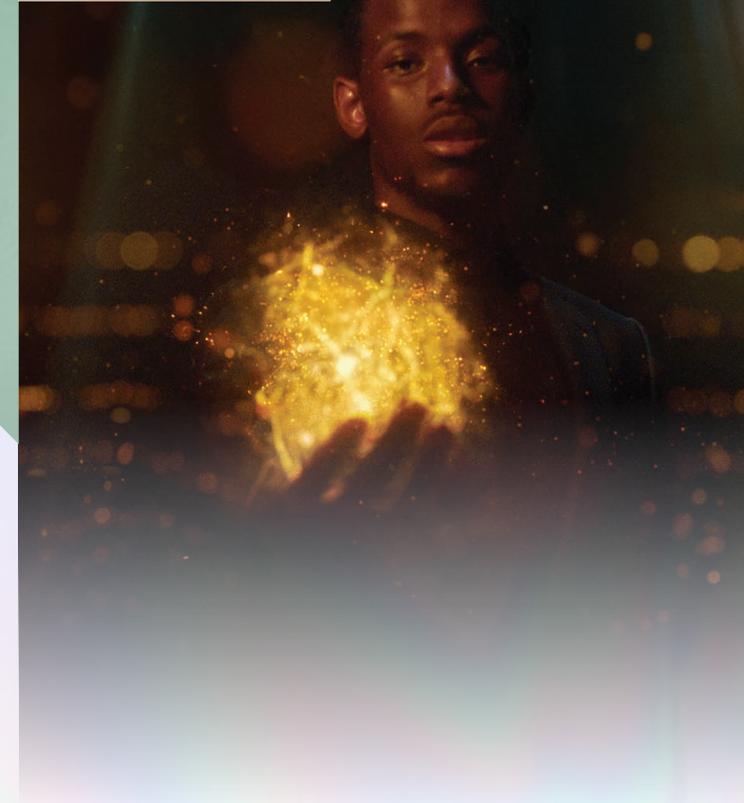
*Invisible Barriers* also includes links to various external organisations and resources that provide further advice and information *(see 'Additional Resources').*

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# ABOUT *INVISIBLE BARRIERS*

**When to use it**

*Invisible Barriers* should be used by film, games and television employers before the creative and hiring process begins. We hope it will encourage greater and more sustainable employment of practitioners from low socio-economic backgrounds, and prompt a greater range of authentic representations of characters on screen.

**What next?**

This resource is first published at the end of 2023. In the coming months, BAFTA's learning programme will explore the themes in this resource through events, networking and discussions with both broad audiences and some of the key target groups identified throughout the resource. In early 2025 we will revise and update this resource with what we have
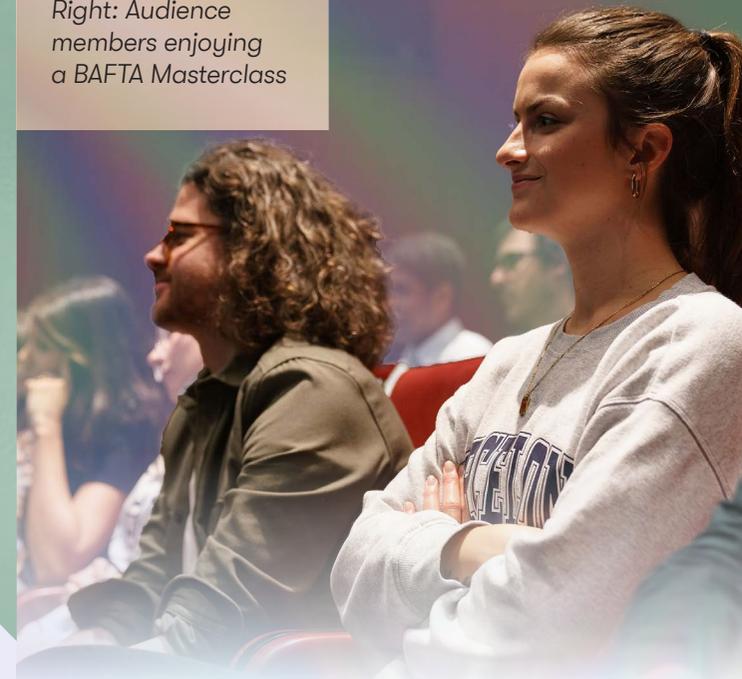
learned – which may or may not be the final version. Sign up to our newsletter, follow us on our social channels, join us for the discussion and help us to keep pushing these issues up the agenda and in the forefront of our minds.

*For more on the study's background and methodology, see 'BAFTA's Research Study'.*

# BAFTA

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
## OF RECOMMENDATIONS

**The participants in BAFTA's study would like to see the following support & interventions introduced:**

## REPRESENTATION:

**Authentic Storytelling:**
- Empower writers, directors, and key creatives from low socio-economic backgrounds to shape the representation of their communities

**Tackling Stereotypes:**
- Depict a balanced portrayal of low socio-economic experiences by encouraging authentic storytelling that encompasses joyful, hopeful, and comedic aspects

**Inclusive Casting:**
- Prioritise actors from regions that align with the story's setting and invite applications from those with lived experience
- Conduct open auditions and cast unknown talent alongside established actors to bring fresh perspectives
- Support those from low socio-economic backgrounds in the casting process - e.g. by using self-taping for casting

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
## OF RECOMMENDATIONS

**Continued...**

**Leadership Team:**

- Increase diversity in commissioning decisions and leadership positions to drive a more inclusive culture.
- Advocate for transparency and diversity in commissioning processes, provide pitching opportunities for emerging and underrepresented creators, and encourage experimentation with different models that bring more voices into the greenlighting process

## CAREER PATHS:

**Informal Recruitment - Develop formal recruitment practices that provide opportunities for individuals with non-traditional career paths.**

- Use skills-based job descriptions and avoid vague language in job postings.
- Provide training for hirers on inclusive recruitment practices.
- Promote job opportunities through diverse industry networks

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
## OF RECOMMENDATIONS

**Continued...**

**Access and Opportunity:**
- Offer apprenticeships or paid internships for aspiring professionals
- Support and promote scholarships or bursaries for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds
- Contribute to careers events in schools, youth groups, and community organisations which bring industry voices into education settings

**Training and Longevity:**
- Provide clear career progression plans for trainees
- Develop on-the-job training programmess or rotational assignments
- Encourage employees to complete training during working hours
- Offer feedback on strengths and areas for development at the end of contracts
- Use preparation time to find new talent and diversify networks for crewing up

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
## OF RECOMMENDATIONS

**Continued...**

## FINANCIAL INEQUALITY:

**Salary Transparency:**
- Include salary ranges in job advertisements to help applicants assess financial suitability and prevent talented individuals from leaving the industry due to inability to plan accordingly

**Support for Emerging Talent:**
- Make provisions for individuals facing financial barriers - including funding opportunities to work with experienced professionals or providing practical solutions such as covering accommodation and living expenses

**Consider Production Schedules and Payment Timelines:**
- Ensure that freelancers are paid promptly for all the hours they are eligble
- Establish agreements for extended working hours and overtime compensation in contracts, as outlined in the BECTU/PACT Agreement

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
## OF RECOMMENDATIONS

**Continued...**

**Cover Travel Expenses:**
- Reimburse travel costs for interviews, auditions, or when individuals are required to work during non-contracted hours

**Responding to Delays:**
- If delays occur in a project, acknowledge that this may affect workers' finances and sensitively invite them to speak up. Approach the matter with understanding, empathy, and a focus on finding solutions

**Mental Health Impact:**
- Provide access to mental health resources and counselling services. Promote a culture that prioritises mental well-being and reduces stigma around seeking help
- Engage Well Being Facilitators where possible to support the mental health of employees

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
## OF RECOMMENDATIONS

**Continued...**

## CODE SWITCHING:

**Workplace culture:**

- Embed proper on-boarding processes for new staff, providing necessary information and encouraging questions
- Conduct regular check-ins with new team members to gather feedback and support their career goals
- Establish clear policies and procedures for addressing bullying and harassment, holding leaders accountable
- Provide leadership development programmes and training that highlight inclusivity and diversity
- Recognise and celebrate achievements fairly and equally, appreciating the unique perspectives and experiences of each individual

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
## OF RECOMMENDATIONS

**Continued...**

**Imposter Syndrome:**
- Actively work to alleviate imposter syndrome, ensuring the culture adapts to embrace diversity and not expecting marginalised groups to conform
- Encourage peer-to-peer learning through buddy systems or mentoring, providing a safe space for questions
- Avoid jargon in on-boarding materials
- Encourage feedback to challenge assumptions and foster a culture of belonging
- Offer resources and workshops on imposter syndrome awareness and coping strategies

## KEY RECOMMENDATION – BAFTA

In our research and for our monitoring of our members and other audiences, we have used the Social Mobility Commission's Toolkit [Link here] for measuring socio-economic background. *See Research Methodology Section below* (page 14).

We recommend that all employers use this Toolkit for monitoring employees and that Question 1 be used to set targets and provide cross industry benchmarks.

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# THE RESOURCE

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# REPRESENTATION

**On and off-screen representation is a major indicator of authentic storytelling. This section features information and videos on:**

challenging and changing harmful stereotypes and clichéd portrayals

the impact of negative portrayals through misconceived, unimaginative and dangerous stereotypes and tropes

how to achieve real, relatable and authentic storytelling through specific storytelling techniques and approaches

how inclusive casting can ensure people from low socio-economic backgrounds can shape how their communities are portrayed

# INTRODUCTION

Ask anyone from a marginalised group and most people will be able to tell you the first time they saw 'someone like me' on screen. Britain Think's recent report for the BFI [Link here] found that audiences value 'providing new perspectives' as one of the key ways the screen arts contribute to the cultural life of the UK. So representation matters, and authentic representation matters more.

As well as the value for audiences, in an industry where opportunities are limited for those from low socio-economic backgrounds, if the few opportunities to represent your community are offered to those who are not from that community, this further limits your chances to develop a successful career. If the key decision makers who greenlight projects are also not from low socio-economic backgrounds, then they may not fully understand the richness and diversity of that experience. This principle applies not only to drama, but also to factual, entertainment, games and the full spectrum of screen content.

# AUTHENTIC STORYTELLING

## Eddie Marsan

BAFTA Cymru-nominated actor Eddie Marsan (*Happy-Go-Lucky, The Thief, His Wife and the Canoe, The Pact*) on how filmmakers often have a middle-class lens and can overlook the intelligence, kindness and sense of community found in working class neighbourhoods

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

BAFTA Elevate Rhys Yates (*The Outlaws, Unforgotten*) on how inauthenticity jumps off the screen and the need for greater diversity at every stage

## Rhys Yates

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

BAFTA EE Rising Star Award-winning actor Jack O'Connell ('*71, Unbroken*) on the value of lived experience when creating authentic characters

## Jack O'Connell

## Nigel Twumasi

Co-Founder and Director at *Mayamada* Nigel Twumasi on the lack of diversity in games storylines, and the value of different perspectives in both decision making process

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

# AUTHENTIC STORYTELLING

### WATCH THE CONVERSATION

Screenwriter Danny Brocklehurst (*Ordinary Lies, Brassic*) on writing authentic stories drawn from his own upbringing in Manchester

**Danny Brocklehurst**

## Charlotte Regan

### WATCH THE CONVERSATION

Screenwriter and director Charlotte Regan (*Scrapper*) on how the films which resonate show different sides of working class communities

## Philip Barantini

### WATCH THE CONVERSATION

BAFTA-nominated screenwriter and director Philip Barantini (*Boiling Point*) on the need to find local actors to play regional parts

## Moo Yu

### WATCH THE CONVERSATION

Co-Founder and Programmer at *Foam Sword* Moo Yu on having job descriptions that invite applications from those with lived experience.

# STEREOTYPES

## Danny Brocklehurst

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

Screenwriter Danny Brocklehurst (*Ordinary Lies, Brassic*) on wanting to depict the joy and laughter of working-class characters and not only negative traits

## Eddie Marsan

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

BAFTA Cymru-nominated actor Eddie Marsan (*Happy-Go-Lucky, The Thief, His Wife and the Canoe, The Pact*) on not being defined by being a working-class actor, striving to challenge what that means

## Kellie Shirley

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

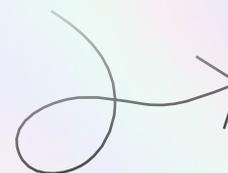BAFTA Elevate actor Kellie Shirley (*EastEnders, In the Long Run*) on how she has played 21 prostitutes and rarely a character who has a profession.

## Kahleen Crawford

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

Kahleen Crawford (*I, Daniel Blake, The Lost Daughter*) on how casting directors might rely on their own experience of the kinds of people who might work in particular professions and should seek to subvert those stereotypes.

# INCLUSIVE CASTING

**WATCH THE CONVERSATION**

BAFTA Elevate actor Kellie Shirley (*EastEnders, In the Long Run*) on how inclusive casting needs to be more than just tokenism

**Aisha Bywaters**

BAFTA-winning casting director Aisha Bywaters (*The Last Tree, We Are All Lady Parts*) on the need to offer additional support for those from non-traditional backgrounds

**WATCH THE CONVERSATION**

**WATCH THE CONVERSATION**

BAFTA-winning screenwriter and director Shane Meadows (*Dead Man's Shoes, This is England*) on how to create a casting process which brings the best out of actors

**Kellie Shirley**

**Shane Meadows**

![BAFTA]

# INCLUSIVE CASTING

## Lauren Evans

BAFTA-nominated casting director Lauren Evans (*The Girlfriend Experience, Sex Education*) on how narrow casting briefs can limit options

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

BAFTA-nominated screenwriter and director Philip Barantini (*Boiling Point*) on character briefs that are often too specific and how he wanted to change that with *Boiling Point*

## Philip Barantini

## Kahleen Crawford

Casting director Kahleen Crawford (*I, Daniel Blake, The Lost Daughter*) on prioritising actors from a specific region when casting rather than casting those with a high profile

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

# LEADERSHIP TEAM

### Kellie Shirley

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

BAFTA Elevate actor Kellie Shirley (*EastEnders, In the Long Run*) on how a diverse writing room with writers from all heritages and backgrounds helps make a show authentic

### Victoria Musguin-Rowe

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

Executive producer and development executive Victoria Musguin-Rowe (*Love & Hate Crime, Stephen: The Murder That Changed A Nation and Strike: Inside the Unions*) on understanding different pressures and the need for extra care to look after people, so they don't burn out and talent is retained

### Perrie Balthazar

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

Screenwriter and executive producer Perrie Balthazar (*Bad Sisters, Coronation Street, Phoenix Rise*) on how a diverse leadership team might be more aware of the needs of others from similar backgrounds - e.g. providing a counsellor for younger cast and crew

### Philip Barantini

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

BAFTA-nominated screenwriter and director Philip Barantini (Boiling Point) on ensuring heads of departments are recruiting 'far and wide' and not just relying on their usual team

# SUMMARY

The importance of authentic representation in telling working-class stories cannot be understated. On screen representations of working-class characters and contributors often focus on negative tropes with dominant themes being suffering rather than joy. The answer however, is not to try and police how any group is represented. Instead, those we consulted wanted to see more people with lived experience being involved in how these communities are represented: in how the stories are devised, how the characters are portrayed and in the initial commissioning process.

*The participants in BAFTA's study would like to see the following support/interventions introduced:*

**Authentic Storytelling – giving more writers, directors, and other key creatives from low socio-economic backgrounds agency in shaping how their communities are represented, by:**

- advocating for the active inclusion of writers with first-hand experience in the subject matter
- establishing mentorship programmes or writers' rooms that bring in diverse voices and backgrounds
- Devising stories in collaboration with the communities in which they take place

![BAFTA logo]

**Tackling stereotypes by depicting the full spectrum of low socio-economic lives, by:**

- encouraging a more balanced portrayal of low socio-economic experiences, including joyful, hopeful and comedic aspects, through authentic life experiences
- funding and producing projects that focus on the multifaceted nature of low socio-economic communities

**Inclusive Casting – hiring those with lived experience, by:**

- encouraging casting directors and producers to prioritise actors from regions that align with the story's setting, including inviting applications from those with lived experience in casting calls
- encouraging open auditions and casting unknown talents alongside established actors to discover fresh perspectives
- supporting those from low socio-economic backgrounds into the casting process – e.g. by using online casting

**Leadership Team – bringing more voices into commissioning decisions and leadership positions, who are then able to drive a more inclusive culture for others, by:**

- advocating for transparency and diversity in commissioning processes
- providing opportunities for emerging and underrepresented creators to pitch their ideas – not only in terms of drama but also in editorial meetings for factual and entertainment
- encouraging broadcasters, streaming platforms, production companies, games studios and developers to experiment with different models which bring more voices into the greenlighting process

*We would appreciate if you could answer a couple of feedback questions to help us learn and improve future resources. Please click here.*

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## CAREER PATHS

**Beginning, navigating and sustaining a career can be precarious for those from low socio-economic backgrounds. This section features information and videos on:**

how equitable recruitment practices can be achieved

how widespread and fair access to opportunities can be achieved

how career longevity can be sustained

# INTRODUCTION

Training is expensive – but even when you have the requisite skills, there are still significant financial barriers to finding work. As the experience of running the Prince William BAFTA Bursaries has shown us, each year there are hundreds of new entrants who are work ready but who have had to turn

**Tacita Small**

down employment opportunities because they don't have the right equipment, a driving licence or because they can't afford to relocate. Training is also a lifelong commitment, which again, can be expensive and hard to access. In a fast paced, often freelance industry, feedback on your work is rare – further limiting opportunities for personal and professional development.

Without connections in the industry, accessing the knowledge of how best to develop your career is very hard to come by [BFI Skills Review]. Moreover, the industry reliance on informal recruitment practices such as word of mouth,

personal recommendations and closed networks [PEC, Improving Young People's Access and Career Progression in work in Film, TV and Games] further limits opportunities. As HR specialist Tacita Small, founder and MD of The Small HR Company, told us:

"Informal recruitment is the greatest hiding place for lack of diversity, especially for those from low socio-economic backgrounds to access available jobs. When you don't have a big network, or what can be perceived as the *right* network, you don't have opportunities to access what you are qualified to do."

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# INTRODUCTION

*Continued...*

Tacita Small founder and MD of The Small HR Company states that training for the talent manager or person in charge of recruitment is key to facilitating change.

Using formal interview processes is a must, to provide a transparent paper trail of why someone was selected over another. Small notes: **"You need to ask what differences people are bringing to this workspace, to this culture. Otherwise, you're just hiring identikit people and making no movement towards greater representation."**

Small's final piece of advice: **"Companies should not be afraid to say out loud what they are missing and who they want to add to their organisation. Be transparent. Say why you're looking for what you're looking for. And look to add to your work culture, rather than getting people in who fit exactly as before. This will create a community of difference and that difference is representation for everybody. Different stories, different voices, different ways of doing things."** Small notes: **"You need to ask what differences people are**

**bringing to this workspace, to this culture. Otherwise, you're just hiring identikit people and making no movement towards greater representation."**

# ACCESS & OPPORTUNITY

**WATCH THE CONVERSATION**

Co-founder and programmer at *Foam Sword* Moo Yu on how diversity initiatives in games can overlook white males from low socio-economic backgrounds

**Moo Yu**

**Rhys Yates**

BAFTA Elevate actor Rhys Yates (*The Outlaws, Unforgotten*) on how a funded place on a course afforded him the opportunity to learn more about his craft

**WATCH THE CONVERSATION**

**Charlotte Regan**

BAFTA-nominated screenwriter and director Charlotte Regan (*Scrapper*) on how a lot of young people are unaware of existing schemes and the need to reach talent at a grassroots level

**WATCH THE CONVERSATION**

**WATCH THE CONVERSATION**

Screenwriter and executive producer Perrie Balthazar (*Bad Sisters, Coronation Street, Phoenix Rise*) on the value of mentors and the difficulty of speaking up in rooms when you don't recognise anyone else like you

**Perrie Balthazar**

![BAFTA logo]

# ACCESS & OPPORTUNITY

### Danny Brocklehurst

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

Screenwriter Danny Brocklehurst (*Ordinary Lies, Brassic*) on trying to find new authentic actors and how they are currently not coming through, due to lack of funding and other barriers to entry

### Eddie Marsan

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

BAFTA Cymru-nominated actor Eddie Marsan (*Happy-Go-Lucky, The Thief, His Wife and the Canoe, The Pact*) on his idea to use tax breaks to create opportunities for young people trying to get into the industry with funding

### Jack O'Connell

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

BAFTA EE Rising Star Award-winning actor Jack O'Connell (*'71, Unbroken*) on the avenues available to him when he was young no longer exist and how funds could be redistributed to support more grass roots talent

![BAFTA]

# TRAINING & LONGEVITY

## Philip Barantini

▶ **WATCH THE CONVERSATION**

BAFTA-nominated screenwriter and director Philip Barantini (*Boiling Point*) on using prep time to find new talent

## Aisha Bywaters

▶ **WATCH THE CONVERSATION**

BAFTA-winning casting director Aisha Bywaters (*The Last Tree*, *We Are All Lady Parts*) on how there are fewer actors from low socio-economic backgrounds now than ever before, and the concept of 'you have to see it to be it'

## Victoria Musguin-Rowe

▶ **WATCH THE CONVERSATION**

Executive producer & development executive (Love & Hate Crime, Stephen: The Murder That Changed A Nation and Strike: Inside the Unions) on informal networks and how, for the first time, she had others from the same background giving her advice and support to further her career

# SUMMARY

There is a serious lack of opportunity available for creatives from low socio-economic backgrounds, particularly outside of London. In recent years, our contributors feel this has worsened as youth groups and other organisations have dwindled, there is now a huge need for additional funding and support for these groups. There is also a generally perceived unease in hiring new entrants or unfamiliar practitioners, and an over-reliance on informal recruitment practices like personal recommendations and word of mouth. This results in the same people being hired over and over again. The lack of opportunity for creatives from low socio-economic backgrounds, combined with lack of support or training from the industry, has created a perfect storm of issues.

*The participants in BAFTA's study would like to see the following support/interventions introduced:*

**Informal Recruitment – developing more formal recruitment practices which ensure those with less traditional career paths have the opportunity to apply, by:**

- Promoting jobs using skills-based job descriptions and avoiding vague language (e.g. instead of saying 'excellent communication skills', be specific about the skills required such as 'writing press releases, delivering presentations' etc. Screenskills' Job Profiles [Link here] can help you identify the skills needed for industry roles.
- Training for hirers – for example Screenskills' free online recruitment training [Link here]
- Promoting opportunities via industry networks such as the BAFTA Connect Directory [Link here], via the BAFTA Prince William Bursary partners [Link here]. *See Additional Resources for more.*

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**Access and Opportunity – supporting industry involvement in careers guidance and initiatives which promote access to paid opportunities for those from low socio-economic backgrounds by:**

- Offering apprenticeships or paid internships for aspiring professionals
- Support and promote or become a mentor for scholarships or bursaries (such as those offered by BAFTA and Screenskills) for individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds to access training, buy equipment or improve their employability
- Contribute to careers events in schools, youth groups and community organisations – BAFTA Members can volunteer here [Link here] and Discover Creative Careers offer opportunities to volunteer [Link here]

**Training and longevity – promote opportunities for those from low socio-economic backgrounds through on the job training and developing the skills which underpin a sustainable career, by:**

- Providing clear career progression plans for trainees, with steps and milestones needed for advancement
- Developing on-the-job training programmes or rotational assignments to help employees gain diverse skills and experiences
- Where possible, allow and encourage employees to complete training during working hours
- Offer feedback on strengths and areas for development at the end of contracts
- Using prep time to find new talent so when it comes to crewing up, you're not relying on the same networks

*We would appreciate if you could answer a couple of feedback questions to help us learn and improve future resources. Please click here.*

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# FINANCIAL INEQUALITY

**Financial inequality and instability can act as a major barrier for individuals from low socio-economic backgrounds to enter and sustain a career within the screen industries. This section features information and videos on:**

how employers should be aware of financial instability for career starters and how an individual's financial precarity could be alleviated with just a few small measures

making salaries transparent and fair, in accordance with living wages/standards

how the stigma of financial instability can remain throughout an individual's career

# INTRODUCTION

In a recent survey of our members [Link here] BAFTA found that 63% of those surveyed had relied on savings to cope with the industry downturn in 2023 whilst another 12.5% turned to family and friends for support. In a freelance industry characterised by short term contracts, a degree of financial resilience is required, even expected, in order to survive. This adds to work place stress – if you are worrying about paying the bills, how can you contribute to the best of your ability?

An assumed level of financial security creates a set of codes and conventions through which the industry operates, meaning talented people can fall through the cracks and be lost to the industry, taking with them the valuable life experience and perspectives which are essential for a relevant and vibrant screen culture.

# FINANCIAL PRECARITY

## Kellie Shirley

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

BAFTA Elevate actor Kellie Shirley (*EastEnders, In the Long Run*) on how expensive it is to go to auditions as someone from a low socio-economic background, especially as someone with a child, and how she's had to learn to ask for assistance

## Kahleen Crawford

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

Casting director Kahleen Crawford on exciting actors not being able to sustain their careers because of financial problems and because they are not offered lead roles which would give them more financial stability

## Victoria Musguin-Rowe

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

Executive producer & development executive (Love & Hate Crime, Stephen: The Murder That Changed A Nation and Strike: Inside the Unions) on how the lack of a safety net can impact your whole life and the choices you can make

## Moo Yu

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

Co-founder and programmer at *Foam Sword* Moo Yu on games industry jobs being prohibitive for those without parental support, and how the 'grind' needed to find new jobs is nigh impossible for those who need a full time job to pay the bills

## Perrie Balthazar

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

Screenwriter and executive producer Perrie Balthazar (*Bad Sisters, Coronation Street, Phoenix Rise*) on how a lack of financial stability not only limits your ability to access training, it also makes you less likely to speak up and develop your distinctive voice for fear of losing your job
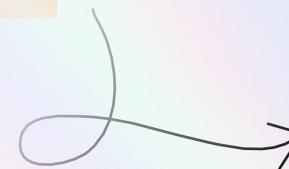
# CODES & CONVENTIONS

## Moo Yu

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

Co-founder and programmer at *Foam Sword* Moo Yu on focusing on task-driven job roles, salary transparency and avoiding vague terminology in job descriptions

## Perrie Balthazar

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

Screenwriter and executive producer Perrie Balthazar (*Bad Sisters, Coronation Street, Phoenix Rise*) on talent falling through the cracks because of financial pressure and lack of understanding of people's different situations

## Victoria Musguin-Rowe

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

Executive producer & development executive (Love & Hate Crime, Stephen: The Murder That Changed A Nation and Strike: Inside the Unions) on being belittled because she couldn't afford to take a long break in between shoot dates, and the need for more understanding and compassion for people's financial pressures

# SUMMARY

Financial insecurity can not only limit your options, making it harder for those from low socio-economic backgrounds to make the choices which will advance their careers, it also carries stigma and contribute to stress and instability. Clarity and transparency around working hours and payment terms empowers individuals to plan better and speak up in times of difficulty.

*The participants in BAFTA's study would like to see the following support/interventions introduced:*

Providing salary transparency, by including salary ranges in job advertisements/descriptions to allow applicants to assess financial suitability and plan accordingly, thus preventing talented individuals from leaving the industry due to financial pressures and promoting inclusivity

Offering support to emerging talent, by employers making provisions for those facing financial barriers, including funding opportunities to work with experienced professionals or providing practical solutions, such as covering accommodation and living expenses

Consider production schedules and payment timelines, ensuring freelancers are paid promptly and in alignment with hours worked. Agreements for extended working hours and overtime compensation should be established in contracts [BECTU/ PACT Agreement]

Cover travel expenses, by reimbursing travel costs for interviews and auditions or when individuals are required to work during non-standard hours, to alleviate financial burdens and promote fairness

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If delays to a project occur, acknowledge that this could affect workers' finances sensitively, inviting them to speak up so you can find solutions. Demonstrate understanding and empathy towards the impact of financial instability in an individual's life, approaching this matter with care and sensitivity in all interactions

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**Check mental health impact, by:**

- providing access to mental health resources and counselling services such as the Film and Television Charity's Whole Picture Toolkit [Link here]
- promoting a culture that prioritises mental wellbeing and reduces stigma around seeking help, for example by engaging Well Being Facilitators where possible

*We would appreciate if you could answer a couple of feedback questions to help us learn and improve future resources. Please click here.*

# BAFTA

# CODE SWITCHING

**BAFTA's research and the contributors to this guide highlighted that often those from low socio-economic backgrounds feel like they have to become a different version of themselves so that they can be accepted, or 'fit', into certain environments. This section features information and videos on:**

how to achieve a workplace that is a welcoming space for all individuals joining a team, crew or production

how unified onboarding practices could build a welcoming workplace

recognising imposter syndrome and what can be done to alleviate it in the workplace

**BAFTA**

# INTRODUCTION

If a workplace culture is built on an assumption of financial stability and if only a limited section of society can survive and thrive within it, it risks becoming a monoculture. Shared experiences and shared references, can lead to a dominant culture that is bewildering, or worse, intimidating to an outsider, leaving them on the back foot, trying to keep up.

"'Toxic' is probably an overused word," explains HR specialist Tacita Small, founder and MD of the Small HR Company, "but if the desire is to create a positive workplace it's important to look at what's preventing that. First, you need to recognise that the workforce is made up of various people and that one form of communication or one working style cannot fit all. If a company wants to have the kind of reputation where people want to work with you or come back to work with you, then ensuring that everyone feels welcome should be top of mind."

She continues: "Everybody wants to come to work so they can do their job, perfect their craft, learn, develop, get paid on time and so on. They don't want to overtly worry about whether they behaved in the right way or what they said may not have come across as it was meant. When hiring people from various backgrounds, you need to understand what's going to make them feel comfortable. It's like inviting someone over to your house – you want them to feel welcome."

### Make onboarding a positive experience

Good onboarding helps with setting the tone. If this isn't done well, new employees feel as though they are not welcome or wanted, which can then carry through the entire project. "It's so important to take a little bit of time to sit down with a new employee and show them how things are done, walk them around," Small explains. "Do more than just give them something to read. That's too linear an approach when people have different needs."

**BAFTA**

*Continued…*

Small also suggests that giving them someone to shadow, to mentor, to buddy, to ask questions of will also help them settle in. She says: "Ask yourself, what is the culture in your workplace and why is that so? Is it set by the mood of the most senior person in that day? Workplaces can be intimidating, but if you feel you're joining somewhere that's showing you how to succeed, by pairing you with someone who has already done it, you're setting the right tone from the start."

**Creating a welcoming workplace**
Small says traditionally embedded codes and conventions, including language and terminology, should be amended to be both inclusive and fit for purpose.

"To create a level playing field for all, we must take away unnecessary jargon, the outmoded conventions that make it sound like you know what you're talking about more than others. Transparency through clarity. Why call a production handbook a bible? It's lazy. It's a handbook. Help people understand what it's like to work there, while creating an environment that encourages feedback, questioning and conversation."

She adds that no one should fear asking a question if they don't understand a situation or terminology: "There should be no such thing as a silly question.

Because codes and conventions are often embedded, this creates a hostile environment that feeds into imposter syndrome. If people think they don't understand what's going on around them or are made to feel that way because the group around them look a certain way or speak a certain way, they start questioning whether they should be there."

"It's a challenge, but it's also a reality," Small concludes. "[Imposter syndrome] is a loud voice and can't easily be suppressed. And others can make it louder… You question whether you belong, even though you do. That's the bit I like to focus on — even though you do."

![BAFTA]

# IMPOSTER SYNDROME

## Danny Brocklehurst

▶ **WATCH THE CONVERSATION**

Screenwriter Danny Brocklehurst (*Ordinary Lies, Brassic*) on how imposter syndrome can stay with you for a long time

## Kellie Shirley

▶ **WATCH THE CONVERSATION**

BAFTA Elevate actor Kellie Shirley (*EastEnders, In the Long Run*) on imposter syndrome never leaving you, and feeling like she has to hustle all the time

## Perrie Balthazar

▶ **WATCH THE CONVERSATION**

Screenwriter and executive producer Perrie Balthazar (*Bad Sisters, Coronation Street, Phoenix Rise*) on how imposter syndrome can be reinforced by the attitudes you're confronted with – e.g. people who think you're the 'diversity hire'

## Philip Barantini

▶ **WATCH THE CONVERSATION**

BAFTA-nominated screenwriter and director Philip Barantini (*Boiling Point*) on never thinking he'd have the opportunity to direct because he'd never seen other directors from his background

![BAFTA]

# IMPOSTER SYNDROME

## Rhys Yates

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

BAFTA Elevate actor Rhys Yates (*The Outlaws, Unforgotten*) on feeling like a fish out of water in drama school because there weren't many other people there from his background

## Shane Meadows

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

BAFTA-winning screenwriter and director Shane Meadows (*Dead Man's Shoes, This is England*) on how he was lucky to meet people who helped him challenge his own feelings of imposter syndrome

## Victoria Musguin-Rowe

▶ WATCH THE CONVERSATION

Executive producer & development executive (*Love & Hate Crime, Stephen: The Murder That Changed A Nation* and *Strike: Inside the Unions*) on how people from low socio-economic backgrounds can undervalue themselves

# SUMMARY

The results of BAFTA's study indicate that the issue of imposter syndrome and the challenges faced by individuals from low socio-economic backgrounds in the screen industries is still widespread. Respondents' feelings of 'not belonging' in the creative sector were often attributed to sentiments surrounding their upbringing, early life experiences and coming from a marginalised background. Those in positions of authority should acknowledge and empathise with the hurdles encountered. Strong support networks, transparent salary negotiations and improved access to mental health resources could help tackle the persistence of imposter syndrome caused by socio-economic disparity.

*The participants in BAFTA's study would like to see the following support/interventions introduced:*

**Create a welcoming workplace culture and promote belonging, by:**

- Embedding proper on-boarding processes for new staff, ensuring they have the information they need and can ask questions
- Regular check-ins, particularly with new team members, to gather their feedback, encourage self-reflection and explore opportunities to work towards career goals
- Establishing clear policies and procedures for tackling bullying and harassment and holding leaders accountable for not fostering an inclusive workplace and addressing issues promptly
- Providing leadership development programmes and training that emphasise inclusivity and diversity – for example Screenskils' online Unconscious Bias training [Link here]
- Acknowledging achievement fairly and equally and celebrating the unique perspectives and experiences that each individual brings to the table
- establishing employee resource groups (ERGs) for networking and support

*Continued...*

**Imposter Syndrome – actively work to alleviate imposter syndrome, remembering that it is not the responsibility of those from low socio-economic backgrounds and other marginalised groups to adapt to the dominant culture, the culture should adapt and strive to become welcoming of all difference**

- Encouraging peer-to-peer learning, for example through a buddy system or mentoring, connecting individuals from similar backgrounds and providing a safe space to ask questions
- Avoid jargon including Screenskills' Learning Glossary [Link here] in on-boarding materials
- Invite feedback to actively work to tackle assumptions and promote a culture of belonging
- providing resources and workshops on imposter syndrome awareness and coping strategies - e.g. resource: ScreenSkills Training Programme on Imposter Syndrome

*We would appreciate if you could answer a couple of feedback questions to help us learn and improve future resources. Please click here.*

# BAFTA

# BAFTA'S RESEARCH STUDY

## Background

BAFTA conducted an in-depth research study with our members and contacts to examine the significant barriers to progression faced by practitioners in the screen industries who came from a low socio-economic background.

In total, 194 practitioners participated in the study, with 33 face-to-face interviews. By virtue of talking to BAFTA members, we heard from individuals who have achieved a degree of career success, including several who have reached a senior executive/decision-maker level. They were vocal in their desire to tackle the issue of socio-economic inequality, and those now in a position to do so were already proactively working for change.

## Methodology

BAFTA asked all participants 12 questions, a mixture of quantitative assessment (measures recommended by The Social Mobility Commission) and qualitative questions, which allowed participants to elaborate on personal lived experiences. This included asking about how their background had affected their career; if and when they had benefitted from any targeted support/interventions; and what support or interventions would they like to see happen in the future.

![BAFTA logo]

# BAFTA'S
# RESEARCH STUDY

**Identifying Socio-Economic Background**

We followed the Social Mobility Commission's (SMC) published guidance for employers on how to measure the socio-economic background of their workforce.

We asked participants three key questions:

1.  What was the occupation of the main household earner when you were aged about 14?
2.  What type of school did you attend for most time between ages 11-16?
3.  If you finished school after 1980, were you eligible for free school meals at any point during your school years?

**We suggest that all employers use all questions in their monitoring but that Question 1 is used by all employers as the key metric for industry benchmarks, as recommended by the SMC.**

*Above: Guest at BAFTA Guru Live 2022*

# BAFTA

# WHAT IS BAFTA DOING?

**FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE:**

Regular programme of in-school visits, in partnership with Place2Be and Into Film, focussing on economically deprived areas

Support for Careers Advisors in school, helping them access industry experts

**FOR NEW ENTRANTS:**

BAFTA Prince William Bursaries and Scholarships

Hardship grants available to individuals taking part in initiatives

Financial literacy, well-being and Imposter Syndrome training

**FOR NEW TALENT:**

Connect Membership, offering the benefits of membership, including networking and skills development, for a subsidised fee to emerging talent

Pioneering the use of Access Coordinators and Well-being Facilitators to support individuals on our initiatives

Financial literacy, well-being and Imposter Syndrome training offered to New Talent cohorts

**INDUSTRY:**

Support with Membership fees

Collecting baseline data and committing to report on socio-economic background of BAFTA Members, setting targets in 2025

**STAFF:**

Paid internship and mentoring scheme targeted at people from low socio-economic backgrounds

Measuring and setting targets for staff from 2025

Salary transparency in recruitment and regular benchmarking

Updated recruitment and on-boarding practices and increased training

Relocation loans

Living Wage employer

Introduced Employee Resource

Groups and regular feedback to improve workplace culture

# BAFTA

# ABOUT US

BAFTA is a world-leading independent arts charity that brings the very best work in film, games and television to public attention and supports the growth of creative talent in the UK and internationally. Through its Awards ceremonies and year-round programme of learning events and initiatives – which includes workshops, masterclasses, scholarships, lectures and mentoring schemes in the UK, USA and Asia – BAFTA identifies and celebrates excellence, discovers, inspires and nurtures new talent, and enables learning and creative collaboration.

For more, visit www.bafta.org.

*BAFTA is a registered charity (no. 216726).*

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# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**A New Direction**    LINK    A New Direction is a not-for-profit organisation generating opportunities for children and young people to develop their creativity.

**ACCESS:VFX**    LINK    ACCESS:VFX is a global, industry-led, non-profit organisation comprised of 40 leading companies, industry bodies and educational establishments in the VFX, animation and games industries. It focuses on actively pursuing and encouraging inclusion, diversity, awareness and opportunity around the common goal of addressing the lack of diversity in the VFX industry.

**Arts Emergency**    LINK    Arts Emergency is an award-winning mentoring charity and support network for young people from underrepresented backgrounds. Members share opportunities, contacts and advice so that young people can flourish in higher education and the cultural industries.

**Bauer Academy**    LINK    Bauer Academy is Bauer Media's in-house training provider, offering work-based learning solutions and apprenticeships to more than 60 external clients, as well as to Bauer's people across 14 countries. Originally established as a pipeline for new talent, it is now a government-registered learning and development centre of excellence with a team of passionate industry experts. It designs and delivers courses, workshops and apprenticeships in the areas of leadership, journalism, content creation and media production.

# BAFTA

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **BFI Film Academy** | LINK | BFI FILM ACADEMY offers opportunities for young creatives aged between 16-25. |
| **Creative Access** | LINK | Creative Access enables people from communities underrepresented in the creative industries to access careers, progress and reach leadership. |
| **Creative Diversity Network** | LINK | Creative Diversity Network exists to enable the UK broadcasting industry to increase diversity and inspire inclusion. It works with its members towards a broadcasting industry with equality at its core. |
| **Creative Future** | LINK | Creative Future specialises in supporting creative people, underrepresented artists and communities facing barriers and inequality to opportunity. |
| **Creative Mentor Network** | LINK | Creative Mentor Network is a charity supporting young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds into careers in the creative industries through mentoring. |

# BAFTA

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**DANC - TripleC**     LINK     The Disabled Artists Networking Community (DANC) is a community of just under a thousand people, the great majority of whom are disabled artists working in TV and the arts. DANC works with and brings together professional disabled artists and key decision/change-makers in the industry to take a solution-focused approach. Its members cover the full spectrum from early career to fully established artists.

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**Dial F For Freelancer**     LINK     Dial F for Freelancer is a platform for film exhibition and film distribution freelancers, with resources, advice and a directory of UK film freelancers.

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**Discover Creative Careers**     LINK     Discover Creative Careers exists to inform and inspire young people about careers in the creative industries. It aims to showcase creative careers unknown to many and to explain what skills and qualifications they need to succeed in those careers when they leave school.

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**FilmFixer**     LINK     As the UK's leading film service, FilmFixer handles approximately 8,000 film shoots a year and works with every major production filming in London and South East England. We help local authorities and landowners to generate revenue from location filming, and make film permitting simple.

# BAFTA

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**FILM Cymru Wales**  LINK  Film Cymru Wales is the development agency for Welsh film. We are dedicated to advancing and sustaining a strong film industry for Wales.

**FILM & TV Charity**  LINK  The Film & TV Charity offers a 24/7 Support Line, as well as access to financial advice and support, and help with everything from mental wellbeing, discrimination and harassment, to a whole host of practical tools and resources.

**Fully Focussed**  LINK  Fully Focused is the UK's leading, youth-driven production company. We are proud founders of Million Youth Media and the MYM Academy, supporting the next generation of filmmakers and underrepresented talent.

**GMAC Film**  LINK  MAC Film is an open access media centre. We deliver a creative and artistic programme for all people, regardless of age, background or income so they can acquire the skills, knowledge, resources and confidence to realise their ambitions in film and elsewhere in the creative sector.

**Independent Film Trust**  LINK  The Independent Film Trust works to increase diversity and inclusion in UK film, TV and immersive media by amplifying untold stories and championing underrepresented filmmakers.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**Industry Minds**   LINK   Industry Minds is an award-winning and industry-leading mental health charity for the creative arts. It offers low-cost and free counselling to those in the arts, counselling and support service to production companies across stage/screen, mental health seminars and training days for organisations in the arts.

**Joseph Rowntree Foundation**   LINK   Joseph Rowntree Foundation is an independent social change organisation working to solve UK poverty.

**Just Add Milk**   LINK   A charity to make the industry more accessible for actors.

**Just Runners**   LINK   Just Runners supplies runners for film shoots, with a diverse pool of runners who do not otherwise know anyone in the industry. It believes gender, race, class, religion and disability do not hinder talent, lack of opportunity does.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**Limit Break**      LINK      Pioneering new forms of utility while inspiring innovators to be bold with new technological developments that will power in-game economies and interoperability.

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**London Screen Academy**      LINK      LSA is a free sixth form academy for students who want to learn all the skills required for a career within the film + television industries.

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**MAMA Youth Project**      LINK      MAMA Youth Project recruits, trains and nurtures young people between 18 and 25 from underrepresented groups or with limited educational or employment opportunities. Through training projects, it equips people with the skills and experience necessary to secure long-term and fulfilling employment in the TV and media industry.

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**Media Trust**      LINK      Media Trust, as a charity, works in partnership with the media and creative industries to give marginalised groups and young people a stronger voice. It encourages the media and creative industries to share their time, knowledge and creativity to benefit charities, underrepresented communities and young people. Working together, it amplifies charities' voices by developing their communication and digital skills to help them connect better with their audiences. It also creates and runs unique programmes to encourage young, diverse talent to develop their confidence, passions and talents for the workplace.

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Raise the Game** | LINK | A pledge for games industry employers from UKIE. |
| **Raising Films** | LINK | Raising Films' mission is to support, promote and campaign for parents and carers in the UK screen sector. |
| **RECLAIM Project** | LINK | RECLAIM is a youth leadership and social change organisation. It is a small but bold charity, using its experience and platform to support and amplify the voices of working-class young people. |
| **Representative Media** | LINK | Representative Media is a database with a selection of free, practical tools to help better represent the underrepresented at every phase of the editorial and advertising processes, across both traditional media and social media. |
| **Sara Putt Associates** | LINK | Independent UK agency representing behind the camera technical and production talent, from Producers and Directors through Heads of Department and Crew. |
| **Screen Alliance Wales** | LINK | SAW is the gateway between the industry and its workforce. It grows and promotes the talent, crew and services of the film and TV industry in Wales. |

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**BAFTA**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Screen Industries Growth Network** | LINK | A toolkit for inclusive recruitment, staff retention and progression. |
| **ScreenSkills** | LINK | ScreenSkills is the industry-led skills body for the screen industries – film, television (including children's, unscripted and high-end), VFX (visual effects), animation and games. |
| **Short Circuit** | LINK | Short Circuit is a film talent initiative for Scotland. They nurture the creative and professional development of filmmakers and creatives working in the Scottish screen sector. |
| **Sutton Trust** | LINK | The Sutton Trust champions social mobility in Britain through programmes, research and policy influence, so that every young person – no matter who their parents are, what school they go to, or where they live – has the chance to succeed in life. |
| **The Small HR Company** | LINK | From television and film to fashion and architecture, The Small HR Company has worked with some of the world's leading creative companies. Its knowledge extends across multiple industries, which means it can adapt its services and deliver a bespoke solution for your business and field. |

# ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

**UK Producers' Roundtable**     LINK    The UK Producers' Roundtable is a collective of more than 100 film producers campaigning for better access and sustainability for independent filmmakers in the UK.

**Under The Moon**   LINK    Under The Moon helps a wide range of creative people and organisations to grow and change. It specialises in creative industries development outside London and champions equal access to creative jobs across the industry.

**#WeShallNotBe Removed**   LINK    #WeShallNotBeRemoved is an intersectional UK Disability Arts Alliance formed as an emergency response to the pandemic. #WeShallNotBeRemoved is a forum to advocate, to campaign and support D/deaf, neurodivergent and disabled creative practitioners and organisations through and after Covid-19.

**Wonder Women TV**   LINK    Wonder Women TV is the central hub for the inspirational women's network for diverse women who work in television and the creative industries.