Building a Creative Nation: Evidence Review
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Rather than simply keep our targets internal, we launched Building a Creative Nation: A Call to Arms to try to galvanise the creative industries into action. We aim to create 6,500 new jobs in the creative industries in 1,000 days. Furthermore, we are campaigning and encouraging businesses in the creative sector to go even further to bring the total to 50,000 new jobs in the same period.

The overall picture of the creative industries is one of apparent robustness. The government has recently claimed that these industries are worth some £8 million an hour to the economy. However it is clear that not enough is being done to channel the benefits of this industry to the next generation and to channel the talents of young people into creating stronger creative businesses.

As this evidence review sets out, there are clear obstacles facing young people from all walks of life from participating in these industries. The relative preference of creative businesses to recruit unpaid workers, from a very small network of in-the-know applicants is stifling the ability of businesses to diversify and grow. This may be a reason why creative businesses remain as micro, rather than major players on the economic landscape.

What is equally clear is that government intervention isn’t working as well as it should. The Youth Contract wage incentive scheme has reached only 9% of its total target for job creation. In a similar period, our Creative Employment Programme has placed over 1000 unemployed people in work. We’ve proved that the demand is there from creative businesses, but we also know that they won’t speak the language of central government to access support, funding or opportunities. It is up to both government and the creative sector to work harder on this.

With this in mind, the evidence review presented here sets out a clear case for the creative industries’ capacity and capability to support not just jobs, but the kind of work that is fair, accessible and rewarding for all young people. This sector is one of the highest growing economically over the last few years. It is time that the structures are put in place to let the next generation experience that success and harness the creative industries to the UK’s economic growth.

Pauline Tambling
Joint CEO, Creative & Cultural Skills
The creative industries can help stem the rise of youth unemployment by recruiting 50,000 young people in 1000 days.

Introduction

This builds on the initial investment from Arts Council England and Creative & Cultural Skills, who have pledged to help create 6,500 jobs in the arts by the end of 2016.

This call for action, and subsequent work by Creative & Cultural Skills and its associated partners, is rooted in an evidence base which overwhelmingly underlines the severe challenges the UK economy (and Europe) faces with regards to youth unemployment, and the enormous potential of the creative industries in being able to face up to some of these challenges.

This literature review is not intended as an exhaustive base of documentation on issues of youth unemployment, social mobility and the potential of the creative industries, but instead gives an underlying rationale for the intervention that Creative & Cultural Skills (and partners) are attempting to make on the UK economy. The paper sets out the current context of youth unemployment and the social mobility crisis currently faced by the UK, before looking at the potential of the creative industries in helping to alleviate some of these issues, along with an examination of some policy areas which might better serve job creation in this area.

Note: Throughout this document ‘young people’ is used to refer to individuals aged 16-24.
Youth unemployment in the UK

“Arguably the biggest long-term challenge posed by the post-recession labour market is the significant growth in youth unemployment” – The CBI, 2011.

A discussion on the need for action in this area must focus first on the immediate crisis to hand, namely the number of young people aged 16-24 who find themselves outside of education, employment or training. In the period June-August 2013, some 95,800,000 people (21% of young people) aged 16-24 were unemployed.

As can be seen from figure 1, the unemployment rate for 18-24 year olds is double the figure it stood at in the boom years of the Labour government, in 2003. The rate of unemployment for those aged 16-18 has also increased dramatically, from a steady period from 1992 up until approximately 2004, to the current rate of approximately 38%.

The results of a dynamic labour market mean that total employment is an unlikely target, particularly for young people who lag behind the rest of the workforce in terms of the uptake of employment. The relatively high youth unemployment figures during a period of large scale growth in GDP help to exemplify that unemployment is structural in the UK, rather than just caused by recession. Structural issues may include low skill levels amongst a consistent cohort of young people (particularly in English and maths), labour market regulations (such as the minimum wage for Small and Medium Enterprises – SMEs) and the need for better job search and job matching services. Despite this, it can clearly be seen that the current levels of youth unemployment, at a fifth of all young people, are unacceptably high.

Unemployment amongst young people is not the only labour market issue for young people. Unemployment, which occurs when young people wish to work more hours than their employer is able to give them, has been a particular feature of this economic downturn. Work by David Blanchflower and David Bell for the National Institute Economic Review showed that in 2012 almost a third (30%) of young people in the labour market wished to work longer hours (and so where technically underemployed), in comparison with just 9.9% in the labour force as a whole. This underemployment points to the loss of potential and productivity amongst the whole workforce, which also makes its way into the creative industries.

During a period in which the UK is attempting to emerge from economic downturn, the financial burden of youth unemployment on the treasury, along with the long term impact of lost productivity and earnings represent a serious obstacle to growth. Research by the Commission on Youth Unemployment, coordinated by the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO), shows that the total cost of youth unemployment to the UK economy is £10.8 billion. Furthermore, research by ACEVO shows that the ‘scarring effects of youth unemployment’ will ultimately cost the treasury £2.8 billion over a 10 year period.

The CBI also breaks down the costs of unemployment to the UK taxpayer on an individual basis. People on jobseekers allowance cost the taxpayer approximately £6,100 plus an estimated £8,100 when ‘direct and indirect taxes and tax credits’ are taken into account. The financial imperative to reduce the rates is therefore clear, and proven by a number of separate academic, government and other sources.

However, the burden of youth unemployment is not just an increased cost for the UK taxpayer, but manifests in a negative impact on those who are out of work, and in particular those young people that are long term unemployed. ACEVO’s report brings together both existing and new research to convincingly make this point. The report points to the fact that those who spend time out of work between the ages of 16-24 will spend on average two months per year outside of work in their late twenties, significantly reducing their earnings and hopes of social mobility.

Furthermore, the ACEVO study points to the mental and physical health problems faced by those that experience youth unemployment. The report states that ‘illness, mental stress, and helplessness, and loss of self-esteem’ are all more highly associated with those that experience youth unemployment. The report states that ‘illness, mental stress, and helplessness, and loss of self-esteem leading to depression’ are all more highly associated with those that experience youth unemployment. The imperative to act is therefore not formed solely on an individual or collective economic argument, but from an imperative to protect the wellbeing of people who find themselves in a situation where they are out of work and education.

Figure 1: Youth Unemployment in the UK 1992 – 2013

1. The CBI Map to Growth: Rebalancing the Labour Market (2011).
2. See House of Commons Library (David Haigh), Youth Unemployment Statistics (2013).
7. The ACEVO Commission on Youth Unemployment, Youth Unemployment: The Crisis We Cannot Afford (April 2012).
8. The ACEVO Commission on Youth Unemployment, Youth Unemployment: The Crisis We Cannot Afford (April 2012).
Social mobility and the problem of access to work

“Without more concerted action to address imbalances in the labour market, high levels of youth unemployment and falling earnings, it will be almost impossible to make progress towards the goal of a highly socially mobile, low poverty society.”

– Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission

Social mobility in the UK has clearly been shown to be less well developed than in other European countries. While it is clearly possible for people who are born into disadvantaged backgrounds to prosper, their chances of doing so are far less likely than those who are born into relative prosperity. The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission point to evidence that not only has social mobility not improved in recent decades, but that there is evidence that the link between parent and child earnings increased 1958-1970, solidifying the link between one’s life opportunities and those of one’s parents. Therefore by this clearly defined metric it can be seen that social mobility has declined.10

A meta-analysis of research on social mobility by the OECD shows that of twelve developed countries (including Australia, France, Canada, the USA and Germany) that could be compared, the UK showed the strongest link between individual earnings and those of their parents. Clearly these issues are also compounded by a lack of labour market opportunities in general.11

The Low Pay Commission, the body tasked with providing recommendations on the National Minimum Wage, also points to the stark current reality that ‘labour is now much cheaper than it was at the start of the recession’, with real wages falling. This means that the chances of a high degree of mobility from low individual earnings and those of their parents. Clearly these issues are also compounded by a lack of labour market opportunities in general.12

The creative and cultural industries have, in the past, been typically identified as a part of the labour market that actively negates the chances of social mobility, through a number of different methods, primarily:

- The preference for recruiting those with qualifications from higher education, even in roles that would typically be seen as not requiring higher level skills (e.g. administrative roles, ticketing roles etc.)
- The prevalence of networks in hiring, and the lack of formal and transparent recruitment methods in taking on new workers.
- The routine use of unpaid work in the form of extended internships in a number of sub-sectors within the creative industries.14

The first point can be clearly seen in a number of labour market reports on the creative and cultural industries. While individual accounts vary due to the make-up of what is defined as ‘in’ or ‘out’ of the creative and cultural industries, the following figures paint a consistent enough picture for the purposes of this review. A report for the UK Commission for Employment and Skills in 2012 by the Institute for Employment Studies outlined that 52.6% of the ‘digital and creative sector’ was employed to level 4 or above.15 Similarly, Creative & Cultural Skills’ footprint, which does not include the digital media, TV/Film and publishing sectors, shows that 59% of the total workforce is employed to level 4 and above.16

While it is difficult to talk about the exact proportion of workers in a sector that ‘should’ receive a university education, it has become generally accepted in the creative industries that the balance has shifted too far towards higher education. The Creative Industries Council Skillset Skills Group point to the fact that apprenticeship take-up is still low, careers advice remains patchy and that the ‘common pathways’, which are routed through higher education, grow wider.17

The second point touches on the difference between formal and informal recruitment methods. Formal methods, as the Work Foundation points out, may include the use of employment agencies, job search websites and Jobcentre Plus. Formal routes are opened to a wider cross section of society, however informal routes are the preference of micro-businesses, where over half of companies with under ten members of staff use methods such as word of mouth.18

While exact figures are difficult to find within the creative industries, much of this is unverifiably confirmed by companies, and given the majority of creative and cultural businesses employ fewer than 10 staff they are very likely to fall into the category that recruits informally. The Creative Society (formerly New Deal of the Mind - NDOTM) point to the fact that while demand is usually extremely high for work in the creative industries, the number of advertised roles does not reflect the actual number of jobs that exists in the creative sector.19 This holds back the diversity of the sector, allowing only certain entitled groups of people to access those roles.

Within the current Coalition Government, the third point has received some limited attention, but is still not particularly high on the policy agenda as a means to open access to a relatively closed sector. Partly as a result of evidence submitted by Creative & Cultural Skills and other organisations, the LPC pointed out that they had received ‘substantial’ evidence over a number of years that there was a growth in the use of terms like ‘internship’ ‘volunteer’ and ‘work experience’, which in their words ‘denote activities that look like work and to which the NMW (National Minimum Wage) should apply’.20 While the LPC do not make an explicit connection between the spread of unpaid work and Social Mobility, the inability for all young people to access the labour market on an equal footing (for example, by gaining work experience in the same way) can only serve to exacerbate the problems of accessing certain professions and roles.

The HMRC has taken some limited action with regards to the creative and cultural industries in relation to unpaid work. In 2011 and 2012 it targeted creative industries however.

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Data on the number of unpaid internships in the UK labour force is inconsistent, and not covered by any official government statistics. Nevertheless, a limited picture can be built, both for the whole economy and for some parts of the creative industries. Approximately 1 in 5 CSP employers (usually larger companies with limited cross-over to the creative sector) claimed to take on an intern in a set period in 2010, which extrapolates to the whole economy as 250,000 internship placements.

11 OECD, A Family Affair: Intergenerational Social Mobility Across OECD Countries (2010).
18 The Creative Society, Make a Job Don’t Take a Job: Building the Creative Society (2010).
20 Ibid.
21 Ibid.
22 Ibid.
However, the CIPD’s research suggested that only 20% of these were unpaid. \(^{22}\) The Trades Union Congress has estimated similar figures, suggesting that 250,000 workers are currently being paid less than the minimum wage in the current labour market, either as interns or otherwise. \(^{23}\)

While data is not strong for the creative industries, a number of studies and papers do show some of the problems in this area. Research on the routes which young people take into the design industry show that 31% of employers that recruited young people use unpaid internships as a source of employment. Furthermore, 17% of employers in the sector state that this is their preferred route for taking on a young person, above taking on someone that has previously been in paid employment at a design company. \(^{24}\) Given there are currently approximately 17,000 businesses in the design industry at the moment, this means that some 2,890 companies (if they were hiring) as a matter of preference would take on a young person through the pathway of an unpaid internship. \(^{25}\)

While concrete figures are difficult to find for other arts organisations, the situation is clearly of some concern to the publicly funded section of the arts and culture world. In 2011 Arts Council England (in partnership with Creative & Cultural Skills), launched Internships in the Arts: A Guide for Arts Organisations, in which ACE’s CEO Alan Davey stated that he hoped “these guidelines help to clarify the legal obligations of arts organisations offering these opportunities”. \(^{26}\)

The problem is implicitly recognised in ACE’s 10 year strategy, where one of the actions for the body is to:

“Promote a diverse workforce, through our funded organisations and strategic programmes, with the aim of creating fairer entry and progression routes in the arts and culture sector, as well as more diverse leadership and governance” \(^{27}\)

By inference then, it is clearly seen that the arts and culture sector currently suffers from unfair or unequal routes into work for different people. Given ACE distributes public funding to its National Portfolio Organisations (NPO) network, it is also fair to say that the prevalence of unfair routes extends not only to the private sector, but also those organisations in direct receipt of public funding to support their programmes and staff.

The need for high level qualifications, the lack of an accessible job market due to the need for an informal network of insiders to the sector, and the public and private sector preference for hiring an unpaid workforce mean that chances to enter the creative industries are difficult to obtain. The creative and cultural industries then, do not at present take an active approach to promoting social mobility as a whole, despite various schemes and initiatives that may look to target specific issues (e.g. BME participation in the creative industries or gender imbalances in certain parts of the industry).

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\(^{22}\) IPPR, Why Interns Need a Fair Wage (2010).
\(^{23}\) HR Grapevine, HMRC Targets Employers for Unpaid Interns 11 November 2013 (2013).
\(^{24}\) Creative & Cultural Skills, Pathways to Design: Young People’s Entry into the Design Workforce (2012).

The economic growth of the creative and cultural industries has been quantified by successive governments, along with a number of reports and research studies from government departments like BIS and the DCMS, government bodies such as the Intellectual Property Office and Non-Departmental Public Bodies such as Arts Council England. Statistics about the size, shape and scope of the creative and cultural industries have also been gathered by charities, such as Nesta, Creative & Cultural Skills and Creative Skillset, and trade organisations and membership bodies such as UK Music, the Crafts Council and others.
While the economic success of the creative industries has been continually reinforced by these studies, the discrepancies in data, stemming from a lack of standardised definitions (and the economic tools with which to implement a standard definition through standard industrial and occupational classifications) has led to confusion amongst policy makers and within the sector itself. As Bakhshi, Hargreaves and Mateos-Garcia note in Nesta’s Manifesto for the Creative Economy:

‘Inadequate statistics have contributed to a perception in the eyes of some that the creative economy is not a well-defined economic entity that is susceptible to strategic policy interventions.’

Martin Smith, a special advisor to Ingenious (a media company) put the issue more bluntly in his 2013 essay for the RSA, stating that:

‘The conceptual landscape [of the creative and cultural industries] is genuinely confusing.’

The dearth of adequate statistics and correct definition then, does not just impact at the level of measurement, but may have inadvertently had an impact on investment into growth, and potentially on broader policy interventions aimed at the whole economy. It is worth noting how few creative businesses have felt able to join in the DWP’s Work Programme, which has arguably been tailored to large, conventional employers at the expense of high growth businesses.

Despite the somewhat confused landscape on defining and measuring the creative industries, some efforts have been made to improve upon this. In 2013 Nesta’s A Dynamic Mapping of the UK’s Creative Industries proposed a revised approach to the DCMS’s approach, while also providing backdated growth figures for employment.

A Dynamic Mapping showed that in the sectors outlined by Nesta as deriving the creative industries, employment had risen by 6.8% between 2004-2010, more than five times the growth figure for the rest of the economy. The new methodology set out by Nesta put creative employment at 2.5 million, with 1.5 million people making up the creative industries. The creative industries and embedded creative workers therefore stand at 8.7% as a proportion of the whole UK economy. While any projections or forecasts are imprecise, we could expect this growth rate to provide another 27,000 new jobs per year (if there was no change in growth up or down and also no accounting for replacement demand within the workforce).

In early 2014 the DCMS published their new set of economic estimates for the creative industries. This approach used the Nesta’s ‘creative intensities’ approach, but gave it additional flexibility to include a number of sectors not utilised in the creative industries. This approach used the Nesta ‘creative intensities’ approach, while also providing backdated growth figures for employment.

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While data is problematic for the creative industries, the one area policy makers and the industry can agree on is the high levels of growth experienced in the previous decade, which shows both the resilience of creative businesses to economic downturn, and that the skills and abilities used in these roles are at the forefront of the UK’s economy. While the numbers often look different for particular areas within the creative and cultural industries, depending on the methodology used for examining them, their overall size and growth potential are not in doubt. With this in mind, the sector looks like a viable area in which the increased employment of young people could potentially be promoted.

The figures within the latest set of economic estimates are striking. They show that in the wider creative economy (all workers within the creative industries and creative workers outside the creative industries) employment grew by 6% between 2011 and 2012, in comparison to just 0.7% for the rest of the economy. Discounting those outside the creative industries, this growth was even higher – 8.6%, the number of jobs within the creative economy increased by some 143,000 jobs in this period, as shown for each individual industry in figure 2."

Figure 2: Employment change in the creative economy 2011 - 2012

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The new education paradigm

“People working in the creative industries are often self-employed, involved in project based work and use networks to find new opportunities”

The fact that the current education system is not sufficiently catering to the needs of a strong and vibrant creative and cultural sector has been explored to some extent in the chapter on Social Mobility and the Problem of Access to Work. However this section looks in more detail at how the current education system is not adequately matched to the specific patterns of work available in the creative industries.

Work by both Nesta, Creative & Cultural Skills, and Arts Council England have proven that the patterns of work followed by those working in the creative industries often do not use linear paths of staying in one specific role over long periods of time. Instead, work within the creative industries reflects high rates of self-employment, project based work and work linked to networks of personal contacts. Nesta’s The Art of Innovation report, which surveyed arts graduates, found that as many as 46% of those working within the arts also held a second job. Nesta also point to the fact that these traits are beginning to be seen in other areas of the economy.

Work by both Nesta, Creative & Cultural Skills, and Arts Council England have also uncovered similar patterns of multi-jobbing in theatre workers. This may be partially driven by low wages in the arts, where the research uncovered that while many workers spent the majority of their time working in the arts, a number of them did not earn the majority of their income from this area. Instead, theatre workers also tended to take work in the education sector, or other areas of the creative industries that might prove more lucrative, presumably in order to supplement their passion.38

The education sector, if it is to be matched to these high growth industries, needs to be able to provide a pathway by which young people can directly engage and interact with people who work in this manner. For example, apprenticeship take-up in its current form may never be able to permeate into all areas of the creative industries, as the guarantee of having projects and work long enough to sustain a full year apprentice in work is not always available to micro-businesses or self-employed workers looking to expand their businesses. Operating within a network of project based work has therefore made it difficult for traditional models of training to prove effective. More effective brokerage of training opportunities within work, and a system which creates a lighter touch for traditional models of training to prove effective. 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Creating an education system fit for a new economy is also brought into frame by the higher tuition fees implemented in Higher Education (HE) across England and the rest of the UK. Figure 3 shows that in England both Creative Art and Design applications and placements were lower in 2012 than 2011. In particular, applications dropped by 15% during this period. While it is important to stress that long term trends can probably not be ascertained from this statistic, it is still important to note that applications are lower in an area of the economy where jobs are perceived to not be as stable or high paying as other parts of the economy, despite the high growth of the creative industries as a whole.

The new types of working pattern within the creative industries and wider parts of the economy, along with an increased level of fees around higher education, may actually create a disincentive for people who may have gone on to become successful in the creative sector. This is a significant issue, and has to be dealt with through changes to both how education in the UK is able to function as a pipeline to jobs and the types of people who are able to access these opportunities. At the moment the current structures may not be fit for purpose in terms of how people will work over the next ten years.

It is also unknown what impact the current fee levels for higher education will be for social mobility in the future. Application rates for young people living in areas with the lowest rates of university participation currently stand at 19%, which is far lower than the 54% for areas with the highest rate of participation in HE. With the increase in fee levels and lack of a guaranteed job at the end of these placements, the incentive for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to go on to study in arts-based subjects would seem to be diminishing.
The impact of previous interventions on work in the creative and cultural sector

Creative & Cultural Skills is currently in the process of managing a £15 million fund from Arts Council England to support 6,500 people into apprenticeships, traineeships and paid internships, from Arts Council in the process of kick-starting businesses to take on more employees. This section therefore looks at a range of evaluation studies of comparable interventions within the sector, along with the wider economy.

There is a limited literature on the impact of structured work/training programmes for young people or the benefits of early-stage career roles within the creative industries. However, over the last five years a number of schemes and programmes aimed at work in the creative sphere have emerged, which have been subjected to varying degrees of evaluation. In this section, we assess some of the realities of utilising the creative industries as a specific industrial area to promote jobs and work for young people.

The Future Jobs Fund (FJF) initiative, launched by the Labour government after the financial crash of 2008 provided a method by which employers could access funding to take on workers, including those in the creative industries. A number of subsequent evaluations shed light on the programme’s relative success, and the impact it made in the creative industries. The FJF, as outlined by the Department for Works and Pensions in 2012, was set up to:

‘…support the creation of subsidised jobs for unemployed young people who were at a disadvantage in the labour market. The programme was primarily aimed at 18 to 24-year-olds in receipt of Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA), with a smaller number of places available to JSA claimants aged over 24 in unemployment hotspots. Official Statistics indicated that between October 2009 and March 2011, just over 105,000 jobs were created under the FJF. The programme cost approximately £680 million.’

The DWP’s programme evaluation of the FJF showed that, post-completion of a placement, participants reduced the amount of days they were in receipt of welfare payments by 25 days per year for as many years as the impact was sustained (the DWP put this at five years within their report). Similarly, each participant was shown to increase the number of days they spent in unsubsidised employment by 39 days per year.

The DWP also emphasised the impact of the FJF through a cost-benefit analysis (CBA). In their calculations, the DWP found that the overall programme impact on participants was an increase in £4,000 per individual, £6,850 per employer and £7,750 for society as a whole. The only negative to this CBA was to the Exchequer, who lost £3,100 in this calculation. In the government’s eyes then, the FJF had a significant benefit, both in terms of individual outcomes and the overall economic gains of the programme.

An additional independent review of the programme was conducted in 2011 by the Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion, which again highlighted many of the benefits of the scheme. The study found that on average participants spent 70 days fewer on benefits as a direct result of the programme than they would have had if it was not in place. However, CESI’s report was critical of some aspects of the scheme, namely its inability to engage with private sector businesses, which had a long-term impact on the sustainability of future employment for participants.

The FJF has not only been evaluated at a macro level. A number of studies have looked at the impact of the programme on smaller cohorts of participants, and significantly for this study, those employing young people in the creative industries. The Creative Society (formerly NDOTM) conducted a Social Return on Investment (SROI) study of a cohort of 807 participants they managed to place with businesses and organisations within the creative industries. The results show an extremely positive outlook for the impact that the creative industries can have on employment prospects for young people. Post-completion, the study showed that the cohort of learners placed by NDOTM outperformed the FJF average, providing strong opportunities for young people who worked in other areas of the economy. Furthermore, during their placements the NDOTM participants were far less likely to drop out of the scheme – 3% in comparison to 11% for the programme as a whole. Finally, 71% of participants either went into employment, education or training at the end of their 6 month placement.

In terms of economic impact, the final SROI methodology employed throughout the study showed that for each £1 invested in the scheme, there was a total return of £1.98, with £1.60 being directly attributable to the work of The Creative Society. Far from not being viable businesses to take on young people then, creative businesses (when effectively brokered into the scheme) actually outperformed the FJF average, providing strong opportunities for young people in the long term.

Other FJF evaluations are also available for the creative industries. The Culture Quarter Programme (CQP), a partnership led by the Royal Opera House in partnership with a number of other arts organisations, placed 105 people on the scheme. A light touch review of the programme was conducted, which sheds some light on the merits of the programme. The review found that 73% of the cohort of young people on the programme had progressed within their careers upon leaving. 63.5% had gone onto further employment, and 10% had gone onto education or training. Furthermore, 33% of those continuing into employment had done so with a CQP partner.

Footnotes:

43 Ibid
44 Ibid
The previous five years have shown exponential growth in the number of businesses taking on Creative Apprentices. The figure has grown from 170 starts in 2008/9 to 1030 in 2011/12.

The COP drew participants who, on average, had been unemployed for five and a half months, and had applied through Jobcentre Plus. Despite this though, the programme seems to have had little impact on the graduate stranglehold on entry level roles. 55% of individuals on the programme were educated to BA level or above, a statistic approximately consistent with the creative industries as a whole. The programme did appear to have a greater impact on ethnic diversity though, with 43% of the participants coming from Black or minority ethnic backgrounds, far higher than the national average for the creative industries as a whole. It is also worth noting that the vast majority of organisations engaged with the programme were publicly funded arts organisations, rather than private businesses.

The FJF is not the only programme aimed at employment for young people that has been assessed over the last few years. In 2010 the Jerwood Foundation launched the Jerwood Creative Bursaries Scheme, which had the objective of providing graduates from diverse backgrounds with work placements of up to 12 months, with a focus on creating ‘paid opportunities for graduates to undertake real responsibilities.’ Overall, 62 people were placed on the scheme and were paid £15,000 per year through the scheme, with a £5,000 pa grant also being offered to host organisations. The scheme was therefore far more expensive than either the FJF or funding through the subsequent Work Programme implemented by the Coalition Government.

In order to ensure that the programme participants came from a diverse range of backgrounds that would perhaps not have had the opportunity to undertake an unpaid internship, eligible candidates had to have been in receipt of Maintenance Grants while undertaking their degrees. Overall, the indicators of the report were extremely positive. 90% of participants were employed within the arts following the conclusion of the pilot, with 90% also feeling that the scheme made them more employable in the arts. Further to this, 90% of the host organisations would consider targeting less affluent applicants again following their involvement in the programme.

The organisations involved with the scheme used the programme as an opportunity to push their organisation in a new direction, or in order to build capacity. 95% of successful offers from the host organisations were for the creation of new roles, and 67% of organisations that offered placements highlighted the importance of this to the scheme. Furthermore, 71% of the hosts stated that they would have taken part if the organisational grant had not been in place, indicating that organisations may have been more willing to experiment with taking on young people than the programme assumed. While it is unlikely that funding for schemes as costly (£20,000 per applicant) could be implemented in the current climate, the Creative Bursaries programme still paints an encouraging picture of the arts in offering viable entry routes to employment and ongoing success, even though they were limited to graduate applicants.

\(^{46}\) Royal Opera House, Culture Quarter Programme: Project Review (2011).


\(^{48}\) Ibid.

\(^{49}\) Ibid.
Employer engagement and uptake of new entry routes into the creative industries can also be seen in the case of Creative Apprenticeships. The Modern Apprenticeships at levels 2 and 3 developed by Creative & Cultural Skills were created with little precedent in 2008. Despite this, creative businesses and arts organisations have been increasingly using this entry route as a way to provide employment opportunities to young people. This especially applies to technical occupations, in backstage theatre and music where higher education qualifications were sometimes seen as not providing a sufficient level of technical expertise for individual roles. The following graph charts the rise in uptake of Creative Apprenticeships, from 2008 through to 2013.

Creative Apprenticeships, along with providing significant outcomes for learners also deliver significant benefits for the UK economy. The SROI study conducted by Baker Tilly found that each cohort of 210 apprentices could provide a net economic gain to the UK economy of £2.4 million over 10 years. As the number of apprentices is on the rise (see figure 4), the economic benefits to the economy are therefore set to increase.

The creative and cultural industries therefore do have a strong track record of addressing youth unemployment, although public and private sector interventions do often have to be tailored or brokered in a specific way for the sector. This is perhaps why the Work Programme, which provides support through much larger independent organisations, has not received the same kind of traction as smaller, more tailored approaches in the past few years, as evidenced by the number of businesses which have engaged with that programme. Nevertheless, the creative industries are clearly a viable area in which to target the employment of young people in the labour force over the coming years.
The impact of taking on young people to individual businesses

One of the main barriers to the recruitment of young people into the creative industries is the perception of risk, especially to microbusinesses and SMEs, of taking on an inexperienced worker within the company. This perception is potentially part of the reason why in actual fact a limited number of businesses take on people under the age of 25. As previously discussed, statistics in this area are subject to variance, but research from Creative & Cultural Skills suggests that only 9.7% of the sector is under the age of 25.14

In order to redress this issue of how many young people emerge in the creative industries then, businesses have to be convinced that there is a sound and rational reason why they should invest time and resources in developing a young person, rather than simply hiring someone more experienced, and perhaps less of a risk.

From the perspective of the whole of the UK economy, the UKCES Employer Skills Survey has found that 24% of all businesses have taken on a young person directly from education over the last 2-3 years.15 However, this is significantly impacted by business size. Around four out of five of establishments that employ over 250 people have employed young people directly from education; however this figure stands at only 13% for businesses that employ fewer than five people, which we know make up the majority of the creative industries. The problem of growing businesses through the recruitment of young people is therefore at least partially structural, and without any significant shift on a policy level, it is difficult to see how this issue would be directly resolved.

The situation at a UK-wide level shows that while it can be difficult for employers to take on young people, they do not generally have a negative perception of doing so. The UKCES show that 59.7% of people who move straight from education to employment are found to be ‘well prepared’ for work. Furthermore, the proportion of those that are considered well prepared increases with the type of education they receive. FE leavers at 18, for example, were found to be well prepared for the world of work by 73.3% of businesses. Clearly then, businesses are on the whole not dissatisfied with their young employees once they have been recruited.16

Much of the literature around employing young people into the workforce centres on the ‘business case’ for why individual firms would benefit from taking the perceived risk of hiring someone inexperienced. The Work Foundation conducted an extensive literature review of this issue in their ‘Missing Million’ programme of research. The review takes a balanced view of the case at an individual level of recruitment for a business, pointing out that there are a number of positive and negative aspects within the decision to hire a young person.

24% of all businesses have taken on a young person directly from education over the last 2-3 years – The UK Commission for Employment and Skills

The research found that the most significant positive factor in hiring young people was that employers would have the ability to ‘mould’ someone into an effective employee from the outset, developing their attitudes as well as their hard and soft skills. Another area which is particularly pertinent to aspects of the creative industries is the specific ICT skills that young people hold, which gives them a distinct advantage, as ‘digital natives’ in some aspects of the economy.18 Despite these positive reasons for employing young people, negative aspects were also cited, in particular the fact that some employers feel that the ‘attitude’ of young people makes them a risk to employ.19 This could be exacerbated in micro-businesses, where the ability to fit into a small team and be part of the working culture has been shown to be significant.20

The business case for taking an apprenticeships into the workforce is also a complex area, as an immediate return cannot be expected from a young person who is still in training. Research by BIS highlighted the ‘payback periods’ of a number of apprenticeship frameworks in various sectors, which shows that the impact is not immediate. In a level 2 retail apprenticeship for example, the payback period (if the apprentice stays with the employer) is two years and three months, while in a level 2 hospitality apprenticeship the payback period is only ten months.21

The Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) conducted both qualitative and quantitative research into the business case for taking on young people, commenting that:

‘Making the business case for employing young people to employers should thus also be about highlighting the benefits of a more long-term, strategic approach to workforce planning’22

This stands in opposition to the usual methods of business growth within the creative industries though, where it is widely asserted that businesses take shorter-term decisions, do not have detailed training plans or budgets or conduct regular performance reviews of staff. The problems could therefore be more entrenched in sectors like the creative industries, where much is made of the high turnover of firms and lack of long-term planning.23

The CIPD’s research does point to some of the unique skills and attitudes that young people possess, in emphasising the case for businesses recruiting from this cohort. According to their research, employers tend to believe that young people possess a ‘willingness to learn, fresh ideas and new approaches and motivation, energy and optimism’ when recruited. They may also be taught newer skills and techniques through education or apprenticeships, which the older workforce has yet to catch up on.

15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
18 BIS, Employer Investment in Apprenticeships and Workplace Learning: The Fifth Net Benefits to Employers Study (2012).
20 Creative & Cultural Skills, Sector Skills Assessment for the Creative & Cultural Sector (2010).
21 Ibid.
Encouragingly, organisations do believe they have a role to play in terms of supporting youth unemployment, which plays into their desire to act on the business case for taking on new workers. 71% of businesses the CIPD surveyed believed young people had a role to play in tackling youth unemployment, and two thirds believe they need to offer entry routes that go beyond the point of graduate entry.62

Investing in an apprenticeship or a young person is not a short term solution to boosting productivity within a firm, but research has shown that it can have significant positive effects. Qualitative research conducted by Baker Tilly has shown that the majority of employers surveyed in the evaluation of Creative Apprenticeships expressed a view that apprentices were both able to contribute in a constructive manner and provide a net benefit to the company. However, many also felt that the reasons for taking on an apprenticeship were based on altruistic reasons of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), to increase their workforce diversity and to cut wage bills, which are lower for apprenticeships than the regular minimum wage.63

While a straightforward business case is difficult to establish, particularly in a sector as adverse to long term planning as the creative industries, it is apparent that a mix of factors can and is persuasive to encourage employers to take on young people. The mix of altruism with regards to youth unemployment, the need to increase workforce diversity in order to drive innovation, the new skills and abilities young people possess in relation to the current workforce and the ability for employers to build a pipeline of talent should all be seen as key. However it may well come down to individual circumstance (e.g. need for additional capacity, whether training is available throughout an organisation) as to whether businesses in the creative industries are ready to accept and act on those principles.

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Current government policy and its implications

The current Coalition Government has rightly placed a priority on the creative industries.

Vince Cable’s industrial strategy, set out in 2012, acknowledges that the ‘digital and creative sector’ are key, offering ‘significant growth opportunities to the UK economy, benefiting from long term trends like globalisation.’ Clearly then, the current administration recognised the importance of these issues, although despite the emergence of a Creative Industries Council there is currently no overarching strategy for growth specific to the creative industries. This hole in policy has been filled to some extent by strategies drawn up by other organisations. Nesta’s Manifesto for the Creative Economy and Arts Council England’s 10 year strategic framework both articulate visions for the sector, but a unified policy has still not been forthcoming from the DCMS or BIS. However, a number of key policy areas can be focused on in order to examine whether creative businesses can be further aided in job creation for young people.

Local Enterprise Partnerships

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) present a significant opportunity for creative businesses, consortia and other stakeholders to leverage investment into skills, training and the workforce for the creative industries. There are currently 39 Local Enterprise Partnerships across England, covering the entire country. These zones have been established in order ‘to play a central role in determining local economic priorities and undertaking activities to drive economic growth and the creation of local jobs.’

A number of LEPs have already recognised the importance of the creative industries, however much more could be done to drive these partnerships to prioritise employment and skills acquisition in the creative sector, where a case can convincingly be made for growth.

This is also a significant area due to the fact that the LEP network is set to grow significantly in importance, in line with the additional funds it is set to receive in 2015. In responding to the Heseltine Review of 2012, the Coalition Government has decided to create a Single Local Growth Fund that LEPs can bid into, which will provide a flexible fund across policy areas with the intention of boosting economic growth.

It is therefore vital to ensure that the creative industries are at the forefront of individual LEPs’ strategies in the short and medium term, in order to leverage this funding.

The Work Programme and the Youth Contract

The current administration has created a large scale welfare-to-work scheme entitled The Work Programme, which works on a performance by results basis through giving out large contracts to private, public and third sector organisations which can in turn sub-contract to smaller more niche organisations, in order to boost employment.

The scheme has had very little purchase across the creative industries, in comparison with the previous Future Jobs Fund under the Labour administration. This may not be due to a set of exceptional circumstances around the creative industries themselves, but as a by-product of being mostly made up of hard to reach businesses.


The Youth Contract wage incentive has only achieved approximately 9% of its annual target.

Research by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Micro Businesses published in 2013 suggested that in a sample of Work Programme clients, only 6.3% were microbusinesses (employing four people or under), in comparison to the proportion of workers employed by microbusinesses in the UK economy - 42%. Clearly then, the scheme has not had a major impact on these businesses, which also happen to make up the majority of the creative industries. Furthermore, the paper points to a number of levers that could be utilised to increase the proportion of microbusinesses engaging with the programme, namely wage subsidies, cash incentives and reduced employer NI contributions.

The Creative Society, a charity that was able to place over 800 people in creative businesses and organisations through the Future Jobs Fund ultimately pulled out of the Work Programme. Its founder Martin Bright, cited the fact that the scheme had a ‘byzantine’ bidding process in order to become a partner to one of the ‘primes’ (the main contract deliverers of the Work Programme) and that ultimately the number of young people they were placing through the scheme was not enough to make their role sustainable.

Running in tandem with the Work Programme, the Coalition Government has also offered a wage incentive scheme through the Youth Contract. This allows firms to access wage incentives for up to £2,275 for young people that complete 26 weeks in employment. The young people targeted had to have been claimants on Jobcentre Plus for at least six months prior to taking on the work offered. Despite a fairly generous wage subsidy, employers have not approached the scheme with much enthusiasm. Despite funding being available to create 160,000 jobs through the wage incentives over three years, the first year of the scheme has seen the creation of only 4,690 jobs, or approximately 9% of the annual target for job creation through the scheme.

The Youth Contract wage incentive scheme has seemingly suffered from a lack of interest from private sector employers (its primary target) across the whole economy, including the creative industries. As a forthcoming report on apprenticeships from Demos points out, this seems to be due to a lack of sectoral engagement or trust between various discrete areas of the economy and the scheme. With a similar wage subsidy mechanism, funds such as the Creative Employment Programme seem far more able to bring groups of employers together to take advantage of schemes to create work for young people.

Given the current limitations of the Work Programme and the Youth Contract wage incentive scheme in reaching micro-businesses, and organisations within the creative industries, there may be a role for the DCMS, BIS and Creative Industries Council in lobbying the DWP to investigate ways in which funds could be opened up to areas where they have not previously been able to penetrate.

Apprenticeships

Apprenticeships are a key part of the coalition’s education policy, and in 2010 the coalition government made a commitment to vastly increase the number of people in the UK that undertook one as a route into work. In 2012 the Richard Review was commissioned by BIS to provide recommendations on the future of apprenticeships, which was broadly welcomed by government.

The Future of Apprenticeships in England: Implementation Plan set out how the system would be reformed to drive up standards and to clearly state the purpose of an apprenticeship.

The implementation plan has placed an increased emphasis on the need for apprenticeships to be based ‘on standards designed by employers to meet their needs, the needs of the sector and the economy more widely’. The process envisaged will put employers in the driving seat of apprenticeship framework creation, whilst the report also explicitly states that SMEs will need to be involved in this process. Despite these laudable aims, it remains uncertain whether a coalition of employers (or a single employer) in the creative industries would have the drive and institutional knowledge to make this work effectively.

There is currently some thought within the creative industries that recognises that intermediary bodies (such as Creative & Cultural Skills and Creative Skillset) are not just helping to create frameworks and standards, but are also creating a market for apprenticeships where one previously did not exist.

Further to this, the rate of uptake is probably limited by a lack of incentivisation and the perceived levels of bureaucracy that face creative businesses looking to engage with the apprenticeship system. The DCMS Select Committee, in examining the potential future role of apprenticeships has noted that ‘the case for tax relief for companies – particularly in the creative sector – should be examined more closely’ in order to determine whether incentives could increase uptake of apprenticeships.

Apprenticeships in the creative industries are gaining increasing traction, as evidenced in figure 4 within this report. Both Creative & Cultural Skills and Creative Skillset, along with stakeholders and other partners have put in place the required pathways and frameworks that allow these organisations to take on young people using this alternative to higher education or other entry routes. There is a possibility that the momentum generated might be lost if the creation of standards was handed over wholesale to employers.

74 Ibid.
75 Ibid.
Conclusion

“We punch above our weight when it comes to the creative industries, which are a huge asset to our economy and Creative & Cultural Skills are flinging open the doors to the creative industries, which is a wonderful thing.”

– Nick Clegg, Creative Nation Campaign Launch

This paper has sought to set out the current landscape which may allow a creative nation to flourish, putting a significant dent into youth unemployment in the UK. The creative industries represent a large element of the UK’s workforce, and by a number of different metrics, still continue to grow despite difficult economic conditions. Arguably though, these industries are not doing enough to nurture and enable a new generation of workers to grow. A sustained initiative should be able to outstrip the current goal of creating 50,000 new jobs for young people in the sector over the next 1000 days, particularly if a number of current programmes or new synergies can be exploited.

While employers often seem hesitant about the “business case” for employing young people, previous initiatives have shown an overwhelming level of satisfaction and financial return when they have made the commitment to hiring young people, either through supporting an apprentice or a normal member of the workforce not in education or training. The financial return on these investments has also been shown, through various programmes and using a variety of methodologies, to overwhelmingly support the introduction of young people, particularly through structured schemes such as apprenticeships.

While the flagship programme for welfare to work in the UK (the Work Programme) is seemingly unable to reach businesses in the creative industries, it may be left to smaller or more localised initiatives, or other types of programme to incentivise employers to expand and take on new staff. Ultimately though, the demand for labour is the most significant driver of job creation, as businesses need to express a wish to increase their business capacity and expand in the future, which would lead to them taking on new staff.

Building a Creative Nation: A Call to Arms expresses an achievable goal of job creation based on previous growth trends identified by various pieces of research. However we recognise it is not only the number of jobs created that needs to be addressed, but the quality of the process by which employers take on young people, and the subsequent destinations both inside and outside the creative industries that are reached by young people. This campaign will seek to both orchestrate a significant increase in employment within the sector, and a change in attitudes and approaches to how young people are hired and developed within the workforce.
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